



REMEMBER THE PIONEERS

This is a choral reading to be used for worship. You will read a brief account of our Seventh-day Adventist pioneers.

Text: Revelation 14:6-12

Adapted from "MV Program Kit"

Songs: #304, 439, 441 *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*

Teacher: Today we are going to read an account of our church pioneers as a choral reading. The story takes place in New England and New York where autumn has dressed the countryside with crimsons, yellow, and oranges.



WILLIAM MILLER

Boys: We are in Low Hampton, New York, at William Miller's birthplace.

Girls: The home of the pioneer still stands. And here he is laid to rest, awaiting the great event, Christ's second coming.

All: Let's hear a little more of his stay.

Teacher: Picture young William Miller seated at his writing desk with his large family Bible opened to the Book of Daniel, a writing tablet resting beside it. He holds a quill pen in his hand for figuring.

This is a new day for William. He had been long numbered among the unbelievers and scoffers, but now things are different. God has shown him a better way. As he continues to study the Scriptures, new and thrilling light is gradually unfolding before him.

The prophetic Book of Daniel especially challenges him: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed," he reads from Daniel 8:14. One of the common beliefs of his day is that the cleansing of the sanctuary refers to the time when Christ will come back to the world.

Boys: The 2300 days fascinate William Miller. He likes arithmetic, and here is an exciting problem to solve—a problem that involves eternal life. He finds from Numbers 14:35 that a day means a year in prophecy. He discovers that the 2300 days (or years) began when King Artaxerxes decreed that the Israelites could rebuild Jerusalem.





Girls: With these clues settled, Miller soon arrives at an answer. Christ will come in 1844, he concludes. The year is now 1831. Only thirteen years until Christ will come! He must tell the world! But Miller is not a preacher. He is afraid to preach. After a terrible struggle, he finally promises God that if the opportunity comes, he will preach the thrilling news he has just discovered. And then he settles back comfortably, knowing full well that no one will ever ask *him* to preach.

Boy 1: Uncle William, Father wants you to come over to our place tomorrow and talk to us on the coming of Christ. The minister is away. We'll have all the neighbors come to our house, so you can have the whole church there.

Boys: Miller is dumbfounded. The Lord has taken him up on his promise. Without saying a word, he strides out of the house.

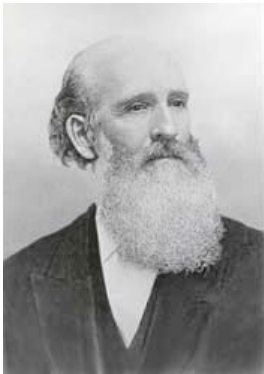
(Miller exits; boy stays.)

And as he rushes toward his grove, the words sound in his ears: "Go and tell it! Go and tell it!" Reaching the grove, he falls on his knees and begs the Lord to release him from his promise. But the only answer he receives is, "Go and tell it to the world." He has promised that if he is called to speak in public, he will; and less than half an hour later he has a call.

The neighbors flock to the Guilford home, and their hearts are stirred with the messages of Christ's soon coming. More meetings are scheduled, and then more and larger meetings. The glad tidings spread through all of New England, and then throughout the whole country. Hundreds of thousands of people are waiting for Christ's coming on that memorable day of October 22, 1844.

Girls: But Christ does not come. What a terrible disappointment! This is all in God's great plan. He has a very special group to develop out of the experience, which eventually becomes our own Seventh-day Adventist Church. He then reveals to His disappointed people that the cleansing of the sanctuary began in heaven on October 22, 1844, and that the time of His coming to earth is known by no man, not even the angels. (Matthew 24:36.)

JAMES WHITE



Teacher: Augusta, Maine, is the setting for the James White story. He is considered by some theologians to be a pioneer warrior.

The story begins with James holding an evangelistic effort at a meeting house in Augusta. Many evenings, violent mobsters created riots outside.

Boy 2: James White tells the audience, "Some poor sinner cast this spike at me last evening. God pity him! The worst wish I have for him is that he is at this moment as happy as I am. Why should I resent the insult when my Master had them driven through His hands?"



Girls: Groans were heard through the crowd. Then all was still. The noisy mob outside quieted. James White continued his sermon, pleading for sinners to repent and prepare for Christ's soon coming. When he had finished, he took his chart and Bible and made his way down the aisle to meet the menacing crowd.

Boys: "A man of noble countenance, familiar yet unknown, stepped up, and locking arms with him, made a way through the parting crowd. Free from them, James White turned to thank his protector, but none was there." *Captains of the Host*, p. 52.

Teacher: In Paris, Maine, you will see the building where the first *Review and Herald* was published. What a struggle James White had to get printed papers to the people! God had told his wife that he should write, write, write. But James had no money to publish tracts. He went forward on faith, anyway, and wrote.

(White walks across the platform with a satchel of papers over his shoulder.) He walked sometimes for miles with his bag over his shoulder to the printing house to have his precious messages printed. And God always provided the money just in time.

ELLEN WHITE

Teacher: Portland, Maine, is the setting for Ellen Harmon White's story. Mrs. White's old childhood home is near the place where she had a near-fatal accident.

