

WHAT DO I RELLECT?

Christmas Program

CHARACTERS:

Stage Manager
Women (about 20)
Child
Poetry Child
Angels
Youth

SETTING: Rehearsal in progress on stage.

AT RISE: Trio of women singing Joy to the World. Their smiles look pasted on. A manger is set in the middle of the stage.

STAGE MANAGER

(as she leaves the area)

Could you wait a minute?

WOMAN #1

(she is incredulous)

Did she say wait?

WOMAN #2

Joy to the world, my foot. Do you know what's happening at my house right now...?

WOMAN #3

I can't wait! I have too much to do! Every Christmas it's the same thing. I'm trying to juggle my job, and the work at home. I have to redecorate the whole house for Christmas. This is such a busy time of year; I hardly have time to think about what the words in the song "Joy to the World" even mean.

STAGE MANAGER

(returns with her child and has him sit on the stage, in front and on the side)

Just sit here, and wait until we are finished practicing and then we will go home.

CHILD

I'm going to be so bored.

(she hands the child a book)

Here, read this and try to find some jokes for the program.

CHILD

Mom!

STAGE MANAGER

(to the trio)

That sounded great. Any questions?

WOMAN #1

Are there any more practices?

WOMAN #2

(sounding exasperated)

Great!

STAGE MANAGER

Will you all be able to come?

WOMAN #3

(drops long sheet of paper)

I guess so, but look at this list of things I have to do. I have to...

CHILD

How about this one? What the best gift to GIVE your parents for Christmas.

STAGE MANAGER

What?

CHILD

A list of things, YOU want. Ha, ha, ha.

WOMAN #3

(speaking to the child)

Which Christmas carol do parents like best?

CHILD

I don't know.

WOMAN #3

Silent Night.

CHILD

(starts to laugh)

Oh. I get it.

STAGE MANAGER

(hurriedly to avoid more trouble and trying to sound cheerful)

Alright. Thank you for coming. You're done for tonight. I'll let you know when we will meet again. Who's next?

(Looks at a list; five women enter; one is singing "Let There Be Peace on Earth.")
Okay, you're singing "Let There Be Peace on Earth?"

WOMAN #4

That's what we're singing alright, but can we make it happen?

STAGE MANAGER

(looking at her list)

Oh, dear. Does anyone know where the pianist is? Let me see if I can call her.

WOMAN #5

Do you think she had an emergency?

WOMAN #6

Well, she probably stayed home to watch her children put up their Christmas stockings.

WOMAN #5

Why would she do that?

WOMAN #6

She says it's the only time they ever hang anything up!

WOMAN #7'

Peace on earth is a great idea, but you should see what's going on at my house.

WOMAN #8

What?

WOMAN #7

It's a disaster! I'm half way through the decorating, the boxes are everywhere. I'm half way through baking the Christmas cookies. I'm half way through the laundry, and I'm half way through making dinner.

WOMAN #8

(laughing)

Sounds like you live in a HALF WAY HOUSE.

WOMAN #7

It might as well be! It's practically criminal how much work I have to do—especially at Christmas.

WOMAN #4

You know why Santa keeps saying “Ho, Ho, Ho?”

WOMAN #7

No.

WOMAN #4

You'd be laughing too, if you only had to work one day a year!

WOMAN #5

Why does Christmas have to come when the stores are so crowded?

WOMAN #6

Listen to this—my sister gave my son a soldier combat outfit, 2 guns, and a toy mortar and she wrapped them all in paper that said, “Peace on Earth.”

WOMAN #7

I just rush around from one thing to the other, and I don't know if I really enjoy Christmas, or create any peace on earth. Every year I ask myself, do I really show the love of the Savior to my family, and others when I rush around like this.

Song: What Do I Reflect

What Do I Reflect?
Words & Music by Krystal Brown

When I am face with fear
Do I stand in faith
Return kindness in a world
Filled with hate?

When darkness grows
Will I be a light,
Like the moon upon still waters
Glowing through the night?
What do I reflect?

When I'm offered lies
Do I stand for truth
Remain unspotted in
An oh, so wicked world?

Will I show forth love
When hearts of men grow cold?
Like the warmth of the sun
On the frozen land below?
What do I reflect?

CHORUS

Is it the light that shown brightly
On the eve of His birth?
Is it the hope that was born with Him
When He came to earth?

Is it the peace of gospel truths restored
When I look at my reflections
Do I see the Savior
Or the world?

When the trials come,
Will I keep the faith
Humbly pray and just
Wait upon the Lord?

