Whispers of Light

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# Assignment 1: Game Concept Proposal

# Introduction

Our game is called Whispers of Light. It’s a peaceful, story-driven puzzle game about guiding lost souls through a spiritual world using a magical lantern. We devised this idea together and built on each other’s suggestions. Everyone in the group worked on different parts, and we gave feedback and support throughout.

Kavya led the game’s core idea and structure, helping shape the theme and layout of this proposal. Divya helped with the story and gave input on all sections. Gaurav worked on the game mechanics and helped brainstorm how the lantern works. Srujal focused on building the characters and their personal stories. Veysel created our 3D asset in Blender with help and feedback from the rest of us.

This whole project is our original work, and we wrote it ourselves based on our ideas and understanding. The game is about light, memory, and emotion—and we believe it stands out because of how personally we approached each part.

# Game Overview

Title: Whispers of Light

Genre: Puzzle Adventure

Platform: PC, Nintendo Switch

In this game, you play as a Light Keeper in a quiet spirit world. Your goal is to help lost souls find peace by exploring their memories and solving puzzles with a lantern that reveals hidden paths and objects. The lantern is magical and reacts to the environment. There’s no fighting or enemies—just puzzles, emotion, and calm exploration. The game is relaxing but meaningful. Players move through realms inspired by each soul's past, making each level different and emotionally deep.

# Story & World

The game is set in a place called the Whispering Realm, where souls go when they haven’t fully moved on. Each area in the game is a different soul’s world, shaped by their memories. Some are peaceful, others are broken or confusing. We came up with the story together during group meetings. The idea of helping people let go of sadness or regret stood out to us. Some souls might feel guilty, others lost or scared, and the Light Keeper helps them find peace. The world is soft, glowing, and a little mysterious, with floating ruins, bridges, and nature all around.

There’s a deeper mystery to the realm, too—the Light Keeper isn’t just helping others, but also slowly uncovering their forgotten purpose. This allows the game’s story to develop quietly as players go deeper into the spirit world.

# Characters

- The Light Keeper: The player character. They don’t speak, but the lantern glows brighter or dimmer based on the emotion in a scene.

- Poco: A musician whose last performance never happened. His world is full of broken instruments and faded sheet music.

- Victor: A soldier who can’t forget what he did in the war. His world is full of ruins and silent statues.

- Sage: A healer who couldn’t save her village. Her world is a field of ash that slowly grows flowers when the player shines light.

- The Lantern: It’s part of the gameplay, but also a symbol. It remembers what other Light Keepers saw and carries that memory through light.

Each soul has a backstory, and their realms visually represent their inner emotions. These areas are meant to feel personal, poetic, and respectful—touching on themes like grief, memory, and forgiveness.

# Game Mechanics

This game doesn’t have any combat. It’s all about walking around, discovering memories, and solving light puzzles.

Main Actions:

- Walk and jump

- Use the lantern to reveal hidden paths or puzzle parts

- Solve puzzles using mirrors, shadows, and other objects

- Pick up fragments of memory

- Help each soul move on to unlock the next area

The game loop:

Enter a soul’s realm, explore it, figure out what’s holding them back, and help them let go. We kept the controls light and easy so players can focus more on the story and visuals. The lantern gets new abilities in each level to make puzzles more interesting over time.

Appendix: 3D Asset Description

Asset Name: Ancient Lantern

Where It’s Used: The lantern is the main tool in the game. The player always holds it. It lights up paths, shows secrets, and helps solve puzzles.

How It Was Made:

I started with a cube as the base shape and later refined it to resemble glass-like material. For the top and bottom parts, I used another cube and shaped it using the Bevel function. For the decorative corners and glass, I used plane meshes and painted them with the #010101FF color and a roughness value of 0.210. I incorporated a circle mesh for the handle and attached it to the top of the lantern using a NURBS Surface.

To create the glowing effect, I placed a UV Sphere inside the lantern and assigned a Transparent BSDF shader to its surface. While I have applied various functionalities to enhance the glow, the project is still incomplete, and I am actively refining it

This was our first 3D model as a group, and it reflects the tone of the whole game: quiet, magical, and full of purpose. We tried to give the lantern a style that matches both story and gameplay—it’s not just a light source, but a key symbol throughout the game.

# Future Development Plan

As a group, we’ve also started planning what comes next for Whispers of Light. Since this is just the first assignment, we want to make sure that the next phases of development build on the emotional tone and gameplay foundation we’ve created. We plan to design five fully developed realms, each representing one of the main soul characters, and add subtle but meaningful environmental storytelling to every space.

