

## Holy Thursday (Songs of Innocence) Literary Device

Writer: William Blake | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

### Imagery

In the poem, Blake portrays the image of "thousands" of children entering the church for the service on Holy Thursday. The poet focuses on how the children look. Blake describes **"their innocent faces clean"** and they are wearing beautiful **"red & blue & green"** dresses. It suggests that the children are especially cleaned and they are wearing beautiful dresses for this occasion. They are not usually dressed up so brightly. So, these images tell us about the condition of these orphaned poor children.

### Simile

**River Thames:** Blake describes how the children are entering the church. The children "flow" to the church **"like Thames' waters."** Here, Blake compares the children to the River Thames flowing smoothly. It means the children are full of life.

**Wands as White as Snow:** In the poem, the beadles (beadles are church officials or charity school officials who guide the children) are leading the children. They have **"wands as white as snow"** in their hands. The wands (sticks) are snowy white. This comparison tells us that the wands are used for a good purpose, like decoration (Because white generally symbolizes purity and innocence). Wands can be used both to guide and to beat. The snowy white color of the wands tells us that the bearers are kind and pure, not cruel. At the same time, Blake may be hinting at a cruel possibility beneath this innocent view. The wands can be easily used to beat the children if they do not obey.

### Metaphor

- **Flowers:** In the poem, the speaker calls the poor children **"flowers of London town!"** Flowers are beautiful and delicate, like the children.
- **Lambs:** The speaker imagines the kids as **"multitudes of lambs."** Lamb is a common symbol of sweetness and innocence. This metaphoric comparison portrays the orphaned children as sweet and innocent.