

The Third Candle

 COLOR THE PICTURE



The night was clear and very cold, and the stars over Sunny Square looked sharp, like tiny pieces of ice.

The giant snow lantern from yesterday still stood in the middle of the square, glowing through all its little gaps. And by the fire, on their flat stone, two candles were burning: the first light and the second, each in a fresh candle Mama Moose had lit from the old one before it burned down.

Next to them stood a third candle. It wasn't out in the open like the others. Ricky had found it a home: another clear jar from his river collection, round and thick, with a little ring of smooth stones around the bottom to keep it steady.

"I keep finding jars," said Ricky proudly. "The river just gives them to me."

Everybody gathered close. Hazel was so excited she couldn't stand still. She tried. She stood very still on all four legs. Then one ear twitched. Then her tail swished. Then one hoof tapped, *tik-tik-tik*, all by itself.

"Hazel," said Mr. Monkey, "your hoof is dancing."

"I'm not doing it!" said Hazel. "It's doing it by itself!"

"Hee hee hee... *SNORT!*" she added, and all four hooves started tapping at once.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey.

Mama Monkey held out a twig. "The first light was for the light we got, given away," she said. "The second was for the light that keeps us walking. Tonight, the third one

comes from the second. This one's for the light that holds steady."

Mr. Monkey took the twig and touched it to the second candle. Then, carefully, carefully, he carried the little flame over to the jar and reached down inside it and lit the third candle.

It caught. And it didn't flicker at all. Inside its thick glass jar, behind its ring of stones, it just stood there, straight and gold and still.

Mr. Monkey looked at the third candle, standing so straight. "I bet I can be that steady," he said. He climbed up on a log, stood on one foot, put his arms straight up over his head like a flame, and held very still.

He wobbled. He wobbled more. He fell off the log into the snow.

"Hee hee hee! Candles are hard!" he said.

So then everybody tried. Bruno stood on one foot and tipped over sideways, very slowly, like a falling tree. Sammy couldn't even get started, because Sammy had never stood still in her whole life. Hazel's hooves started dancing again. Ricky lasted the longest, until his nose itched.

But Tessie didn't move at all. Not one bit. She sat perfectly still in the snow by the fire, for so long that everybody stopped trying and turned to look at her.

"Tessie wins," said Mr. Moose. "She's the steadiest."

Tessie didn't answer. Everybody leaned closer. And from

inside her shell came a very small, very slow sound.

Zzzzz... zzzzz...

"She's asleep," whispered Benji.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose, very softly, and they let her sleep until the candles were ready.

"Now," said Mama Monkey, "the gold circles."

Everybody went to the little green pine by the Moose home's door and found the circles with their own faces on them.

Daddy Moose turned his over and saw the night the light went out on the ridge, and himself at the table relighting it, and all the little leaf-shaped lights coming back on. He didn't say anything. He just reached over and rested his big chin on top of Mr. Moose's head for a moment.

Mama Monkey found the broken bowl, glued back together. "Oh," she said. "I'd forgotten all about that bowl." And she laughed and hugged Mr. Monkey and kissed him on the ear.

Shiloh found a red circle with his own curly face on it. When he turned it over and saw the windy ridge, and the little sheep at the back pointing up, he hid his whole face in his wool.

Mr. Moose found one with a moose face on the front. The moose had a big gold nose. He turned it over, and there were two friends at a table, and one paint pot, sitting very still in the middle.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose. "My golden nose!"

"It's still a little gold," said Mr. Monkey, looking closely.

It was. Just on the very tip.

Everybody settled down around the fire. It was warm. The three candles burned side by side. The giant snow lantern glowed. And way up at the top of Everest's cliff, the little light shone steady too.

Bruno looked at all of it. Everybody he loved, all together. All the lights. All the warm. And he felt so happy and so full that it all came out at once in one great big happy sigh.

"HAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH."

