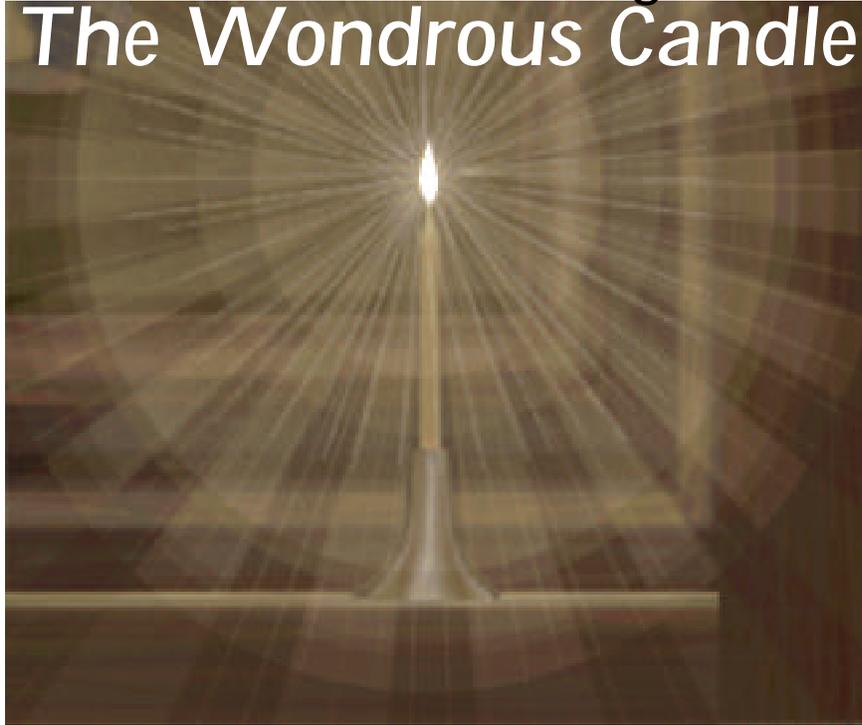


Christmas Tales from Foreign Lands:
The Wondrous Candle



Teacher's Guide

Christmas Tales from Foreign Lands:
The Wondrous Candle

Produced by
Colman Communications Corp.

Facilitator's Guide Written by
Barri Golbus

Animation by
Karen Rhine

Assisted by
Adam Rhine

This video is the exclusive property of the copyright holder. Copying, transmitting, or reproducing in any form, or by any means, without prior written permission from the copyright holder is prohibited (Title 17, U.S. Code Sections 501 and 506).

©MM Colman Communications

The Wondrous Candle

Table of Contents

Program Overview	1
Viewer Objectives	2
Suggested Lesson Plan: Primary	4
Suggested Lesson Plan: Intermediate	5
Suggested Lesson Plan: Advanced	7
Description of Blackline Masters	8
Answer Key	9
Web Resources	9
Transcript of the Video	10

Christmas Tales from Foreign Lands:

The Wondrous Candle

Running Time: 14 minutes

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Intended Audience and Uses

This video is intended to be used for holiday and Christmas programs in which children of any age (and adults) participate. It also may be used by older students studying folktales and comparative literature. Comparative literature students, as well as other viewers, may find it instructive to see the other two programs in this series – Old Befana, from Italy, and An Untold Miracle, from the Middle East.

Program Synopsis

The Wondrous Candle, an Eastern European tale, takes place in the small Romanian village of Galea in the late 1800s. As the story begins, a group of villagers is seen throwing offerings into a mysterious well. Strange sounds come from the well. The villagers believe their offerings will pacify the source of the disquieting sounds.

Petru lives in the village with Maria, his sick, widowed mother. Like the other Galeans, he is ashamed of the village's tiny, decrepit church, and wishes the people of Galea could afford a beautiful cathedral, such as the one in nearby Bostea. Because it is much more beautiful, everyone thinks it is also much holier than Galea's church.

As winter takes hold, Maria becomes increasingly ill. Petru decides the only way to save his mother is to

visit the great cathedral of Bostea and light a prayer candle there. But he must pass by the mysterious well to get to the church.