We will also expand the lantern’s functions. Right now, it reveals hidden elements and glows emotionally. Later, we want it to be upgradeable, with unique effects in each realm. For example, in Victor’s realm, the lantern could reveal hidden truths in crumbling statues. These special features will make each area more unique and connected to the soul’s backstory.

We’re also exploring how to handle the game’s pacing. Since this is a calm, emotional game, we’re going to avoid fast or intense music. Instead, we’re looking into ambient soundscapes and soft piano or violin themes, matching the story being told. The player should feel like they are walking through someone’s memory, not rushing through a level.

Finally, we want to build a credits area at the end of the game, where players can walk through a quiet grove filled with lanterns that represent each soul they helped. It’s a way to reflect on the journey they took and what they learned from each story.

We’ve divided future tasks based on what each of us enjoys and can contribute:

- Kavya will continue leading the creative direction and documenting ideas.

- Divya will help refine the world and theme, adding emotional touches.

- Gaurav will develop the mechanics and logic behind puzzles and lantern upgrades.

- Srujal will expand each character’s narrative arc.

- Veysel will begin testing different types of low-poly props and interactive models.

This game is personal to all of us, and we’re proud of how much thought we’ve put into making something gentle, different, and honest.

# Assignment 2: Genre, Target Audience, and Game Justification

# Genre Justification

This genre also lets us use environmental storytelling. Instead of telling the player everything with dialogue or text, we want them to figure things out by exploring — through visuals, sounds, ruins, and how the world changes. It’s a more personal and immersive way to tell a story, and we felt this genre was the best way to make that work.

# Target Audience Analysis

The main audience we had in mind for Whispers of Light is people aged 16 to 30. We’re aiming at players who enjoy story-driven, emotional games — the kind that make you think or feel something, rather than just focus on fast gameplay. Many of these players might have played games like Firewatch, Gris, or Spiritfarer — games that have a unique art style, strong atmosphere, and meaningful themes.

Our audience is likely to be students, creatives, or just gamers who enjoy trying new indie-style games. They often play on PC and might find our game through Steam, or by watching creators on YouTube or Twitch, or even seeing it at a small game showcase.

We also spent time thinking about accessibility because we want as many people as possible to enjoy our game. Since light and sound are big parts of gameplay, we’re planning things like:

• Showing visual indicators (like flashing symbols) along with sound clues,

• Using colourblind-friendly palettes, especially for light-based puzzles,

• Letting players customise controls, to support different physical needs,

• And offering optional hints or a relaxed mode for those who want a more laid-back experience.

Right now, we’re building the game for desktop PC, since that gives us the most freedom in terms of graphics and mechanics. But later, if we get a good response, we’d love to bring it to consoles as well. We aren’t focusing on mobile because the game depends a lot on immersive 3D movement and subtle visual cues, which might not work as well on small screens.

# Conclusion

As a team, we chose the puzzle-adventure genre because it fits the kind of game we wanted to make — something calm, meaningful, and focused on exploration. We care more about emotion and storytelling than difficulty or combat. Our puzzles are part of the world and story, not just challenges for the sake of it.

We believe this genre helps us create a game that players can really connect with. Also, by keeping our target audience and accessibility in mind from the beginning, we hope to make Whispers of Light enjoyable for more people. We’re proud of how it’s coming together, and excited to keep developing it as a team.

# Assignment 3: Optimized 3D Model + Market Research & Competitive Analysis

# Part 1: Technical Optimization Write-up

For Assignment 3, we decided to optimize our 3D model of the Shrine of Memories, which was created in Assignment 2. The main goal of this optimization was to reduce the model’s poly count to make it more efficient for game engines like Unity or Unreal Engine, while keeping the look and style of the original design.

This kind of optimization is particularly important in the game development industry, where efficiency and performance are crucial. Although a high-poly model may appear great in a render, it might create delay, longer loading times, or even crashes when used in a real-time engine, particularly on mobile devices or virtual reality. Therefore, we aimed to achieve a balance between maintaining the model's game-ready state and maintaining its visual impact.

Knowing what to keep was one of the difficulties we faced. Some tiny design elements looked nice up close, but didn’t add much to the overall shape or feel of the model. It took a lot of zooming in and out and some trial and error to determine what might be made simpler without losing the shrine's significant aura. This changed the process from simply removing geometry to feeling more like sculpting.

After optimization, we cleaned up the UV layout to ensure there were no overlapping or stretched textures and renamed all the parts of the model using meaningful names (e.g., “Shrine\_Base” instead of “Cube.001”).