It was the biggest sigh in the history of Wonderful Woods. It blew across the fire. It blew across the flat stone. And *fff, fff*, it blew out the first candle and the second candle, just like that.

Everybody gasped.

Bruno's eyes went wide. "Oops! Are they okay?"

Mr. Monkey's heart jumped. The first two candles were just two little curls of smoke now. The first light and the second light, gone.

But the third candle didn't even notice.

Inside its jar, behind its ring of stones, the third candle was still burning. Straight and gold and still. Bruno's sigh had gone right over it.

Mr. Monkey looked at the third candle. Then at the two dark ones. He didn't have to run anywhere. He didn't have to climb anything. The light was right there.

"Mr. Moose!" he said. "The third one's still lit!"

"Then we light them again," said Mr. Moose. "From the third one."

Mr. Moose held the twig steady between his teeth, and Mr. Monkey lowered it into the jar until it caught. Then they carried the little flame back, slowly, and lit the second candle. And from the second candle, the first.

Three lights again.

Ricky stood up. "I have a joke," he said. "Why was the candle so sleepy? It was all burned... out."

Nobody laughed. The candles flickered. Ricky looked very pleased.

"Haw haw haw," went Bruno, very quietly, from behind his paws, because he was still a little embarrassed. "Sorry, candles."

"That's why we have three," said Mama Moose, and she patted Bruno's big arm.

Then Tessie woke up, and cleared her throat, very slowly.

"In three nights," she said, "comes the longest night of the whole year."

Everybody turned to look at her.

"The sun goes down early... and it comes up late. And in between... it's dark for a long... long... time." Tessie looked at the three candles. "But after the longest night... the days start getting longer again. Every day... a little more light."

Mr. Moose looked up at the cliff. At the little light, burning at the very top, beside Everest. One candle, all alone up there, in the dark. He thought about how long the longest night would be.

"Mr. Monkey," he said quietly. "Will the light at the top last all through the longest night?"

Mr. Monkey looked up too. He didn't know.

"We'll keep them lit," said Mr. Monkey. "All of them. The ones down here. The one up there. The whole woods. All night."

"All night," said Mr. Moose.

Then everybody had berry pie, and Bruno ate his very carefully, and didn't sigh even once. He held it in so long that his cheeks puffed out like two snowballs.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey. "Ricky found another jar. Hazel's hooves danced by themselves. I lit the third candle from the second one, and Mr. Moose got his golden nose circle. Then Bruno sighed so big he blew out the first two candles. But the third one stayed lit, so we lit them all again. And the longest night is coming."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

