

The Christmas Carol -- A Special Request

By Shana Oshiro

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this play to my mother, who always taught me that all of my gifts can be used for God's glory.

STORY OF THE PLAY

It's Christmas Eve and Jim and Nancy Marley, with their three kids, Tom, Belle, and Tony, have just returned from buying more presents at the mall. They agree that they're too tired to go to church, so after a quick prayer, they head off to bed. But when young Tony makes a special request, Gabriel, the Angel of Christmas Past, appears. He starts the family on a special journey which is soon led by Mike, the Angel of Christmas Present, and then Archie, the Angel of Christmas Future. Needless to say, the family's journey to Bethlehem that wonderful night changes them forever.

This funny but tender story will lead your congregation to reflect on their own Christmas celebration and worship experience. There are many flexible speaking parts for adults and children, several which are small enough to be modified or removed, if necessary. A special closing song (see end of script) or other carols can be added easily.

Performance time: 45 - 60 minutes depending on music.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Much doubling possible)

JIM MARLEY: The father.

NANCY MARLEY: The mother.

TOM MARLEY: Oldest son, about 11 years old.

BELLE MARLEY: Middle daughter, 8-9 years old.

TONY (or TONI) MARLEY: Youngest, 5-6 years old.

TWINK: Star of Bethlehem.

GABRIEL: Angel of Christmas Past.

MIKE: Angel of Christmas Present.

ARCHIE: Angel of Christmas Future.

JOSEPH

MARY

GASPAR: Wise Man.

MELCHIOR: Wise Man.

BELTHASAR: Wise Man.

DONKEY 1 and DONKEY 2

CAMEL 1 and CAMEL 2

ANGEL CHORUS: 10-15 kids at the stable.

SANTA CLAUS

HELPER ELF

ANGRY MOTHER 1

ANGRY MOTHER 2

STORE CLERK

GALLANT: Selfless boy in Santa's line.

GALLANT DAD

GALLANT MOTHER

GOOFUS: Naughty boy in Santa's line.

GOOFUS DAD

CAROLERS: 10-15 kids at Gallant home.

FUTURE JIM

FUTURE NANCY

FUTURE TOM

FUTURE BELLE

FUTURE TONY

HOMELESS PEOPLE

SETTINGS

It's easy to make these scene changes by keeping the sets simple and portable. The main setting is the Marley living room/dining room with a front door, a coat closet or coat tree, basic furniture, and a lighted and decorated Christmas tree. On the coffee table is a tin of Christmas cookies and a candle. In Scenes 1 and 7 the holiday decorations around the room should be secular and overdone, but in Scenes 5 the decorations are more appropriate.

SCENE 2: A basic manger should be moved on USL. A piano is DSR or below the stage.

SCENE 3: A department store with a Santa chair. An electric guitar arrangement of "Carol of the Bells" plays overhead.

SCENE 4: A humble apartment with a rocking chair.

SCENE 5: The Marley home Christmas Eve one year later. Same set up as the first scene with a Christmas tree, but with nicer decorations and a large feast at the table.

SCENE 6: A church soup kitchen with a serving table and several tables and benches at which to eat.

SCENE 7: Back to present day. Marley's living room, now littered with bows, wrapping paper and open boxes with gifts left behind.

CLOSING SONG

An arrangement of "Silent Night" by the playwright's mother, Allyn Lloyd, is included at the end of the script. Each part in the vocal score should be first sung individually, then all are sung together. The piece can be substituted with the traditional "Silent Night" if desired.

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(AT RISE: It's Christmas Eve. The MARLEYS enter living room from SL, coming home from shopping. NANCY, JIM, and BELLE are wearing Santa hats. TOM is wearing an elf hat and TONY is wearing reindeer antlers. They take off their coats as they enter.)

NANCY: Ah, home at last! Boy, there's nothing better than a family shopping spree on Christmas Eve. *(Hanging up coat.)*

JIM: *(Drops handful of shopping bags.)* You're joking, right?

BELLE: I had fun, Mommy!