# Industry Context

Games with emotional storytelling, peaceful exploration, and artistic visuals are becoming more and more popular, especially in the indie scene. Titles like Gris, Spiritfarer, and Journey have shown that players enjoy experiences that are calm, meaningful, and visually creative. These types of games tend to use stylized graphics (like low-poly or hand-drawn styles), which not only look unique but also perform well in different game engines.

Tools like Unity URP, Unreal Engine 5, and animation plug-ins now help small studios and students create beautiful games without needing a huge team or budget. Our ideal players are seeking a peaceful moment in their day, such as someone who wants to relax after work or find a quiet place to think. They can enter an emotionally rich and private world while wearing headphones and listening to the game's ambient soundtrack.

Our game, Whispers of Light, fits into this trend perfectly — it focuses on calm exploration, emotional visuals, and storytelling through environments rather than characters or dialogue.

# Competitive Analysis

1. Ori and the Blind Forest  
• Strengths: Beautiful visuals, emotional story, and fluid gameplay mechanics.  
• Weaknesses: Can be too challenging for casual players; the saving system is frustrating for some.  
• Reception: Very positive; highly rated and popular on Steam and Xbox.

2. Spiritfarer  
• Strengths: Unique theme (life and death), hand-drawn animation, cozy feel, deep story.  
• Weaknesses: Gets repetitive over time, especially the management tasks.  
• Reception: Excellent reviews, especially for art style and emotional storytelling.

3. Journey  
• Strengths: Peaceful gameplay, beautiful visuals, and innovative multiplayer experience.  
• Weaknesses: Very short game length; not much replay value.  
• Reception: Hugely successful; won Game of the Year awards and still remembered for its emotional impact.

# Positioning Strategy

Whispers of Light is different from these games because it focuses on exploring emotional spaces through architecture and lighting, rather than characters or action. Our shrine locations reflect inner emotions, such as grief, hope, or nostalgia. This gives the player a peaceful and meditative experience while discovering the story at their own pace.

Unlike Ori, there is no platforming or combat. Compared to Spiritfarer, we don’t rely on text or characters — we let the world speak for itself. While Journey has a similar emotional vibe, Whispers of Light gives players a bit more control and freedom to explore symbolic locations. Even though we respect what these titles do, we noticed a chance to examine emotion in a more quiet, symbolic manner.

We use the building itself—the light, color, and space—to tell a story rather than using conversation or gameplay to direct players. This method gives you the impression that you are wandering through a dream that is exclusively for you, making the experience feel interpretative and personal.

We think players who enjoy games like Abzû, A Short Hike, or Gris would really enjoy our game. It’s made for people who want to relax, explore, and experience something beautiful and meaningful.

Imagine that a player enters a dimly lit shrine with a pool of calm water lit by shafts of light that filter through a damaged roof. There are no words, but there is a sense of place evoked by the color, the design, and the calm. It might be grief. It might be quiet. Whispers of Light is about allowing you the room to feel what you want to feel, rather than telling you what to feel.

# Assignment 4: Textured 3D Model + Core Gameplay Mechanics

# Part 1: UV Unwrapping & Texturing

The Shrine of Memories is one of the most important models in our game, both for how it looks and what it represents. For this assignment, we improved the way we did UV mapping and texturing so that it meets both technical rules and looks good. One thing we fixed was applying scale, rotation, and position before unwrapping. This was something mentioned in our Assignment 1 feedback, and fixing it helped make our UVs line up better with the actual model.

We also planned where to place the seams carefully. We hid them in places that players won’t see much, like behind pillars, under the floor, or in shadowed areas. This helped us avoid visible cuts in the texture. We made sure each UV island was neat and evenly sized so that the texture would look clear and sharp. For repeated parts, like the two columns, we used the same UV space to save room and make painting easier.

We painted the textures by hand using Blender’s Texture Paint mode. After unwrapping the model into different sections, we added details and lighting to each part. First, we filled in base colors — like cold grey for stone, warm gold for the light, and dull brown for old, worn-out parts. Then, we added shadows and highlights by hand to make the surface look more realistic and three-dimensional.

We paid extra attention to the glyph areas, since they show where memories are activated in the game. We used soft golden lines and made them glow slightly to match the magical feel. We also added cracks, moss, and faded symbols to make the shrine look old but still mystical.

We used just one 2048x2048 texture file for the whole model. This helps the game run smoothly and keeps it compatible with real-time game engines. Even though we thought about adding extra details like normal or specular maps, we decided not to, so the art style stays soft and storybook-like. We might still add glowing effects later using grayscale textures or a second layer.