*We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.*

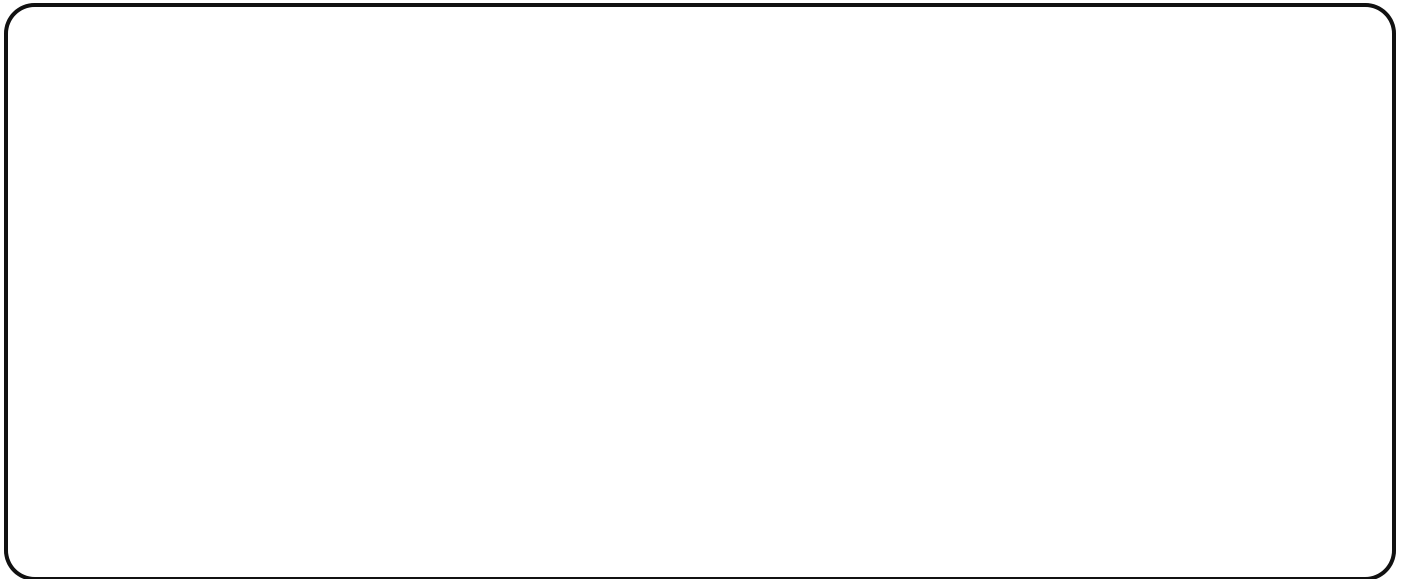
And by the fire in Sunny Square, three candles burned side by side in the cold, the newest one standing straightest of all inside its jar.

 Let's Talk

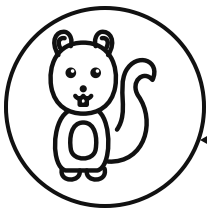
- 1 Bruno's big sigh blew out two candles. How did they get the light back?
- 2 Tonight we light the third candle. Who helped make things right for you this year?

 Your Turn

Get ready to make peace! Draw someone you could make things right with this week.



I can make things right with _____.

SAMMY'S JOKE

Where do fish sleep at night?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!



CLUE



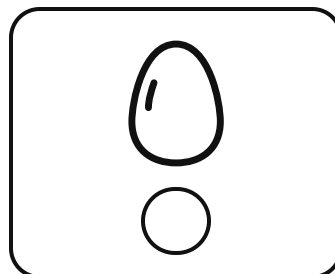
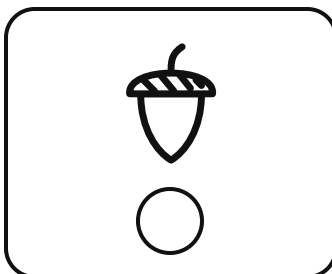
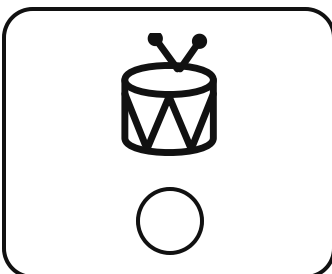
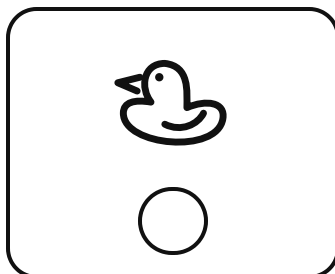
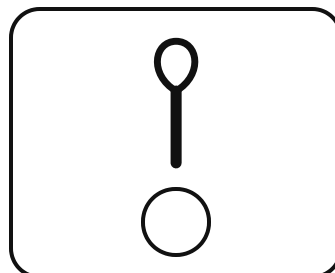
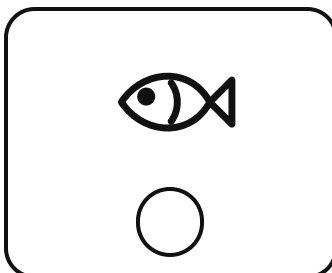
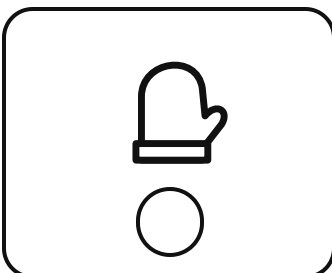
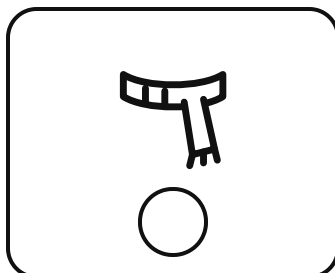
In the river _____!