He trips and falls by the well. A child's voice from within begs Petru for his prayer candle. The voice says the candle will bring warmth and light. Torn and confused, Petru finally throws his candle into the well, along with some matches.

An angel rises from the well and rewards Petru for his sacrifice. When he returns home, he finds his mother is well. Later, Petru returns to the village church, only to find that it is now radiantly lit by his little candle. He now understands the source of the miracle was his love and faith.

VIEWER OBJECTIVES

Young Viewers (Ages 4-8)

After viewing this video and participating in the suggested activities, young viewers should be able to do the following:

1. Summarize the story.
2. Tell their favorite part of the story.
3. Discuss how Petru's good deed resulted in a miracle.

Intermediate Viewers (Ages 9-13)

After viewing this video and participating in the suggested activities, intermediate viewers should be able to do the following:

1. Summarize the story.
2. Explain how good deeds benefit more than the recipient.

3. Discuss outward symbols of charity versus true charity.
4. Explain how Petru's love and faith resulted in a miracle.
5. Discuss the concept of personal bravery.

Advanced Viewers (Ages 14-Adult)

After viewing this video and participating in the suggested activities, advanced viewers should be able to do the following:

1. Discuss the role of love and faith in the story and relate it to the role of love and faith in their own lives.
2. Explore the symbolism of the well and relate it to the theme of the story.
3. Discuss the symbolism of darkness and cold versus light and warmth used in the story.
4. Examine and discuss the thematic aspects of the story.
5. Explore the villagers' assumption that a large, ornate cathedral would be holier than a small church. The producers encourage you to make adaptations and changes to the following lesson plan whenever you feel it will enhance your students' learning experiences. Only by tailoring the material to your unique classroom situation will you be able to maximize the educational experience afforded by these materials.

SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

Primary

Introduce the Program

Conduct a class discussion on mothers and fathers. Ask your students why they love their parent(s). Explore the

many things parents do for their children. Then discuss how children reciprocate. Do they perform chores around the house? If so, what are they? Are there other ways that children can show they love their parents?

Pre-Viewing Activities

Duplicate and pass out Petru and Maria. Have the students color the illustration, then draw their own picture. If appropriate, have each child tell his or her classmates about the person drawn. If your students are unable to do this activity individually, you may decide to do it as a class activity. Then, introduce the video by telling the students that the little boy in the picture, Petru, showed his love for his mother, Maria, by doing many things for her, including something very brave. Tell the class that as they look at the program they should find out all the things Petru did for his mother.

View the Video

Total viewing time is approximately 14 minutes.

Post-Viewing Activities

Ask the class what Petru did for his mother. They should mention gathering firewood and cooking her meals.

Discuss Petru's bravery. Was it dangerous to walk through the forest alone? Why? Next, duplicate and pass out Petru Prays. Have your students do this exercise as seat work or, after the picture has been colored, do it as a class activity. Next, duplicate and pass out Petru's Decision. Have your students do this exercise as seat work or as a class activity. Next, duplicate and pass out The Angel's Reward. Have your students do this exercise as seat work or, after the picture has been colored, do it as a class activity.

SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

Intermediate

Introduce the Program

Write the word "love" on the chalkboard. Ask the class to define it. Assign someone to write down the various definitions of the word. Then discuss why love is such an important emotion. Help your students understand that love can cause people to do brave and wonderful things. Then discuss the concept of love as it relates to Christmas. Help your class understand that one of the major precepts of Christianity is that love is powerful – more powerful than swords, guns or other weapons. If you feel it would be instructive, discuss moral leaders such as Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. who used love as a force to destroy evil.

Pre-Viewing Activities

Tell your students they are going to see a Christmas legend from Romania whose central idea is the power of love. Have one of your students locate Romania on your classroom map. Explain that the story, which takes place about 100 years ago, is set in a small vil-

lage. Tell your students that as they watch the program, they should pay close attention to the beliefs and attitudes of the villagers. Do the residents of the village have any erroneous ideas? If so, what are they?

View the Video

Total viewing time is approximately 14 minutes.

