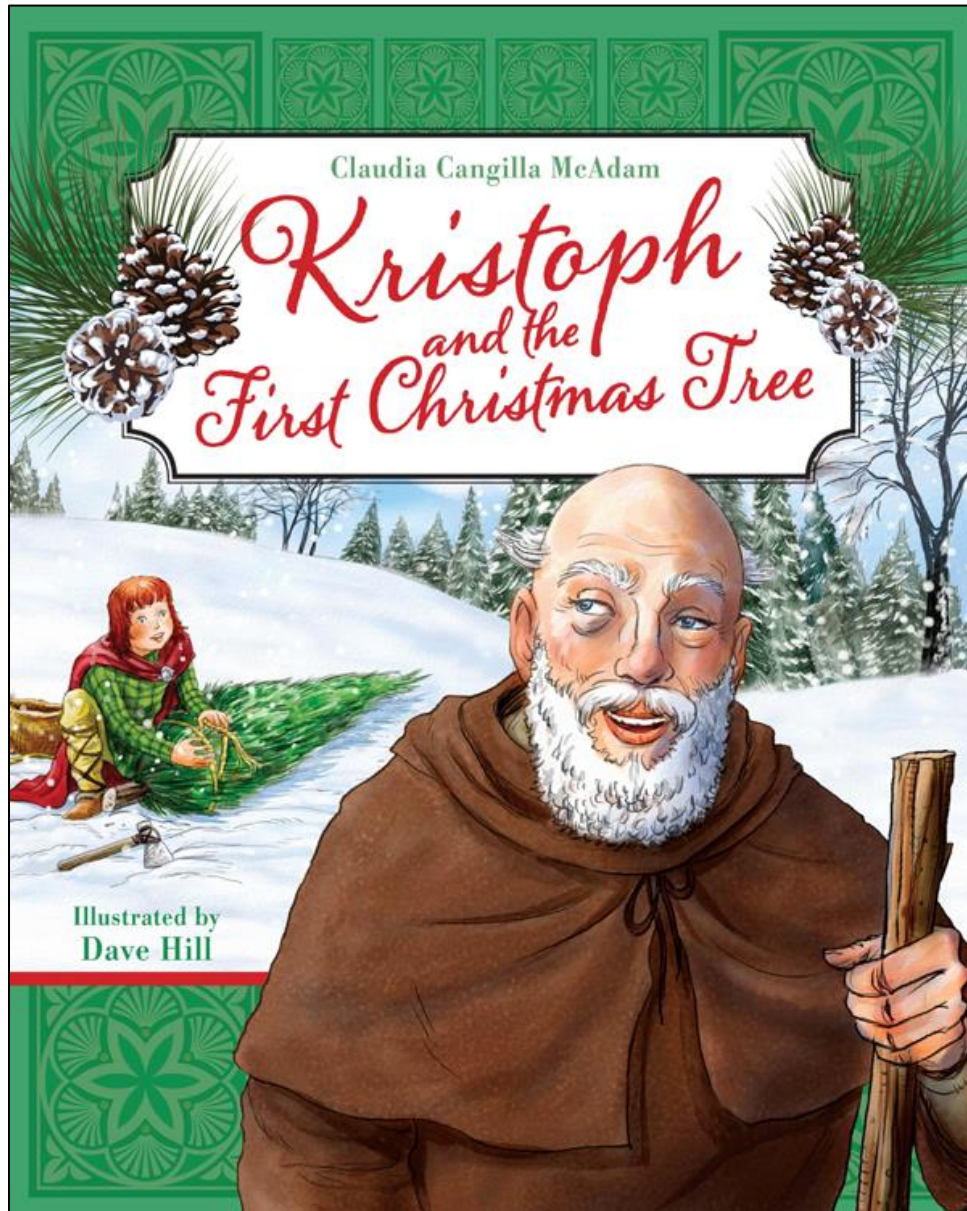


Kristoph and the First Christmas Tree

A Discussion and Activities Guide



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Discussing Kristoph and the First Christmas Tree

In **Kristoph and the First Christmas Tree**, some of the characters exhibit how a person might live the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude as well as the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Can you use a discussion of this book to get students to think deeply about the value of living out the virtues? (See page 13 for more on the virtues.)

Reading

Read **Kristoph and the First Christmas Tree** by Claudia Cangilla McAdam and illustrated by Dave Hill (Paraclete Press) aloud, or have your students read it prior to this discussion.

General Discussion

Some possible questions students can discuss:

- Where does this story take place?
- When does it take place?
- Why is this a special Christmas for Kristoph?
- Why do you think Kristoph likes being called “Kit”?