Will I search His word,
Let it enlarge my soul?
Take what the Spirit's taught
And let it show?

CHORUS

Will I reflect the anger,
The bitterness, the grief;
Reflect the vanity, immodesty,
The pride of worldly things?

When I look in the mirror,
What will I see?
A creature of the world
Or who He'd have me be?
What do I reflect?

CHORUS

WOMAN #7

I hope I can choose to reflect something better in my home too.

STAGE MANAGER

Thank you for coming. We'll practice again.

WOMEN

(as they exit)

Sure. Great.

CHILD

Mom, I love this one.

STAGE MANAAGER

Okay.

CHILD

One Christmas a teacher who hated homework, a nice babysitter, and Santa Claus were riding in an elevator of a very expensive hotel. Just before the door opened, they all noticed a ten dollar bill lying on the floor. Which one picked it up?

STAGE MANAGER

I don't know.

CHILD

Santa Claus, or course. The other two don't exist.

WOMAN #9

(comes running in)

I know I'm early, but can I go now?

STAGE MANAGER

(looking at her watch)

I guess that will be okay.

WOMAN #9

I'm trying so hard to prepare a special Christmas Eve so that I know that my children will feel the Spirit of Christmas. I'm never sure if they do. I don't even know if they even think about it, with all the toys and talk of Santa Claus. What do you think?

STAGE MANAGER

I think children learn more than we know.

POETRY CHILD

I wonder what does Christmas mean,
With its stars and shiny balls?
Is Christmas more than Christmas trees
And toys and games and dolls?

Of this I'm sure: There's something more,
For I've heard may say
That in a strange and far-off land,

A child was born that day.

And Christmas is to celebrate
His coming from above.
He showed us how we all should live
And told us how to love.

Song: Little Children, Can You Tell?

Little Children, Can You Tell

Music: Tune from Christmas Morning Lyrics by: Anonymous

WOMAN:

Little children, can you tell?
Do you know the story well?
Every girl and every boy
When the angels sing for joy
On this Christmas morning.'

CHILDREN

Yes, we know the story well.
Listen now and hear us tell.
Every girl and every boy,
Why the angels sing for joy
On this Christmas morning.

All

For the little Babe that day,
Cradled in a manger lay;
Born on earth our Lord to be,
This the wond'ring angels see
On this Christmas morning.

(Found in Hymnary.org The cyber hymnal #3596)

STAGE MANAGER

I think children remember the feeling of Christmas that we create. You have a story, is that right?

WOMAN #9

Yes, that's right. It's by Thomas S. Monson.

STAGE MANAGER

(as new women enter)

Hi! We'll be ready for you in just one minute.

WOMAN #9

Elder Monson said, "Such was the experience of a Sunday School class some years ago when a wise teacher placed aside the manual one Sunday morning as Christmas approached. With her class members listening in, she telephoned me. I was serving then as the bishop of a large ward situated in the central part of Salt Lake City. The teacher inquired, "Are there any poor in your ward—people who need a sub for Santa?" She then described her own neighborhood as one of affluence and mentioned that she wanted her class to remember this particular Christmas. I responded that our members had the necessities of life but mentioned a family that would welcome a special experience—one that would also greatly benefit her young class members.

The family I had in mind had recently emigrated from war-torn Germany and had rented a humble, older home in our area. The children were new to America, and, while they were learning to speak our language, they were shy and reluctant to mingle with others. Their personal possessions were few; they had lost so much during the war.

In a private telephone conversation with the teacher, I suggested an appropriate evening when her class could accompany her to our ward meetinghouse and together we would journey to the home where the Mueller family lived. Again the teacher stated that she wanted her choice class to remember the true meaning of Christmas. I responded, "Could I suggest, then, that each child bring with him or her a gift that has a special meaning to the individual; a gift the person treasures and would rather keep for himself."

Just four days before Christmas, the class journeyed to our ward. Several adults brought them in large, expensive automobiles. Such an array of wealth had never before graced the parking area. We then walked to the Mueller home, singing carols along the way. The laughter of the children and the hurried pace of their steps reflected the anticipation of Christmas.

It was at the Mueller home, however, that the frills of Christmas became the spirit of Christmas. I watched as one girl looked into the eyes of one of the Mueller children, a girl about her age, then tenderly handed her a beautiful doll she had received on her own birthday, a gift she herself loved. She anxiously told her newly found friend how to dress the doll and hold it ever so tenderly in cradled arms. I observed a normally rowdy boy take from his left hand his genuine leather baseball glove, which bore the replica signature of Joe DiMaggio, and place the glove on the left hand of a German-speaking boy who had never seen, far less worn, a baseball glove. He then explained how to catch the baseball in the special pocket of the glove, which he had hand prepared hour after hour with a particular oil. Such was the experience of each child with each gift.