While texturing, we kept checking how the model looked with lighting turned on using Blender’s Eevee renderer. This let us adjust brightness, contrast, and outlines to make sure it would look good in the actual game.

# Part 2: Core Gameplay Mechanics

Whispers of Light is a story-focused game where players solve puzzles and explore a peaceful, mysterious world. You play as a spirit guide who travels through old, forgotten places. In this world, light stands for memories, and your main job is to bring back balance by lighting up shrines and discovering hidden stories.

Core Loop:  
1. Walk around different areas that are open and free to explore.  
2. Use a magical lantern to collect small pieces of light  
3. Find broken shrines and try to fix them  
4. Solve puzzles that use light to unlock secret parts of the story  
5. Gain a memory and a new ability when a shrine is restored  
6. Go back to older places using the new powers to find more secrets

The game is calm and doesn’t involve fighting. It’s about thinking, exploring, and healing the world around you. The way the player moves through the game matches its emotional theme — slow, peaceful, and meaningful.

Exploring the world in Whispers of Light is driven by curiosity and emotions. Each area, or biome, feels different — with its own challenges, pieces of story, and visual style. Lighting plays an important role. Some places stay hidden or blocked until you shine your lantern or unlock a memory. As players move forward, both the look and gameplay of the world change.

Players don’t just explore — they help restore the world. They’ll come across broken statues, blocked paths, or inactive symbols. These can be fixed using light or special interactions. Some paths only open at certain times, which makes exploring feel more meaningful and rewarding.

In this game, puzzles are more than just logic — they represent emotions. Each shrine has a puzzle linked to a feeling:  
• Fear: A maze with mirrors and very little light  
• Trust: Working with two ghost-like echoes to unlock a door  
• Joy: Playing musical notes in the right order to match a happy memory

The puzzles get harder over time. At first, players learn simple light mechanics. Later, puzzles mix timing, memory, and all the lantern’s powers. This makes each challenge feel more connected to the story.

The lantern is the player’s main tool and grows with the story. It gains powers as players collect more memories:  
• Memory Pulse: Lights up old carvings and signs  
• Echo Anchor: Shows what happened in a place a few seconds ago  
• Light Chain: Connects objects for puzzle solving  
• Prism Beam: Splits light into different directions for advanced puzzles

Each new power also adds to the story. For example, the Light Chain is unlocked during a puzzle about connection and loss — making it feel emotional, not just technical.

The story is told in pieces, not in order. Players unlock different memories as they go, which helps them slowly understand what is happening in the world. These include short videos, interactive scenes, and talks with spirits. All of them are saved in the Memory Gallery so players can look back on them.

Some special memories are locked behind moral choices. That means how players act in spirit encounters can unlock different parts of the story — encouraging them to replay and try different options.

Meeting spirits is a big part of the game. Some spirits want help, while others pretend they’re fine. How the player acts — whether they’re patient or harsh — affects the spirit’s response. If the spirit opens, the player sees a memory and the world becomes brighter. If not, that memory stays hidden.

These choices lead to one of three possible endings:  
• Light Renewed: All spirits helped, and world restored  
• Fading Path: Some light returns but many questions remain  
• Silent Echo: Few memories found; world stays broken

There’s no clear good or bad path. It depends on how you treat others. The ending reflects your emotional choices, not just your gameplay skills.

The game has lots of replay value:  
• You can complete shrines in different orders  
• Some memory stories are locked in the first playthrough  
• There are 3 different endings  
• New Game+ gives you all powers from the start  
• A secret area opens only if you collect all hidden glyphs

The hardest puzzle — Shrine of Reflection — appears only after all memories are found. It uses every lantern power and ties together the whole story. Finishing it reveals the final truth: who the spirit guide really is.

# Conclusion

This document shows the full version of Whispers of Light. From 3D modeling to texturing, puzzle design, and emotional storytelling — we’ve put everything we’ve learned into this assignment. We’ve also improved based on feedback from earlier work: better formatting, clearer writing, and stronger links between visuals and gameplay.

What started as just a cool idea has now become a full game concept. Whispers of Light is not only playable — it’s meaningful. It’s about light, memory, and the feeling of finding peace in a broken world.

# Assignment 5: Advanced Materials + Monetization & Development Cost Plan

# Part 1: Advanced Materials – Comparison and Analysis

For the Fractured Mirror asset, we created two different material styles: a realistic version and a stylized version. Both styles were created to explore how the asset could visually support the game’s themes of memory, mystery, and the power of light. The goal was to balance artistic design with emotional tone while ensuring technical quality in Blender.

