



Light up the cold, dark season with a warm and bright holiday show!

Running time: 35:17

Grade level: General public and family audiences

Narrated by Noah Adams
Written by James Manning
Produced by Mark C. Petersen
Original artwork by Michael W. Carroll and Tim W. Kuzniar

When the December holiday season rolls around each year, planetarians often present special programs that combine astronomy and holiday traditions. One of the most popular programs in the Loch Ness Productions repertory is *Season of Light* — an elegant and sophisticated program about the coldest and darkest of seasons — a time which holds some of the warmest and brightest celebrations of the year.

This presentation traces the history and development of many of the world's most endearing holiday customs, all of which involve lighting up the winter season — from the burning Yule log, festive Christmas tree lights and sparkling candles in windows, to the lighting of luminarias and setting off fireworks in the American Southwest and the traditional ritual lighting of the Hanukkah Menorah.



St. Nicholas, Sinterklaas, Kris Kringle, Father Christmas, and Santa Claus all drop by as well.

Naturally, there is some astronomy in *Season of Light*. Audiences learn a selection of Northern hemisphere winter constellations, and find out why we even have seasons, as we demonstrate the Sun's path across the sky throughout the year, and the Earth's tilt and orbit around the Sun.



The show also recounts the historical religious and cultural rituals practiced during the time of winter solstice — not only Christian and Jewish, but also Celtic, Nordic, Roman, Irish, Mexican and Hopi. It also takes a look at some of our more light-hearted seasonal traditions: from gift-giving and kissing under the mistletoe to songs about lords a-leaping and ladies dancing; and the custom of decking the halls with greenery and candles.

And of course, the program explores the possible astronomical explanations for a "Star over Bethlehem" in the last quarter of the show: comets, meteors, novae and supernovae, and planetary conjunctions.

Season of Light is visually rich, culturally inclusive, musically satisfying, and soothing as a warm drink on a cold winter's night — and the perfect program for that end-of-the-year program slot!





Science Education Content

Season of Light is a specialty program with an emphasis on astronomical and cultural themes related to the holiday season.

Its educational impact is achieved through a set of multidisciplinary ideas woven throughout the program that help relate different holiday traditions and astronomy to the lives of students, families, and the general public.

Show content is relevant in these subject areas:

Earth and Space Sciences:

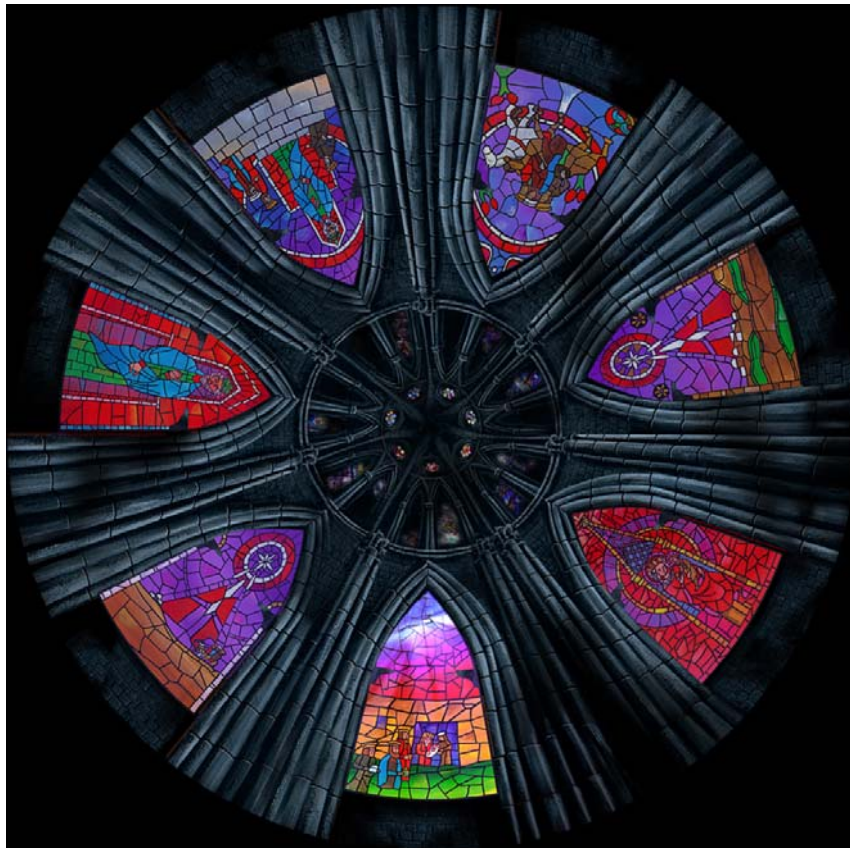
- Sky objects: Sun, Moon, Venus, Jupiter
- Constellations: Orion, Canis Major, Canis Minor, Gemini, Taurus, Auriga, Leo
- Comets, stars, novae, supernovae, meteors
- Orbital motions of planets, lunar eclipse
- Change of seasons

Science History/Science as a human endeavor:

- Stargazing as a scientific activity
- Cultural connections between astronomy and holiday traditions
- Ancient use of astrology to predict events
- Ancient and modern perceptions of sky events and objects

This show adheres to principles put forth in the National Academy of Sciences' Education Standards published in 1996. For more details, visit the NAS Standards Web site at: <http://books.nap.edu/html/nses/html/index.html>.

Sunlight
streaming into
a cathedral
windows
illustrating the
Christmas
story...



... just one of
the ~63,000
dome master
frames in this
show.



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