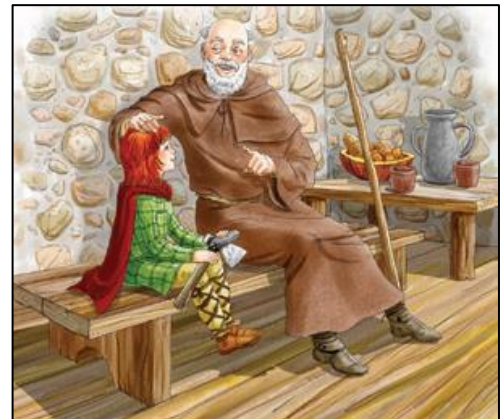


Illustration © Dave Hill



Illustration © Dave Hill

- Where are Kristoph and Boniface preparing to go?
- What does Kristoph do to help prepare for the journey?
- Do you think they are going to have a grand Christmas celebration? Why or why not?
- Name some of the things Kristoph brings on the journey.

- In what ways does Boniface show charity to Kristoph?
- What do you know about Boniface from the very first page of the book? What kind of a person do you think he is?
- Why do you think Boniface and Kristoph are going to a nearby village?

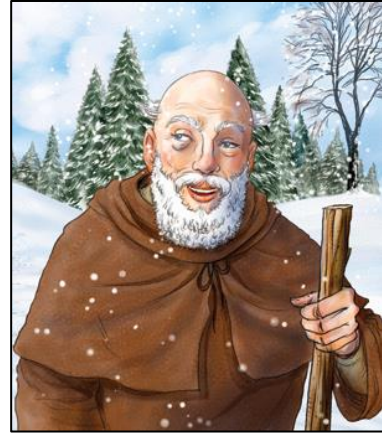


Illustration © Dave Hill



Illustration © Dave Hill

- How do you think Kristoph felt when he first saw the pagans?
- How do you think Boniface felt?
- What were the pagans doing at the oak tree?
- The men don't see Kristoph and Boniface. Those two could run away, but don't. Why do you think they stay?

- In what way does Boniface show that he is courageous?
- Do you think his actions show that he is wise (prudent)?
- Do you think Kristoph is courageous?

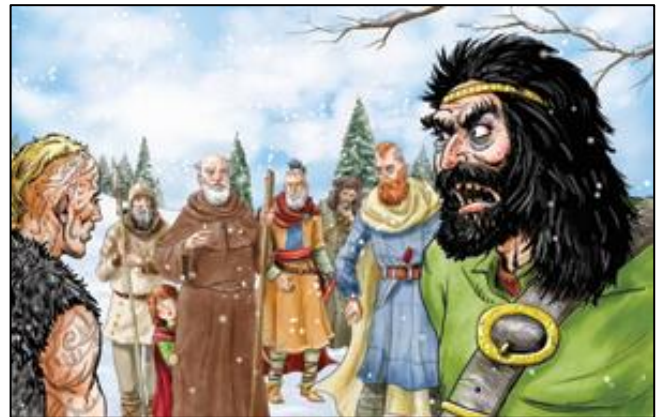


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- What does Boniface say he can do to the giant oak tree?
- What is the men's reaction to Boniface's claim?
- Does Kristoph think Boniface can chop down the tree?
- What theological virtue (see p. 11) does Boniface ask Kristoph to have?

- What do you think the pagans are thinking after Boniface chops down the oak tree?
- Why does Boniface call the evergreen "the tree of the Christ Child?"
- What does Boniface tell the men to do after he cuts down and gives them the fir tree?

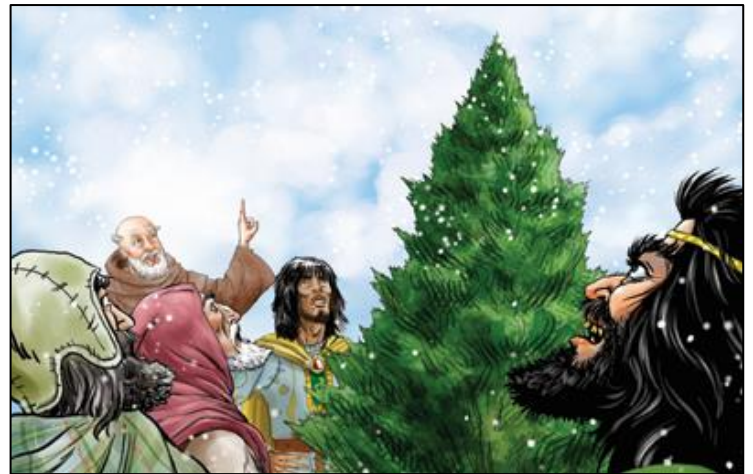


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- Once he is rescued, the son of the village chieftain shows love (charity) to Boniface and Kristoph. What does he do?
- At the end of the story, do you think Kristoph's Christmas will be different than the kind of one he imagined at the start of the story? In what way?