The realistic version was developed using BlenderKit PBR (Physically Based Rendering) materials. We used a base cracked glass texture with enhanced surface detail through a roughness map. A normal map was applied to bring depth and make the cracks appear more three-dimensional. We also added subtle imperfections like smudges and dirt to reflect age and wear. The metallic edges of the mirror frame were also treated with realistic textures, showing slight corrosion. This version gives the mirror an ancient, grounded, and believable appearance. It looks like an object forgotten over time, fitting environments like ruins, old cabins, or forgotten caves.

The visual effect of the realistic material is very immersive. It helps the mirror feel like part of the world and adds weight to the scene. However, it lacks the magical or mysterious quality that is essential to Whispers of Light.

The stylized version was created using a custom shader node setup in Blender. In this version, the mirror cracks glow softly using an emission shader. We used a noise texture and transparency to create a shimmer effect that changes slightly when viewed from different angles. This effect simulates the idea that the mirror is reacting to the player’s lantern light. The glow also hints at energy, memory, or hidden magic. The rest of the mirror remains dark and slightly translucent, with a foggy glass effect.

Visually, the stylized mirror looks magical, emotional, and story rich. It gives the feeling that the mirror is not just an object, but something alive with memory. It fits locations where the player might discover hidden story moments, flashbacks, or puzzle mechanics.

The use of emission, mixed shaders, and soft transparency also matches the broader art style of Whispers of Light, which relies heavily on light and emotion. The technical node setup included the use of Mix Shader (combining emission and transparency), along with a ColorRamp to control intensity of glow, and a noise texture to drive the shimmer animation.

Both versions have their own strengths. The realistic mirror is grounded, believable, and would work well in a more physically based world. It’s also relatively easier to understand visually for players. The stylized version, however, feels more aligned with the game’s atmosphere. It adds mystery, emotion, and fits directly into gameplay — especially where mirrors reveal memories or act as portals.

Because Whispers of Light is a narrative game based on exploration, memory, and discovery, the stylized version was selected as the final material. Its glowing and magical quality fits perfectly with the story and the interactive nature of the mirror.

# Part 2: Monetization and Development Cost Plan

Whispers of Light is a narrative-driven, emotionally rich exploration game. The game focuses on visual storytelling, atmosphere, and puzzle elements, all tied together through the theme of light and memory. Because of this, the game is best suited for players who enjoy single-player experiences, meaningful stories, and artistic presentation.

To match this audience, we will release Whispers of Light as a premium paid game on PC and console platforms. The standard purchase price will be $19.99 CAD. This one-time purchase model ensures a complete and uninterrupted experience without any advertisements or paywalls. This decision is based on studying similar narrative games like Ori and the Blind Forest, Journey, and Gris, which have successfully launched with a paid model and were well-received by story-loving players.

We believe this pricing is reasonable for our intended audience, particularly those who value creativity and emotional depth over flashy gameplay or high action. A one-time purchase also builds trust with players by offering them full access without requiring additional spending.

To extend the life of the game and maintain post-launch engagement, we plan to offer one optional downloadable content (DLC) pack after the main release. This DLC will be priced at $4.99 CAD and include an additional story chapter, extra collectibles, and expanded gameplay mechanics tied to the mirror’s function. This allows dedicated players to explore more of the game world while maintaining the core game as a full and satisfying standalone experience.

We do not plan to include microtransactions, advertisements, or loot boxes in the game. These features, though common in some genres, would not fit the tone and purpose of Whispers of Light. Our goal is to offer a complete experience that feels artistic, personal, and polished.

Whispers of Light will initially launch on PC via Steam and itch.io, followed by a console release on Nintendo Switch. These platforms were chosen because they are popular with indie game players and narrative game fans. Steam offers broad reach, visibility through indie showcases, and the ability to distribute updates and DLC smoothly. Itch.io is widely used by indie developers and aligns with our audience of story-driven, arts-focused gamers. The Nintendo Switch is ideal for reaching a wider and often younger audience that appreciates emotionally engaging games.

Whispers of Light will be developed by a small indie team of five people. The roles and responsibilities include:  
• 1 Game Designer and Writer: Handles the core mechanics, level design, narrative structure, and overall game vision.  
• 2 Artists: Responsible for modeling, texturing, animating, and visual polish of characters and environment.  
• 1 Programmer: Builds core systems, interaction logic, UI/UX, and performance optimization.  
• 1 Marketing and Community Manager: Focuses on outreach, trailers, dev logs, Kickstarter updates, press releases, and managing the game’s online presence.