Post-Viewing Activities

Ask your students what they liked best about the story. What things did they find most interesting about Romania? Now, discuss the erroneous beliefs of the villagers regarding their church. Why didn't it really matter how big or small the village's church was? What was really important? Help your class understand that the behavior of the villagers (as a group or as individuals) was far more important than the size of their church. Discuss the concept of the superficial and the real. Has anyone in the class ever known somebody who appears to be something, while in reality that person is something altogether different? If the people of Bostea had a large church, but paid for it with stolen money, would they be more or less holy than the people of Galea? Now, pose the following question: "Even though Petru was poor in appearance, he was rich in another, more important – and more real – way. In what way was he rich?" Help the class understand that he was rich in character. He was completely unselfish and could sympathize with others (his mother and the child in the well). Moreover, he had the bravery to act upon that sympathy. Petru was rewarded for his actions – his journey to save his mother, and his throwing the candle and matches into the well to bring warmth and light to the child.

SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

Advanced

Introduce the Program

Discuss symbolism and how it can be used to deepen a story's message. If your students have studied symbolism previously, have them give examples from literary works your class has studied. Discuss the use of darkness and light as literary symbols. What might darkness represent? Help your students understand that darkness can represent death, ignorance and evil. What about light? In the western literary tradition, it often represents enlightenment and goodness.

Pre-Viewing Activities

Tell your class that they are now going to see a Christmas legend from Romania in which symbolism plays a major role. Alert your students that you will expect them to discuss the symbolism after seeing the program. Also, ask the class to look for artistic clues used in the animation, clues that underscore the symbolism used in the story.

View the Video

Total viewing time is approximately 14 minutes.

Post-Viewing Activities

Ask your students if anyone would like to comment about the coloration used in the animation, and how it underscores the symbolism of the story. Some of your students may have noted that the colors used by artist Karen Rhine were muted, with heavy use of pastels, throughout much of the story. By contrast, the scenes

in which the angel and the candle (symbols of love, Godliness, hope and faith) appear are bright and fully saturated. Note the difference in the scenes of the church with the candle in it, and the church without the candle. How might this correspond with the story's message? Help your students understand that the Galeans' perception of their church was "colored" by their view that the church was less holy. The candle in the church illuminates a more enlightened perspective – the church building remains the same, but the unselfish actions of Petru, as well as his love and faith – make it holy, even holier than a beautiful cathedral. You may also want to discuss the symbol of the well, which was dark and foreboding until illuminated by the candle. Petru's selfless act – truly selfless because he gave up the thing he wanted most – resulted in a miracle. Discuss the following Biblical quotation from Ecclesiastes 11:1, "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days." How does the quotation relate to Petru?

Description of Blackline Masters

Maria and Petru – Introduces the two main characters of the story, and provides an extended activity that helps the primary student identify with the principal character of the story.

Petru Prays – Helps primary-level viewers recall events that took place in the story.

Petru's Decision – Helps viewers recall the crucial turning point of the story and provides an opportunity for them to discuss it and other parts of the story.

The Angel's Reward – An extended activity that provides primary and intermediate students an opportunity to think independently about life-affirming gifts.

ANSWER KEY

The Angel's Reward – Line 1: PEACE; Line 3. JOY; Line 7, HEALTH; Line 11, LOVE

WEB RESOURCES

Christmas on the Internet

<http://www.twoc.com/Christmasinter/main.html>
Stories, songs, games, recipes, coloring book, Christmas art. A major resource.

Christmas at Imagitek

<http://www.imagitek.com/xmas/ideas>
Ideas for Christmas projects, tips and a lot more!

Christmas Day Kid Crossword

<http://www.sunniebunniezz.com/puzzles/xmaskcr.htm>
A Christmas crossword puzzle for primary-aged children.

Christmas Crafts for Kids

<http://www.merry-christmas.com/crafts.htm#8>
A collection of excellent craft activities for children.

Christmas.com Music Box

<http://www.Christmas.com/carols/>
Listen to all your favorites!

TRANSCRIPT OF THE VIDEO

STORYTELLER: Romania – a land of mountains, of timeless mist whose edges reveal green valleys below.

It is a place where time seems to stand still.

Century-old churches are found in practically every village there.

Many have religious paintings on their outside walls, reminders of famous persons in church history, and, perhaps at Christmas time, reminders of stories like “The Wondrous Candle.”

Long ago, a mysterious well lay in the center of a dark Romanian forest.