👁 Hidden Pictures

Find each hidden thing in the picture. Color it, then color its circle!



CAN YOU FIND THESE?



 Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

 Puffs

Lit, lit, and lit! The last lamp is in a jug.

 is glad. He puffs a big, big puff.

Puff! The lamps are not lit!

“Ack!” says .

But the lamp in the jug is still lit!

 gets a stick. Lit! Lit!

The lamps are lit at last.

PICTURE WORDS



Bruno



Mr. Monkey



Color a star each time you read it.

♥ My Thank-You

Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

Thank you.

for making things right.

🕯 Tonight's Candle

Tonight the third candle gets its light from the second one. Three lights now!



Dec. 4



Dec. 11



Dec. 18



Dec. 25



Jan. 1

Trace the flame on candle 3! Candles 1 and 2 are already lit.

THE CANDLE WORDS: A GROWN-UP SAYS EACH LINE, AND YOU SAY IT BACK

Grace comes in.

(cup your hands)

Gratitude sees it.

(point to your eyes)

And graciousness passes it on.

(open your hands to the candle)

Grown-up: "What do we pass on?" You: **Generosity, hope, and peace!**

One light. Passed along.

DRAW YOUR FAMILY WITH YOUR CANDLES

★ Celebration Night

Tonight your family celebrates. It has three parts:

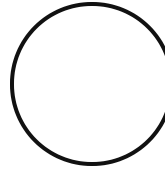
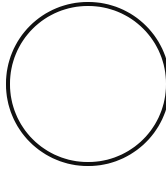
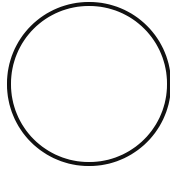
1**Remember:** The third candle**2****Rejoice:** The Opening**3****Ready:** Plan the giving

Remember: The Third Candle

This week is about peace. Peace means everything is the way it should be: nothing missing and nothing broken. When two friends stop fighting and make up, that's peace. When someone who was sick gets better, that's peace too.

Tonight a grown-up lights the third candle from the second one. Maybe you can choose where the Peace candle stands!

Who helped make things right for you this year? Draw their faces or write their names.



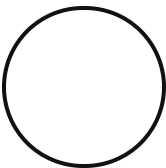
Rejoice: The Opening

Your family reads the gold ornaments by candlelight. Find the ones with **your** name on the front. When you finish one, look at the person who wrote it and say thank you!

I found gold ornaments with my name!

Write the number, or draw a dot for each one.

My favorite one is from:
(Draw their face or write
their name.)



WHAT DID IT SAY? DRAW OR WRITE IT.

 Ready: Plan the Giving

The next three days are for giving: your time, your things, and your words. Plan them with your family. Draw or write your ideas in the boxes.



DEC. 19

Your time

Who is having a hard time?
Spend time with them.



DEC. 20

Your things

Who could you give a small
peace gift to?



DEC. 21

Your words

Who could you make up with,
or say sorry to?

EXTRA, IF YOUR FAMILY DOES IT

Breaking Bread for Peace

In Poland, many families begin Christmas Eve dinner by sharing a thin wafer. You can do it with any bread! Everyone holds a piece. Go to each person, break off a little of their bread, and say a wish:

I hope next year you _____.

You can also say a sorry, or let one go:

I'm sorry for _____.

I forgive you for _____.