Estimated project cost is $36,000 CAD. Breakdown:  
• Software and Tools: $2,000  
• Team Compensation (6 months): $30,000  
• Asset Store Plugins: $500  
• Marketing and Promotion: $2,500  
• Distribution and Publishing Fees: $1,000

All team members will work part-time over a period of six months, making this both manageable and sustainable. While most tools (e.g., Blender, GIMP) are free, additional asset plugins may help accelerate development.

To fund development, we will launch a Kickstarter with a $40,000 CAD goal. This covers budget + platform fees and emergencies. Reward tiers include digital wallpapers, exclusive lore entries, and early DLC access. If Kickstarter fails, we'll apply for Canadian grants (Ontario Creates, Canada Media Fund, Indie Superboost). As a last resort, we’re open to publisher partnerships, but prefer self-publishing for creative freedom.

Ethics are central to our monetization. No microtransactions, ads, or manipulative mechanics (e.g., time-gated rewards) will be used. The DLC will be optional and not contain core story moments — respecting player experience.

Post-launch, we'll support the game with accessibility updates and possibly story expansions. Depending on community interest, we may later port to PlayStation or Xbox. The goal is to build a long-term audience that supports future titles.

# Conclusion

The monetization and financial planning for Whispers of Light is built around fairness, creative focus, and sustainability. By using a transparent one-time purchase model and offering optional content later, we respect players’ time and money. With the support of Kickstarter and Canadian grants, we can build a polished and emotionally impactful game while remaining independent and community focused.

# Assignment 6: Practice – Automating Tasks with Blender Scripting + Marketing Strategy & ROI

# Part 1: Blender Scripting

In Whispers of Light, we began using Blender Python scripting to automate common scene-building tasks. Our game contains many repeated objects—especially lanterns and memory pieces—so it made sense to write tools to speed up this process and reduce human error.

One of the scripts we created automatically places objects in a circular pattern. These circular patterns appear around shrines or memory-related scenes, where multiple lanterns glow around a center point. Using math functions like sine and cosine, we calculated each object's position and evenly distributed them across a user-defined radius. This script allowed us to generate 8 lanterns perfectly spaced in a ring with just a few lines of code, saving significant time and ensuring layout consistency.

Another script we created applied a glowing, glass-like material automatically to selected objects. This material used Blender nodes like Glass BSDF and Emission to simulate glow and transparency. Rather than manually building the material in the Shader Editor each time, we wrote a Python function that created and applied a material called 'GlassGlow' to the active object. The script connected the nodes properly and allowed us to modify parameters like color and brightness consistently across assets.

Some early struggles involved navigating Blender's node API, which was confusing at first. We also had to troubleshoot when objects failed to appear correctly or didn’t link into the active scene. It took multiple trials, reference checks, and group effort to fully understand node creation through code.

These scripts significantly streamlined our workflow and gave us confidence in Blender automation. We’re now considering using scripting for exporting assets, generating animations, and potentially building more internal tools to improve our production pipeline.

# Part 2: Marketing Strategy and ROI

Our target audience includes players aged 16 to 30 who enjoy calm, story-rich, and emotionally immersive games. These players often follow indie developers and are familiar with titles like \*Gris\*, \*Journey\*, and \*Spiritfarer\*. We’re designing Whispers of Light to resonate with that group through artistic visuals, reflective storytelling, and relaxed gameplay.

We plan to market Whispers of Light using low-cost platforms effective for indie outreach:  
• TikTok and Instagram Reels – posting short gameplay clips and glowing visual moments.  
• YouTube Devlogs – showing our development process.  
• Discord – creating a space for feedback, updates, and early access.  
• IndieDB and press kits – reaching out to indie game blogs.  
• Reddit forums like r/IndieGaming – to share progress and build awareness.

Our branding centers on the game’s emotional and visual identity. The tagline is: “A luminous journey through forgotten memories.” The atmosphere emphasizes soft glowing environments, gentle music, and a personal tone. This branding helps us stand out in the narrative indie space.

We’ve set clear marketing goals:  
• Before launch: Gain 500+ followers, recruit 100+ Discord testers, be featured in 2 indie blogs, and run a closed beta.  
• After launch: Reach 1,000 downloads within 3 months, maintain 80%+ positive reviews, and retain a dedicated community for future projects.

Our planned price point is $6.99 CAD, distributed via itch.io. Based on that, we project:  
• 1,000 sales × $6.99 = $6,990 CAD  
• 2,500 sales × $6.99 = $17,475 CAD  
We may also use a 'Pay What You Want' option, potentially increasing revenue via tips or bundles.