The peasants from the nearby villages feared this well, because from its depths came a strange sound – part moan, part sob, part heartbeat — somewhat like a lost soul in distress.

The village nearest to the forest was called Galea.
The people who lived there were poor and their lives, miserable.

Their little wooden church — ancient and shaky — stood at the far eastern edge of the village.

The people of Galea were ashamed of their dilapidated little church and dreamed of building a large cathedral like the one in Bostea, the village on the other side of the forest.

The Galeans thought that because Bostea’s church was much more beautiful, it was also much holier.

They also thought that whatever was in the well might get out some day, and that the only to keep it contented was to throw small offerings, such as bread and fruit, into its depths.

And so when the weather was warm, they would march in procession once a week, after church, to make their offerings.

In winter, however, almost everyone stayed away. Only occasionally could anyone be found near the well when cold descended upon the forest.

Once in a great while, little Petru could be seen there all alone, gathering dry branches before the sun set.

Petru lived with the smallest hut in Galea, with his mother, Maria, who had become very ill this particular winter. The little boy took care of her as best he knew how. But nothing seemed to help.

Indeed, Maria's condition worsened.

Of course, that made Petru worry – and very sad.

Late at night, he would pray for his mother's recovery – pray harder than he had ever prayed before.

Then he would put his arms around her to keep her warm.

As the night wore on, he would ask himself, "How have I displeased God? Surely, I must have done something to bring on Momma's illness."

But try as he would, he could never think of anything.

As the days passed, Maria became increasingly ill. On Christmas Eve, Petru could sense that if he didn't do something, his mother would die!

And that is when a thought came to him. He knew that when one desires something very, very much, he must offer a prayer candle at church. Prayer candles, it was said, reinforced prayer.

Now as it happened, Petru had swept Galea's little church several days ago, and Father Toader had given him, as payment, a small prayer candle and a box containing five matches.

Petru decided he must offer the candle in prayer for the return of his mother's health.

But not at the poor, little house of worship in Galea. No, he decided that he must go to a much more worthy place – the beautiful cathedral in Bostea.

To get there, he had to take either a very long road, which would take days, or a shortcut through the dark forest where the mysterious well stood.

The forest was an especially frightening place at that time of year – dark and cold, with wolves prowling about.

Nevertheless, Petru was in a hurry, so he plunged bravely into it, his heart beating like a heavy hammer. He hoped that he could find a small pathway that went around the well.

As he trudged deeper into the forest, the winds began to howl. They whipped around him angrily, biting at his skin.

Hurry as he might, night seemed to be pursuing Petru, gaining on him, catching up to him. His breath came in hard gasps that hurt him at the bottom of his throat.

Where was the little pathway? Where was it? Suddenly, he heard a noise. Was it his heart beating wildly? Or...was he near the dark, mysterious well?

Yes! Yes, there it stood, that dark, sinister object.

Petru started to run, but he tripped and fell at its very edge! The youngster began to sob...but soon stopped. What was that?

Sobs – other sobs – came from deep within the well! Someone else - another child – was weeping!

Then, suddenly, Petru heard a plaintive voice:

CHILD'S VOICE: Oh, it's so cold down here! Please, throw down your little candle! It's so cold and dark here!

PETRU: My little candle? Oh, no! No, I really cannot do that!

CHILD: But I am so cold down here, so cold and frightened. It is Christmas Eve, and I am all alone down here and it is so dark!

PETRU: But my mother is ill; she's dying! I cannot give you my candle! I must go to Bostea to light it in front of the Blessed Queen's image so Mother will get well.

CHILD: There are many candles lit before that image on Christmas Eve. The Blessed One would not miss your poor little light, while down here I am cold and lost and forsaken. Please, oh, please give me your light!

PETRU: But I'll never be able to get another candle. I'm so poor! And if mother dies, I'll be all alone!

CHILD: In the name of the Blessed Child, give me your candle. Oh, please! This is the night of His birth. Can any prayer be refused if asked in His name tonight?

STORYTELLER: Petru did not know what to do! It seemed as if all the grief of the entire world came from the well! And how could he deny a prayer in the name of the Holy One?

Yet, he must also save his mother!

In his confusion, he made his decision!

And down went the candle and matches!

And with that, he wept as if his heart would break.

