

# DEVOTIONAL STUDY GUIDE

by Susan Naus Dengler

# SEEKERS OF THE LIGHT

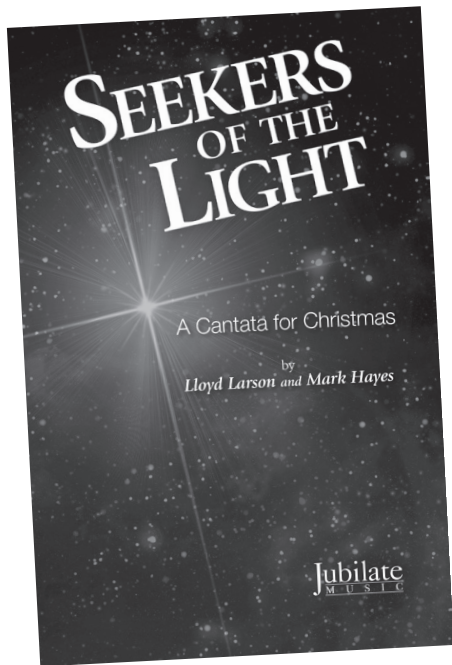
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# SEEKERS OF THE LIGHT: Stories from the Journey

by Susan Naus Dengler

## FOREWORD

“Since the earliest days of the world’s existence, God’s people, the world over, have been travelling on a journey, seeking the Light that was promised by God.”

In your congregation, the cantata, *Seekers of the Light*, has been chosen for this year’s musical retelling of the Christmas story—the retelling of the Biblical journey that culminated in the wondrous birth of Jesus, God’s beloved Son. We know, however, that the journey was far from over, as men and women of God have continued, throughout history, to seek the truth as the Holy Spirit leads them, day after day.

With this in mind, we offer the devotional guide, *Seekers of the Light: Stories from the Journey* as an aid to congregants as they prepare to, once again, relive the joyous events of Christ’s coming into the world. Included in each week’s devotion is a prologue that introduces the Biblical story, including a verse of prophecy, a brief responsive reading, a monologue by an Old or New Testament character, a short, unison prayer and a verse of a hymn or carol that can be either read by the leader, or sung by the group.

The obvious choice for use of these devotions is the choir, as it practices for the cantata’s presentation. Simply following the self-guided devotions for each week would certainly be a most helpful and inspiring start (or ending) to each week’s rehearsal.

However, these guides would also prove to be an excellent resource for a Sunday School class or small group during the weeks leading up to Christmas. They would even be a helpful framework for worship services, along with the addition of the typical worship ingredients such as hymns, scripture readings and a sermon.

No matter how your congregation chooses to use this devotional material, it is our prayer that Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, will find His place anew, within the hearts of the people of God.

Susan Naus Dengler, author

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## SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

The simplest way to use these devotions is to assign parts to be read by members of the group. You would need a leader, someone to read the verse of prophecy during the prologue and someone to read the Seeker's Story. Each devotion, as written would take no more than 10 minutes. For the busy choir director, it is suggested that someone from the choir would be assigned the responsibility of scheduling persons to do the various reading parts each week, thus relieving the director of this task.

There are 10 devotions offered. However, if your group would prefer to use fewer than 10, here is a suggested plan:

**9 weeks: Begin with week #2 and end with week #10.**

**8 weeks: Begin with week #2 and end with #9.**

**7 weeks: Begin with week #4 and end with #10.**

**6 weeks: Begin with week #5 and end with #10.**

**5 weeks: Begin with week #5 and end with #9.**

**4 weeks: Begin with week #4 and end with #7.**

**3 weeks: Begin with week #5 and end with week #7.**

It is also possible that your group might want to further enhance the material offered with some group discussion. Below you will find possible questions for discussion for each devotion:

### **Week #1**

1. What are the promises that are included in this week's devotion?
2. What promises have been mentioned in the songs that have been rehearsed thus far?
3. What promises from God have proven helpful to you in your life's journey?

### **Week #2**

1. How did God deliver the Israelites from the Egyptians?
2. What are some modern day stories of how God delivers people from harm?

### **Week #3**

1. This week's prophecy uses the imagery of a branch and roots. There are many other places in the Bible that use similar symbolism of trees, leaves, branches, roots, etc. What are some of these images and how do they apply to the journey of God and God's people?
2. Ruth explained how her own ancestry connected with Jesus, the Messiah. What was that connection?
3. What other strong connections with Jesus' birth appeared in Ruth's story?  
(Answer: They returned to Bethlehem, the place of Jesus' birth.)

## Week #6

### Prologue

- Leader: Centuries had passed as God's people waited for the fulfillment of the promise that the Messiah—the Light—would, one day, come to save them. They cried out, "Why do You hide Your face from us? Why do You ignore our affliction and oppression?" (*Psalm 44:24 adapted*) They clung to the promises that had been sent to them through the prophets.
- Prophet: "Arise, shine, for your Light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you." (*Isaiah 60:1 NRSV*)
- Leader As God's people continued to seek the Light, they had no idea that the time was almost at hand.

### Invitation to the Journey (read responsively)

- Leader: Come, all you seekers of the Light.
- All: Come, let us walk in the Light of the Lord.
- Leader: Let the hearts of all rejoice who seek to do what is right.
- All: Let us trust in God, even when the way seems unclear.
- Leader: We find guidance for the journey from stories of our ancestors in the faith.

### Seeker's Story

My name is Joseph. I am a seeker. For one thing, I have always sought to do what is right. I guess you could say that it has had a huge effect on how my life turned out. I am a simple carpenter. When Mary and I became engaged, I thought that we would live out a fairly ordinary life in Nazareth, our hometown. But then, I found out that Mary was going to have a baby—before we were even married! I didn't know what to do. I could have ended our engagement, but that would have gotten her in a lot of trouble. As I was trying to figure out how to break our engagement quietly, God sent an angel, who explained to me that the Baby she was going to have was God's own Son—the Savior. That made all the difference! My family was also from King David's line, thus fulfilling the prophetic scriptures.