Our estimated development costs are minimal, totaling approximately $700 CAD. These include potential Unity license upgrades ($250), audio assets ($150), editing tools and visuals ($100), social media boosts ($100), and store-related fees ($100). With these numbers, we only need to sell 101 copies to break even.

In conclusion, Whispers of Light is not just a polished student project but a market-ready indie game with a defined identity and sustainable marketing plan. Our use of free tools, automation, and ethical pricing supports a clear return on investment and lays the foundation for future creative projects.

# Assignment 7: Game Launch Strategy & Distribution Plan

We intend to release Whispers of Light in the spring of 2026, when big gaming developers usually don't compete as much. This calculated timing helps our independent puzzle-adventure game become increasingly well-known and popular among fans of narrative games. Since our game has a well-thought-out narrative framework that is best enjoyed as a single, cohesive whole, we intend to release the full version of the game instead of using Early Access.

We plan to carry out a closed beta testing phase in the winter of 2025 in advance of the main release. A limited number of Kickstarter backers, early email subscribers, and a select group of gamers from our Discord server will participate in the beta. We will use this group's feedback to find faults, improve gameplay mechanics, and guarantee a seamless user experience. In order to incorporate community comments and preserve transparency through development updates and changelogs, we intend to offer frequent upgrades to the beta build.

Through live Q&A sessions, behind-the-scenes development video, and a potential Kickstarter campaign to fund marketing and final-stage polish, we also hope to create a community of early adopters. In the months before launch, this will help us cultivate a devoted following and create buzz through word-of-mouth. If this financing phase is successful, it will also function as a marketing campaign, including special incentives like early access to demo builds, digital artbooks, and soundtrack downloads.

Our game will first be available on PC platforms, namely itch.io and Steam. With millions of users and powerful marketing features like wishlisting, discovery queues, and reviews, Steam is a tremendously prominent platform. The emotional tone of our game is well suited for independent games with a compelling story or experimental design, which Itch.io is perfect for. We want to convert the game to the Nintendo Switch in late 2026, contingent on funding and post-launch feedback. The game is a fantastic fit for portable systems because of its controller-friendly gameplay and comparatively minimal technology requirements.

The key to striking a balance between sustainability and accessibility will be pricing. Whispers of Light will be available for purchase on Steam for $9.99 USD and on itch.io for $7.99 USD, with a 15% launch discount in the first week. These rates take platform fees and perceived game value into consideration while still reflecting our objective of reaching a large independent audience. If we eventually produce expansion packs or a deluxe edition with extra content like a lore compendium or developer commentary, we might provide package discounts.

To increase our reach, localization and accessibility will be crucial. The game will support French and English at launch, with intentions to include Spanish and Japanese in later updates. We'll incorporate colorblind mode, adjustable user interface, subtitles, and a high contrast visual option for accessibility. For players with restricted mobility, we are also investigating the potential for keyboard remapping and basic control techniques.

We'll employ influencer outreach, social media, and independent festival participation to market the game. Discord, YouTube, and TikTok will be our main marketing platforms. To create excitement, we'll share behind-the-scenes videos, developer diaries, and gameplay snippets. We can reach the ideal audience by collaborating with YouTubers and broadcasters who specialize in emotional storytelling or narrative games. In order to increase our credibility and draw in media attention, we also intend to submit to showcases like IndieCade, Day of the Devs, and Wholesome Direct.

Light-based puzzles, symbolic storytelling, and emotional exploration will be the main focuses of the game's branding. Players who appreciate Journey, GRIS, and Ori and the Blind Forest will find the visual style—soft lighting, luminous surroundings, and magical realism—appealing. Our objective is to produce a singular emotional experience that appeals to a specialized yet devoted audience.

We project that the overall development costs, including marketing, software tools (such as asset libraries and plugins), art, sound, and possible freelancing work, will come to about $8,000 in terms of return on investment. We would need to sell roughly 1,200 copies in order to break even, assuming a conservative average of $7 per transaction after fees. We think this can be accomplished in the first three to six months after launch, based on our platform selections and marketing strategies.

In conclusion, our distribution and launch plan for Whispers of Light aims to strike a balance between community involvement, artistic vision, and long-term financial viability. We intend to create an unforgettable independent game that attracts a devoted player base by fusing compelling story gameplay with careful marketing and moral pricing.

We want to deliver free content upgrades that include new memory puzzle sequences or expand the game universe in order to encourage post-launch involvement. In addition to rewarding current players, these updates will re-engage potential customers who might have missed the original release. We think that continuing to support developers can help maintain interest over time and promote goodwill.