Suddenly, there was a flash, and the forest filled with heavenly music. What was happening?

Why did he suddenly feel as if his heart was overflowing?
Then, there was another flash!

PETRU: Oh! Ohhh!

ANGEL: Thank you, Petru. You took pity on me, delivering me from the darkness. You sacrificed what seemed to be your only hope. But see how your one little candle becomes a light that illuminates the entire world?

Now, go to your mother, for she is waiting for you.

STORYTELLER: When Petru saw his mother, he knew a miracle had occurred.

For there she stood, all trace of illness gone! She was now beautiful and young.

Never was Petru so overjoyed!

Later, he stole out of his hut, toward the old wooden church.

The stars were all out, and twinkling. The village was fast asleep; everything was silent. Usually, the church was just another shadow among many.

But not tonight! The much-despised little building had become a thing of radiance, casting long rays of light in all directions.

With faltering step, Petru approached God's house, like a pilgrim come from afar.

Once inside, he saw his candle – one little candle whose light was so strong that it turned the lowly little sanctuary into a thing of beauty, a thing of radiance, peace and joy!

And now Petru understood all. The candle embodied his sacrifices, his love, his faith - and the miracle of his mother's recovery.

The old well had been delivered of its curse, and the Holy Child's hand had placed Petru's humble offering upon the altar of God.

Romania, from where our story, "The Wondrous Candle" has come, is located in Eastern Europe.

Yugoslavia and Hungary lie to its west; Ukraine, to the north and east; Moldova, directly to the east; and Bulgaria to the south. The Black Sea borders Romania on its southeastern flank.

Its waters wash up upon some of the best beaches in Europe.

As you've seen, the country has many mountains.

Yet, thousands of lakes are found in Romania, also.

And many rivers. The Danube, one of Europe's major rivers, forms a large delta in the southern part of the country. The delta has been set aside as a wildlife preserve – one of the largest in Europe.

Romania is also a country of small villages with picturesque homes, towns with wide plazas, and a few large cities with wide boulevards and bustling crowds. The capital, Bucharest – with more than two million people – is the largest.

Bucharest is sometimes called the "Little Paris of the East." It has an arch, like Paris, France, and, similarly, many beautiful parks.

The first people to settle in what would someday become Romania were known as the Dacians. They came about 2,300 years ago.

The Romans followed some 400 years later. Romania means "land of the Romans." And, in many ways, that is exactly what it is.

For even today, people walk to the fields, where they work much as their Roman ancestors did some two thousand years ago.

The Romans also brought Christianity to Romania.

Monasteries are still found throughout the country.

Within their walls, time almost seems to stand still.

Besides religion, another important part of Romanian culture is its folk music.

Folk dancing is also important.

The Romanian people are proud of their heritage, their history, their lands, and their literature – one example being a small boy who, through faith and good deeds, is rewarded by a miracle at Christmas time!

Name _____

Directions: You will see a video about a boy named Petru. His mother's name is Maria. Petru loves his mother. He does many things to show his love. Color the picture. Then draw a picture of someone you love in the empty box.



Name _____

Directions: Petru prayed for his mother. He wanted her to get well. Petru did other things to help Maria. Color the picture. Then list the things Petru did for his mother.



What I Wish For

Name _____

Directions: Was your favorite part of the story when Petru tried to decide what to do with the candle and matches? Color the picture. Draw a second picture that shows another part of the story you liked.



Another Part of the Story I Liked

Name _____

Directions: The angel rewarded Petru by making Maria well. The angel could reward Petru with other things. Color the angel. Then see if you can find her other rewards in the letter jumble. Circle them.



H M P R X W A P E A C E N X X L M N Y O
H P M X R V E R L L W I L Z R Z X X I I
U R T W I U Z Q X J O Y G I Q I R P A N
O Y N M L X X E V E C W A L X R P H M I
W N R P Z P Z P V L X M G L R B V B P N
A I P B V W B R L G M X L V P H E A N T
H E A L T H R E I W A L X R H M M I Z R
H P M X R V E R L L W I L Z R Z X X I I
A N P B V W B R L G M X L V P Z P R N W
W N R P Z P Z P V L X M G L R B V B P N
L O V E W N R P Z P V L X I G W R W V P