Girl 1: Nine-year old Ellen, her twin sister, and a girl friend were happily returning from school. An angry girl followed shouting at them. The frightened girls started to run. Ellen turned back to see how close she was. Her pursuer threw a stone which struck Ellen squarely in the face. She slumped to the ground, badly hurt. Her sister and friend helped her to a nearby store, and then, not knowing how badly she was hurt, carried her the rest of the way home. Ellen did not regain consciousness for three weeks. Her sweet face was so disfigured that her father didn't know her when he returned from a trip. She was never able to attend school regularly again.



Girls: Everyone thought Ellen would die, but she lived. She lived because God had a special work for her to do. She was weak, fragile, and often sick. But she loved God with all her heart, and He used her in a powerful way. He chose her as His special messenger for the last days because she was willing to do His bidding. He gave her dreams and visions from youth until the end of her long life.



Boys: Ellen married James White, and together they helped to organize the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Wherever she went, Mrs. White wrote. She wrote books relating the things God had shown her in vision. She wrote letters to people telling them the secret sins of their lives and warning them to repent and get right with God. She wrote about the Bible, about heaven, about nature, about health, about history, about science, and about education. She wrote about future events. But most of all she wrote about Christ. She knew Him as her dearest Friend, and she loved Him with all her heart. Her greatest purpose in life was to bring others to Him.

Girl 3: I'm glad God chose a woman for His messenger. It makes me feel that He can use girls like me, too.

THE SABBATH

Teacher: Washington, New Hampshire—as they drove out through the beautiful countryside to the little Adventist church, the story was told of how our wonderful Sabbath message came to God's people so many years ago.

Boys: Faithful Adventist pioneer Frederick Wheeler was conducting Communion at the little Washington, New Hampshire, church on Sunday morning. He noticed a middle-aged lady, Mrs. Oakes, in the congregation, who kept her eyes fastened on him. She almost jumped to her feet when he said that those who partake of Communion should be ready to obey God and keep His commandments.

Girl 4: You remember, Elder Wheeler, that you said everyone who confesses Christ should obey God.

Boy 3: Yes.

Girl 4: I came near getting up in the meeting right then, and saying something,

Boy 3: I thought so. What did you have in mind to say?

Girl 4: I wanted to tell you that you had better set that Communion table back and put the cloth over it until you begin to keep the commandments of God.

Boys: Elder Wheeler sat back astonished. In what way was he not keeping the commandments of God? Mrs. Oakes then unfolded to him the Sabbath as a beautiful Christian doctrine. He believed and accepted.

Girls: The daughter of Mrs. Oakes, Rachel Delight, was the schoolteacher in town; and she worked with her mother in spreading the Sabbath message. Wheeler preached a sermon about the Sabbath in this little church shortly after his encounter with Mrs. Oakes, and it became the first Sabbath-keeping Adventist church. Wheeler and many other Adventist pioneers became Seventh-day





Adventists; and Rachel Oakes Preston, the Seventh-day Baptist, became a Seventh-day Adventist.

JOSEPH BATES

Teacher: Fairhaven, Massachusetts, is the early home of Joseph Bates. He was a sea captain who became a Seventh-day Adventist pioneer. Joseph Bates learned a lesson about faith when he ran out of grocery money.

Girl 5: Joseph, I'm baking and I don't have enough flour to finish the bread. It would be nice if you could get some sugar and salt and butter and eggs. We could use some cornmeal, too, for mush in the morning.

Boy 4: How much flour do you need?

Girl 5: About four pounds will do, I think.

Boy 4: Very well.

(Both exit.)

Boys: Joseph Bates went to a store nearby and bought just four pounds of flour and a few other things. He didn't have money for the other groceries or for more flour. People in those days usually bought barrels of flour, but how could he do that with only a York shilling (12 ½ cents)? He placed the things on the table in the kitchen and returned to his desk and his writing. Mrs. Bates had been out and had not seen her husband bring in the groceries. When she discovered the small amount of flour, she hurried into the room where he sat.

Girl 5: Where did this flour come from?

Boy 4: Why, isn't there enough?

Girl 5: Yes, but where did you get it? Did you borrow it from Neighbor Briggs?

Boy 4: No, I bought it. Didn't you tell me you needed just four pounds to finish your baking?

Girl 5: Yes, but have you, Captain Bates, a man who has sailed ships out of New Bedford to all parts of the world, gone to the store and bought *only four pounds* of flour?

Boy 4: My dear, I spent for those groceries the last money I have on earth.

Girl 5: What! I thought we were rich! What did you do with that money you got when you sold out your interest in the ship after you left the sea? Why, that was \$11,000!



Monthly Activities - March



Boy 4: Yes, I know, my dear. But that money is all gone now. I have spent it in traveling, preaching, and helping to support others so that we can tell the message of the second coming of our Lord.

Teacher: The pioneers struggled through severe hardships to spread the message they so dearly loved. They were giants of faith.

All: We're proud to be Seventh-day Adventists after hearing these stories of our forefathers. Won't it be great to talk with men like Joseph Bates and William Miller when we get to heaven? They can tell us their experiences themselves.