As we left the Mueller home and walked back to the meetinghouse, not a word was spoken. One could hear the crunch of the newly fallen snow as young feet, guided by happy hearts, made the two-block journey. We entered the building, there to have donuts and apple cider. In the blessing that was asked upon the food, a beautiful girl, her voice choked with emotion, described the feelings of all as she prayed, "Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the best Christmas we have ever had." That night, as children who had found the real spirit of Christmas filled the automobiles, left the parking lot, and disappeared into the darkness, I recalled the meaningful words from the hymn "O Little Town of Bethlehem":

How silently, how silently

The wondrous gift is given!

So God imparts to human hearts

*The blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still
The dear Christ enters in.*

(*Hymns*, 1985, no. 208.)

And so He had. The quest for the Christmas spirit had been rewarded.

(*Ensign* 1987, In search of the Christmas Spirit by Thomas S. Monson)

STAGE MANAGER

(As Woman #9 exits)

Wonderful story. Thank you so much

WOMAN #10

We have so much, don't we. That's what I like about Christmas. It reminds me about what's important, and what's not.

WOMAN #11

Christmas seems to get more and more expensive every year. It's so easy to get wrapped up in the commercial side of the season.

WOMAN #12

My husband always tells me that anybody who doesn't think Christmas last all year doesn't have charge accounts.

WOMAN #13

It's strange to think that the greatest man who ever lived on the earth was one of the most humble when it comes to worldly wealth.

WOMAN #10

Oh, that reminds me of a poem. I just read. It's called, Child of the Night.

Child of the Night
By Holly Wooley

Child
Of the night and hushed
Majesties of light.
Cool evening breeze
And a single cry,
A mother's tender arms
And eyes...
Unspoken grace adorns
Crude stable hay and
Humble cloth.
A King is born
In quiet manger
Without pretense
Or display...
No jeweled crown
Nor fame is found
Except,
In lighted sky
And whisper
Of a father's tender
Murmur of His name,
"Jesus."
The morning breaks
In quiet sigh and fame;
A dark and sleeping
To never be
The same.

Music for No Golden Carol Begins,

WOMAN #10-13

No Golden Carriage
By Gilbert M. Martin

No golden carriage, No bright toy;
No snowy bunting for one small boy;
No crimson roses, not marble chair;
Only the starlight on shining hair.

No crystal palace, no warm bed;
No downy pillow to grace his head;
No bridled horses, no great feast;
Only the straw and the scent of beast.

Here is this room, only a stall;
Shepherd and sheep, manger so small
Mother quite near, father close by;
Soft rushing wind like angels
winging through the sky.

No golden carriage, no bright toy;
No snowy bunting for one small boy;
No crimson roses, no marble chair;
Only the starlight on shining hair.

No crystal place, nor warm bed;
No downy pillow to grace his head;
Only the manger, stars above;
Only straw 'neath the Gift of Love.

STAGE MANAGER

That was beautiful!

WOMAN #11

(to Woman #13)

I agree with you. It's really ironic that we spend so much money to celebrate the birth of the Savior who was a poor and humble carpenter.

WOMAN #12

How did that happen?

WOMAN #13

I don't know, but maybe we can think about it a little when we plan our Christmas each year,

STAGE MANAGER

Thanks for your help.

(The women exit and the Stage Manager stops to look at her list.)

CHILD

Can I have a dog for Christmas?

STAGE MANAGER

(distracted)

No, you can have turkey like everyone else.

CHILD

No, Mom, you're not listening to me.

STAGE MANAGER

(walking over to stand by him)

Oh, I'm so sorry. I'm trying to finish this so we can go home.

CHILD

(reading from his book)

Okay, here's another one. If Santa and Mrs. Claus had a son, what would he be called?

STAGE MANAGER

I don't know. What?

CHILD

A subordinate clause!

(A woman enters and see child on the stage.)

WOMAN #14

It looks like you have a little helper there.

STAGE MANAGER

Yes, I do!

WOMAN #1

I think sometimes we get so busy at Christmas we forget what angels we have in our own homes all year round.

(Pianist starts playing and the two women quietly discuss the program. A choir of little children all dressed in white with halos enter onto the floor.)

Song: Christmas Angels

Christmas Angels

Music by: Frank Mills (Music Box Dancer)

Words by: Gail H. Johnsen

We are Christmas angels
All dressed in white.
Softly, we will whisper
On this Christmas night.