Vocabulary

Word	Definition
chanting	repeating rhythmically and insistently
chapped	cracked, roughened, reddened
chieftain	the chief of a clan or a tribe; a leader of a group
coarse	lacking in fineness or delicacy of texture
crested	to reach the top of a hill, mountain, etc.
dusky	somewhat dark; having little light; dim; shadowy
fell	to cut down
fir	a tree of the pine family known by its pyramid shape, flat needles, and cones
frayed	raveled or well-worn
hide	the pelt or skin of an animal
inky	black as ink
massive	large; great or imposing
mincemeat	a mixture dried fruit, spices, and meat used for filling pies
murmured	spoken in a low tone or indistinctly
narrowed	decreased in width or breadth
orphanage	an institution for the housing and care of children without parents
quake	a trembling or tremulous agitation
quilt	a coverlet for a bed; a bedspread, especially a thick one
quivered	shook with a slight but rapid motion; vibrated
ruffled	fluffed up; destroyed the smoothness or evenness of
sacred	devoted or dedicated to a god or to some religious purpose
sifting	scattering or sprinkling
snickered	laughed in a disrespectful manner
teetered	wobbled; moved unsteadily
thrust	to extend
whack	a sharp, resounding blow
yams	sweet potatoes

Word Puzzle

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

In the puzzle above, find the following words:

BEESWAX	FIR	PAGAN
BONIFACE	GERMAN	SNOW
CANDLE	GOD	TREE
CHRISTMAS	KRISTOPH	YAMS
EVERGREEN	OAK	

SOLUTION:

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

BEESWAX

FIR

PAGAN

BONIFACE

GERMAN

SNOW

CANDLE

GOD

TREE

CHRISTMAS

KRISTOPH

YAMS

EVERGREEN

OAK

ACTIVITY

In **Kristoph and the First Christmas Tree**, Boniface calls the evergreen “the tree of the Christ Child.” He says that it should shelter loving gifts and lights of kindness. How might you bring joy to other people during the weeks or days leading up to Christmas? Next to each ornament below, write what you can do to be kind to someone or to bring them happiness. Then, on the next page, color and cut out an ornament at the bottom of the page for each kind deed you do and paste it to the tree. The star is reserved for what you consider to be your greatest deed of kindness this Christmas! Cut it out and put it at the top of the tree.

































Illustration © Dave Hill

*“Faith is to believe
what you do not see;
the reward of this faith
is to see what you
believe.”*

—St. Augustine

Do you know someone who shows great faith? Write a note to that person, telling them how much their faith has meant to you. Or, is there someone you know who is struggling because their faith is weak? Offer to pray for them. Write a note to that person, telling them that you are praying for them. Mail or give the note below to that person.