TONY: Why were there so many people there? *(NANCY removes his coat.)*

TOM: Because...it's Christmas. Tis the season to go shopping.

(HE peeks into NANCY's shopping bag, she snatches it away.)

JIM: Instead of home relaxing with cookies and eggnog like the good old days. *(Hangs up coat.)*

NANCY: Well, it doesn't matter what we do as long as we do it as a family, right?

BELLE: Mommy, did you get me a computer? Or a cell phone? *(Hands her coat to NANCY.)*

JIM: ...Or a doll? What's with kids these days? Instead of giving and sharing, they think Christmas is the world holiday for upgrades on everything they have. *(Looks at TOM.)* Except their report cards.

TOM: Welcome to the twenty-first century, Dad. *(Tosses coat onto couch.)* Can I have my iPod now?

NANCY: *(Gently, but cross.)* Hang that up, please.

TONY: Are we still going to church?

BELLE: Oh, do we have to? I'm tired and I want to open my presents!

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JIM: I wish we hadn't stayed out so late, but maybe we'll just call it a night. Light a candle, say a quick prayer and head to bed.

TOM: *(Takes a cookie from the tin on the coffee table.)*
Works for me!

NANCY: Alright, everybody, come on. Let's all kneel.
(Kneels USC of coffee table.)

BELLE: Why do we have to kneel?

JIM: Because your mother said so. Come on, it will be quick.
(Kneels L of NANCY.)

TOM: Let's get this over with. *(Kneels beside JIM.)*

(BELLE and TONY kneel R of NANCY. JIM takes the cookie from TOM's hand and puts it back in the tin, half-eaten.)

TONY: Who is going to pray?

NANCY: Why don't you do it, Tony?

BELLE: And make it fast! I want my presents!

JIM: Belle, don't be rude. Go ahead, Tony.

(JIM lights a candle on the table. ALL bow heads.)

TONY: Dear, Jesus...sorry we didn't make it to your party.
Please let us have a real Christmas here at home. Amen.

JIM and NANCY: Amen.

BELLE and TOM: Amen.

TOM: *(Takes old cookie and a new one from the tin again.)*
Good night!

BELLE: *(Also takes a cookie.)* Good night... *(Sing-songy, like na-na-na-boo-boo.)* I'm getting a laptop!!!

NANCY: And nightmares, too, with all that sugar before bed.

TONY: Daddy, may I sleep by the tree?

JIM: Sure, buddy, we'll bring you a blanket. Everybody to bed...

NANCY: And stay away from our room because we still have gifts to wrap!

JIM: *(Rolls eyes.)* Oh, brother.

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(NANCY brings a blanket and pillow. JIM goes to turn off room lights and turns on the Christmas tree lights.)

JIM: *(Cont'd.)* Good night! Sweet dreams of everything you want for Christmas...since who knows what you'll *actually* get?

(NANCY covers TONY on the couch with a blanket. ALL exit for their rooms. Tony waits for them to leave before he gets up to sneak a cookie. CUE Angel entrance MUSIC and SPOTLIGHT for GABRIEL SR. He has a sense of humor, but still ethereally formal like the traditional depiction of Gabriel. MUSIC fades. Gabriel walks behind Tony, who does not notice him.)

GABRIEL: Careful, Tony, you heard your mother. All that sugar may give you bad dreams.

(TONY freezes with cookie in his mouth. He turns around, sees GABRIEL, and screams.)

TONY: AAAAHHHH!!!

(NANCY enters running.)

NANCY: Tony! What's wr... AAAAHHH!!!

(JIM, TOM, and BELLE enter. NANCY and TONY are frozen in fright.)

JIM, TOM, and BELLE: AAAHHH!!!

GABRIEL: *(Covers his ears.)* Please, please...scream not.

BELLE: Who are you? What are you?

GABRIEL: Belle, is it? My name is Gabriel. I am an angel of the Lord, the Angel of Christmas Past. He asked me to pay you all a visit...apparently upon *(Looks for TONY, then stops to stare at him.)* special request.

TONY: For what?

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