“See the little angel
In the manger there.
See the loving mother
Mary, virgin fair.”

We are little angels
Sent into your home.
Like the baby Jesus
We from Heav’n come.

We are little angels
All dressed in white.
Teach of our Savior,
On this Christmas night.

(Angels come up on stage and encircle the baby Jesus in the manger. They repeat the song and exit. One angel stays at eh manger and leaves a gift for the baby.)

ANGEL

Little angels on white wings
Little gifts—such tiny things.
Just one little heart that sings
Make a merry Christmas.

(Several woman enter; one has a child)

WOMAN #15

Most of my little angels have grown up and left home now, but I remember a year about 18 years ago on Christmas Eve. I was a young mother very painfully aware of the wide gap between my household reality and what I though the ideal Christmas looked like—the ideal Christmas portrayed on television and in magazines. The Christmas of beautiful décor, exquisite meals, and happy, smiling children. I had tried hard to finish wrapping and cleaning, all the while attempting to achieve some order and peace in my home as I cared for my three little boby, one of whom was a very cranky baby. There was a heavy feeling weighing me down that night—I was overwhelmed.

It was starting to get dark. I had the baby in the highchair, trying to feed him and get him settled. Dinnertime was fast approaching, and there was no candlelit table, no warm feast, nothing ready on the stove. Just then my husband, who had been out doing some last-minute shopping, walked into the kitchen and placed on the counter a bag of pancake mix, some frozen orange juice, and a package of sausage. In his own way, he was telling me tht he knew I was at eh end of my rope and, if worse came to worst, he was prepared to make our Christmas eve dinner.

And so that Christmas Eve, our family shared breakfast. I don't remember how it tasted, but I rmember how it felt to be loved and understood. From then on, breakfast has always been our Christmas Eve fare. Our children probably don't understand its significance; nevertheless, breakfast is our tradition and it stands fast.

The small act of service my husband performed for me that Christmas Eve so long ago may seem insignificant, but it taught me that through small and thoughtful acts in the midst of the mundane, our lives can be changed. Through our own and other's selfless service, the Spirit can work in our hearts and Christ can enter ourlives, which is what this season is all about. Perhaps decorations set the stage, but love and service are at the very heart of Christmas.

WOMAN #16

I think Christmas memories are the best memories of the year.

WOMAN #15

I love, just love Christmas.

(Music begins)

WOMAN #15 & #16

Song: Christmas Mem'ries

Christmas Mem'ries

Music by: Don Costas

Lyrics: Alan & Marilyn Bergman

Singing carols, stringing popcorn,
Making footprints in the snow
Mem'ries, Christmas mem'ries
They're the sweetest ones I know.

Cookies baking in the kitchen
Cards and ribbons ev'rywhere
Frosty Christmas mem'ries
Float like snowflakes in the air.

And of the joys of waking Christmas morning,
The family round the tree
We had a way of making Christmas morning
As merry as can be.

I close my eyes and see shiny faces
Of all the children of their own
Funny but come December
And I remember
Every Christmas that I've known.

WOMAN #16

Christmas is my favorite time of year too.

STAGE MANAGER

Christmas is one of the times I can get homesick even when I'm home...Why is that?

WOMAN#15

Maybe it's because the Spirit of Christmas is so strong that it makes us miss our heavenly home. We feel so close to the Savior and we want to be with him; we want to be like him.

(Woman #15 & 16 exit; Woman #17-#19 enter; #18 has a child with her.)

WOMAN#17

We had a Christmas like that. A number of years ago our family was in Belgium in France for the holidays. We had six small children, including a new baby born in that country. Before Christmas we had written home for some clothing and Christmas gifts for our children. They did not arrive in time for Christmas as we had hoped.

As we sat together Christmas Eve reading the New Testament and the account of the birth of the Savior, there was a little melancholy because there would not be many gifts. But as we read the words about the gift our Father in Heaven had given, his beloved Son, Jesus, we realized that there were many in our city who needed help. So we quickly gathered together some of our possessions and a Christmas box of groceries and sought out those families.

As we visited that tiny apartment and began to sing Christmas carols, our hearts were full as perhaps never before. WE felt the spirit of giving, we felt the spirit of those who were receiving, and we felt the spirit of our Father in Heaven. We returned to our home that Christmas Eve with a far greater gift than those gifts we had anticipated from home. Truly, the only real gift is the gift of oneself.

WOMAN #18

I remember one year thinking Who Needs Me at Christmas.