Additionally, we will collect continuous feedback via social media surveys, Steam reviews, and a community feedback form that is integrated into the website of our game. This feedback loop will help us better understand our audience for upcoming releases and will direct any patches or upgrades that are released after the launch. Building trust and promoting retention will require being transparent about patch notes and community interaction.

Finally, we consider Whispers of Light to be the start of a larger story universe. We intend to investigate prequels or side storylines through smaller projects or graphic novels if the game does well. We may be able to strengthen our brand and increase the players' emotional investment in our environment by using this transmedia strategy. Long-term, we aim to grow from a single-title release to a sustainable studio known for meaningful, artistic games.

# Assignment 8: Post-Launch Strategy & Community Management Plan

Following the planned release of Whispers of Light in Spring 2026, our post-launch strategy focuses on sustaining player interest, ensuring technical stability, and nurturing a creative and inclusive player community. We recognize that launch day is not the endpoint but the beginning of an evolving journey with our players. This document outlines our roadmap for delivering updates, gathering player feedback, and fostering an engaged fanbase through meaningful community initiatives. By extending support and building a long-term communication model, we aim to transform the game’s single-player experience into a continuously evolving artistic platform that resonates with our audience.

Our technical support strategy post-launch begins with a day-one patch addressing known bugs discovered during late beta testing. After release, we plan to issue bi-weekly patches during the first three months, shifting to a monthly cadence afterward. These patches will address bugs, gameplay balance, and feature improvements based on community feedback. Updates will be posted across our official channels, including Discord, Steam, and our website, along with changelogs and patch summaries to promote transparency. Critical hotfixes may be released immediately if urgent issues arise, with rollback systems in place to minimize disruption to players.

We intend to release free narrative-based content updates, including new puzzle sequences, visual environments, and side stories tied to memory themes. A major DLC is planned approximately six months after release, introducing an expanded zone around the Shrine of Memories and integrating new lore and puzzles. Optional cosmetic content, such as alternate outfits or lantern styles, may also be offered to support ongoing development. These content drops are designed to increase player retention and encourage returning players to explore new aspects of the story. We also plan to coordinate these updates with marketing beats and community events to maximize visibility.

Tracking and analyzing key performance indicators is essential to our post-launch success. We will monitor player retention, average playtime, Steam reviews, game completion rates, and feedback collected from Discord and Reddit. Additionally, we will implement a user-friendly in-game feedback system and a web-based suggestion portal. Google Analytics will be used to evaluate engagement with our website and patch announcements. We aim to act on both quantitative data and qualitative player sentiment to adjust game balance, improve accessibility, and guide post-launch development.

Beyond the launch window, we will focus on nurturing a loyal player community through social media campaigns, regular updates, and creative engagement. Our Discord server will serve as the central hub for interaction, while platforms such as Twitter, TikTok, YouTube, and Reddit will be used to reach a broader audience. Weekly developer updates, spotlight videos on fan creations, and seasonal community polls will help maintain excitement. We also aim to reach new players by partnering with content creators who specialize in emotional, story-driven games. Targeted ads and game festival participation will also support outreach.

We aim to maintain two-way communication through interactive formats such as monthly livestreams, developer Q&A sessions, and behind-the-scenes content. Regular contests—such as lantern design challenges, puzzle submissions, and themed screenshot competitions—will encourage creativity and community bonding. Email newsletters will share insights into development progress, patch notes, and featured feedback. These efforts will position the development team as transparent, approachable, and passionate about their work.

Reliable and responsive player support is key to maintaining trust. We will provide a web-based support ticket system with a 24–48 hour average response time. A live bug tracker with status tags will allow players to monitor progress on reported issues. Automated Discord bots will handle common support queries, while a dedicated moderation team ensures respectful discourse. We will also maintain a searchable knowledge base and FAQ section to minimize player frustration and provide quick self-service solutions.

Whispers of Light will offer light modding support for the PC version. Players will be able to access key texture and animation folders for aesthetic customizations. Although full modding tools are not planned initially, we will share a modding FAQ and starter guide in our Discord’s dedicated modding section. Curated community mods that meet our artistic guidelines may be highlighted in monthly showcases. We are also exploring the idea of allowing community-voted lore entries, character names, or visual elements to appear in future content as a nod to fan creativity.

In conclusion, our post-launch strategy for Whispers of Light is built around continuous improvement, community inclusion, and artistic growth. We are not only delivering a polished puzzle-adventure experience at launch, but also fostering a long-term relationship with players who resonate with the emotional tone of our world. Through content updates, responsive support, and empowering our creative fanbase, we intend to evolve Whispers of Light into more than just a game—it will be a collaborative artistic journey shared between developer and community.