-----Detach Here-----

Dear _____,

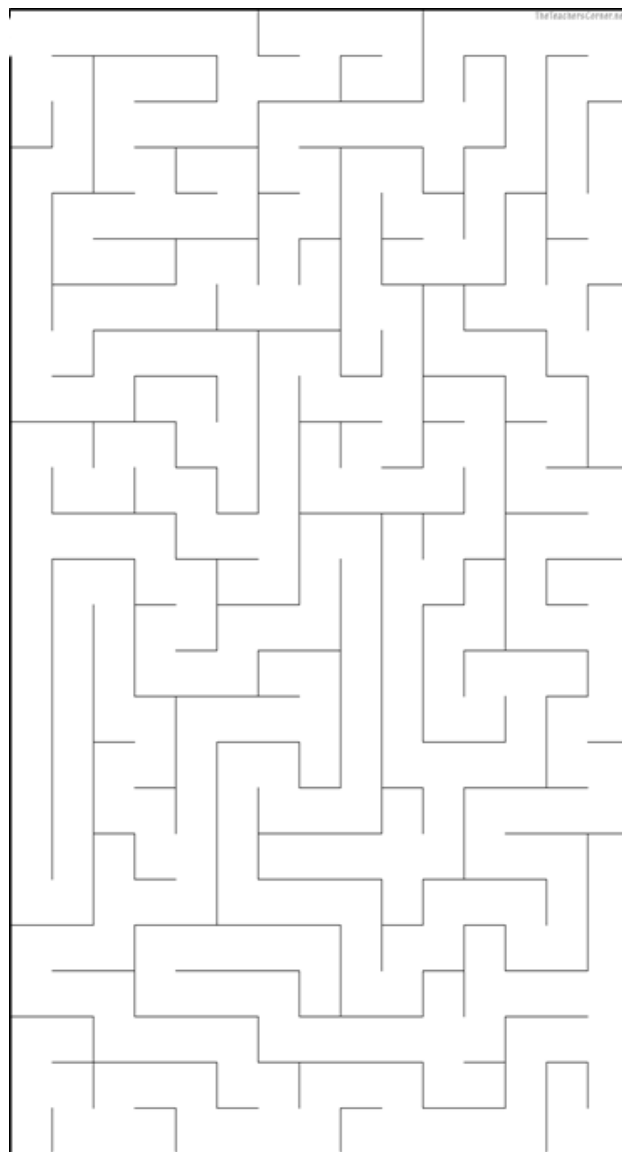
From,

KRISTOPH'S MAZE CRAZE

Can you help Kristoph get his Christmas tree home through the maze below?

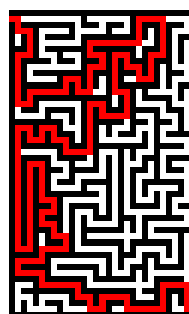


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Solution

When duplicating this sheet for students, cut off this section or cover it up before copying.



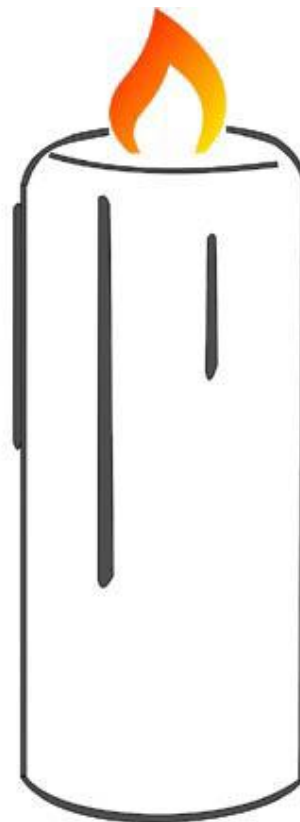
In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says to the people, “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Mt 5:14-16).

Boniface says that the Christmas tree can shelter loving gifts and “lights of kindness.” You can be a light of the world, too.

CRAFT

Light of the World Candle

- 1) Get a toilet paper tube, or make one by rolling a rectangle of construction paper 4 1/2" x 6" into a cylinder. Secure with glue, tape, or staples.
- 2) Decorate the tube with paint, colors, or glitter.
- 3) Cut out the flame shape below and glue it to the upper inside edge of the tube.
- 4) Poke a Christmas tree ornament hanger through the opposite inside edge of the tube or insert a piece of string or yarn through a hole poked on that side. Hang the candle on a Christmas tree or wherever you'd like, to remind yourself that “you are the light of the world.”



For duplicating several flames at once to be used in the craft, print out the following:



When cutting out each flame, it may be helpful to include a “tab” at the bottom of the flame so that it can be more easily attached to the “candle.”

Discussing the Virtues

The ancient philosophers Plato and Aristotle discussed the cardinal virtues of **prudence**, **justice**, **fortitude** and **temperance**. They are the foundations of natural morality.

Prudence is “right reason applied to practice.” It is the virtue that allows us to judge what is right or wrong in every situation.

Justice is the giving to others of what is their due, of what is fair.

Fortitude is courage. It is what allows us to overcome our fear and to remain steady in the face of obstacles. Prudence and justice are the virtues through which we decide what must be done; fortitude is the strength to do it.

Temperance is the restraint of our desires or passions. Temperance is the virtue that keeps us from excess. It is the control of the desire for pleasure.

The theological virtues are **faith**, **hope**, and **charity**. They are gifts of God through grace.

Faith is a form of knowledge that extends beyond the natural limits of our intellect, to help us grasp the truths of divine revelation.

Hope is a desire for all that is good—that is, for all that can bring us to God—and thus, while God is the final material object of hope, other good things that can help us grow in sanctification can be intermediate material objects of hope.

Charity is the virtue by which a person loves God above all things for his (that is, for God's) own sake, and loves others for God's sake.

By referring to the definitions above, students can be prompted to discuss or write answers to questions such as:

When have you had to judge between doing right and wrong?

In what ways did Boniface know what was “just” for the pagans?

Describe a situation in which you had to use fortitude (or courage).

How did Boniface show his courage? Do you think he was afraid at all? Was Kristoph?

Describe people you know of who have done courageous things.

When and how did the characters in the story put the needs of others before their own needs?

In what ways did the characters in the story show they had faith?

How do you demonstrate that you have faith?

What do you think the son of the village chieftain hoped for?

In what ways did Boniface show his love for the pagans? How did Kristoph show love?

How did the son of the village chieftain show his love for Kristoph and Boniface?

Can you think of someone who shows (or showed) great love for other people?