Next to the Christmas tree was not the girl's bike I'd wanted, but a secondhand boy's bike my father had repainted. Trying to hold back the tears, I thought, "At least I'll be able to tell the kids at school that I got something 'big.'" As a child I never quite got beyond shame and self to the true meaning of Christmas.

Later, as a teenager, I sang with a group, and Christmas was our busiest time. We sang at company parties, church parties, club parties—and I loved the glamour and the **compliments**. “This,” I told myself, “is the real meaning and feeling of Christmas.” I was wrong again. Then one Christmas we decided to sing at the hospital. Each of us bought an inexpensive gift for a patient, and we sang privately to individuals who hadn’t had any visitors. While we were singing, one of us would give the gift to that person.

All the patients seemed responsive except Edgar. He was an old man with tension, fear, and anxiety in his face. He wouldn’t look at us at first, but after we sang a couple of songs, he started watching out of the corner of his eye. When I took the little present to him, he broke down and sobbed so hard his whole body shook. Then he said softly, “You’re the only friend I have.” None of us sang the rest of the song, only hummed it in very broken tones.

Christmas was never the same after that. I forgot all about the presents I never received or the places I never went. I still remember and try to re-create the feeling of peace I felt that year. And I would like to help my children understand the true meaning of Christmas, to know the joy I felt when a special child of God, sick, frightened, and alone, said, “You’re the only friend I have.” Karen F. Church, Orem, Utah

(Woman #18 takes the child to the manger.)

CHILD
That can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring him a lamb.
If I were a Wise Man
I would do my part,
Yet, what can I give Him?
Give him my heart.

(Child places heart in manger.)

WOMAN #19

Someone once wrote:

I am the Christmas Spirit
Unknown author

I am the Christmas Spirit. I enter the home of poverty, causing pale-faced children to open their eyes wide in please wonder.
I cause the miser's clutched hand to relax, and thus paint a bright spot on his soul.
I cause the aged to renew their youth and to laugh in the glad old way.
I keep romance alive in the hearts of childhood, and brighten sleep with dreams woven in magic.
I cause eager feet to climb dark stairways wit filled baskets, leaving behind hearts amazed at the goodness of the world.
I cause the prodigal to pause a moment on his wild, wasteful way, and send to anxious love some little token that releases glad tears—tears which wash away the hard lien of sorrow.
I enter dark prison cells, reminding scarred manhood of what might have been and pointing forward to good days yet to come.
I come softly into the still, white home of pain, and lips that are too weak to speak just tremble in silent, eloquent gratitude.
In a thousand ways I cause the warty world to look into the face of God and for a little moment forget the things that are small or wretched.

STAGE MANAGER

Those are wonderful stories. Thanks for coming!

(A youth group enters.)

Oh! Here you are! You are the closing number. I think you are going to be in hats and coats, right?

YOUTH

(putting them on)

We brought them.

Song: Joyous Christmas

Joyous Christmas
Have a joyous Christmas, joyous Christmas
Fill your heart with good cheer.
Thank the Lord above for all the love
You have from those you hold dear.
Let the Christmas bells ring out, proclaiming loud and clear,
Have a joyous Christmas joyous, Christmas and a happy New Year.
Have a joyous Christmas, joy Christmas but don't fail to recall.

That a tiny stranger in a manger was the start of it all.
Let the Christmas bell ring out, proclaiming loud and clear
Have a joyous Christmas, Christmas and a happy New Year.
Have a joyous Christmas, joyous Christmas
Sing it loudly and then.
Pray for all your worth for peace on earth and for good will to men.
Let the Christmas bell ring out, proclaiming loud and clear.
Have a joyous Christmas, joyous Christmas and a happy New Year.

STAGE MANAGER

You are ready! See you soon.

(The youth exit and the Stage Manager turns the lights to the stage off and she and her child start to exit.)

I guess we can go home.

CHILD

(still looking at the book)

Home? Oh sure. Hey Mom. That was kind of fun.

STAGE MANAGER

Was it? I think everything about Christmas can be fun. We just have to remember the reason we are celebrating, and the joy and peace that the Savior brought into the world, and try to always put our eye on Him throughout the holiday season.

CHILD

Okay Mom, let's try to do that. Oh! What did the bald man say when he was given a comb for Christmas?

STAGE MANAGER

What?

CHILD

Thanks! I'll never part with it.

STAGE MANAGER

Let's try to be like that bald man. Let's get the Spirit of Christmas, the Spirit of Christ and never part with it!

(Stage manager flips off last light and only the light on the manger is still on. Joy to the World plays until the lights come back on.)