



Written by
Cora Alley

“A Heartfelt Christmas”

Preview Script

Scriptures:

John 1:14

“The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him, will not die but have everlasting life.”

Dramatic Category: Full-length Christian Play

Topic: Christmas

NOTE:

This play is a “storyline” only. It provides a context into which any number of Christmas songs will fit. This performance is ideal for soloists, ensembles, and choirs of any size and any age. The first six songs are interspersed into the first act, with the remaining songs making up the “Christmas Choir Concert,” which the “family” of characters attends.

Performance Time: 25 minutes of drama to add to any number of Christmas songs

Objective:

In this simple story of a heartbroken little girl, searching for her lost hamsters, we see the “heart” of God who came to Earth to rescue His beloved people. This play is a “storyline” only. It provides a context into which any number of Christmas songs will fit. Create an unforgettable family holiday memory that looks at the why behind Christmas.

Synopsis:

Have you ever lost something you really loved? Have you ever searched for it with all your might? Have you ever been broken hearted because you wanted it back? If you have, you have a lot in common with God. “A Heartfelt Christmas” tells the story a broken-hearted little girl who is up all night searching for her beloved hamsters who ran away, because she left the cage door open.

While calling for them in the night, she wakes up her Grandpa, who has fallen asleep on the couch while reading the Bible. Grandpa attempts to take her mind off of her tragedy by reading to her about someone else who lost His beloved creatures and has a broken heart, too: God! Grandpa chronicles the story of God's quest to restore the fellowship lost in the garden. He begins with the calling of Abraham, goes on to the 10 commandments, then to the prophets, and finally he surprises his granddaughter by telling her that God became one of us so he could "find us by speaking our language."

This delightful story is artfully woven around your favorite Christmas carols. The script has suggested places when you can insert music that you feel best expresses the various scenes. The action culminates at a crisis point when Jeanne's brother refuses to attend the Christmas concert with his family because he cannot understand why God would ever come to earth and be born as a human being.

Jeanne explains that this was how we could know and understand Him, and most important of all, that our sins are forgiven because this little baby grew to be the perfect sacrifice.

Her new-found understanding of how the "lost" become "found," prompts little Jeanne to employ a hamster on a leash so he can "find his own kind." The story of God's search for His people is told in a way that will communicate to young and old alike as we celebrate the miracle of Christmas.

Cast:

Jeanne: *A little girl of seven*
Grandpa: *The highly animated "teacher" in the story*
Beth: *Jeanne and Keith's mother*
Alan: *Jeanne and Keith's dad*
Keith: *A 14-year-old, obstinate son*
Adam: *The director the Christmas musical*
Choirs: *Any number of performers of all ages*
Soloists: *Any number of soloists, as designed by the director*
Ensembles: *Any number of ensembles, as designed by the director*

Props:

A Bible for Grandpa (with a "**cheat script**" inserted into various pages)
Some children's Christmas books
Post-it notes scattered on stage
A marker
A clipboard for Adam with flyers for information
A rake
A basket of apples
Gift-wrap and ribbon
Boxes to be wrapped
Presents under the tree
Miscellaneous Christmas decorations for the house
2 baskets of apples
Winter clothes (coats, mufflers, hats, mittens) for the entire family

NOTE:

This script is challenging for Grandpa. Put a “cheat script” of his lines in his Bible.
Place parts of the script in various places, so he appears to progress through the story.

Music:

A gentle song about God’s love (with a long introduction) (same as Song 3, below)
A medley of instrumental Christmas songs

Songs:

The songs in this script are only suggested. Choose your own Christmas songs, based on the suggested “feel” or “theme” of the songs.

- Song 1: An “upbeat Christmas song”
 - Song 2: An “Emmanuel medley”
 - Song 3: A “song about God’s love” (with a long introduction)
 - Song 4: A “joyful children’s song”
 - Song 5: A “unique Christmas song” (Currier & Ives – type)
 - Song 6: A “unique Christmas song” (quartet?)
- Christmas Choir Concert

Costumes:

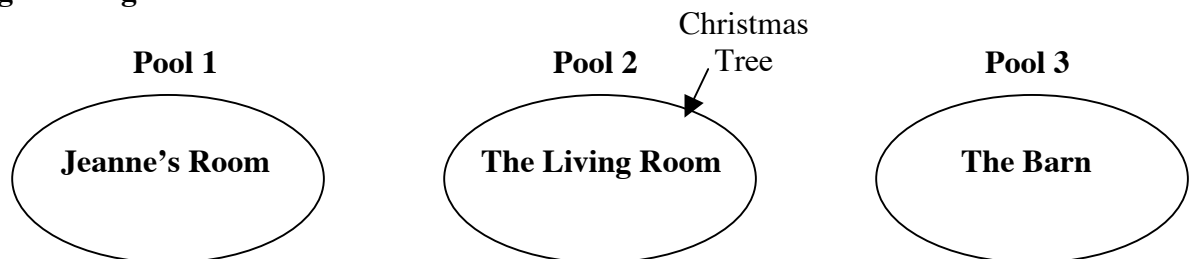
A flannel nightgown for Jeanne
A shawl, a cane, and a cardigan sweater for Grandpa
Christmas-type clothing
Whatever costumes are determined by the musical numbers

Set:

An over-stuffed chair
A bookshelf
A standing lamp on a dimmer
Bales of hay and barn-type things
Jeanne’s bedroom stuff
A Christmas tree
Christmas paraphernalia

Animal: A live hamster or a guinea pig with a collar or a harness on a long leash.
(This is for the closing scene.)

Stage Arrangement:



The Script:

PROLOGUE

SONG 1: "An Up-Beat Christmas Song" (or a medley of them)

Choose a song that captures the joy of the season. The choir, clad in merry Christmas colors, might enter from all sides, through the audience, taking their places on stage as they sing.

Welcome: Adam

(Transition from the opening song, then set the stage for a new look at the Christmas story: the story of "God with us.")

SONG 2: "Emmanuel Medley"

More sacred-type Christmas Carols focusing on the birth of Christ.

(Stage the singers all around the stage, so they surround "The Living Room" area where Grandpa and Jeanne will do their scene, center stage.)

LIGHTS: FADE OUT ON SINGERS AND UP ON GRANDPA, POOL 2

ACT 1

Scene 1: "The Loss"

(Grandpa is seated in an over-stuffed chair at the center of the stage, asleep with the opened Bible on his chest. Jeanne enters, from UR dressed in a flannel nightgown and carrying post-it notes and a marker. She is peering all around, putting up post-it notes that say "Beware of Cats," or "Hamsters, Come Home," etc. Some notes have direction signs on them and read "This Way Home." She puts the notes on the lamp, the bookshelf, the chair, and on the floor. She is calling softly.)

Jeanne: Fred, Barney.
Where are you?
Fred, come out. Barney, come...

(She stops in mid-sentence as she sees grandpa asleep on the chair. She thinks he is dead and runs over to him. She shakes him violently.)

Grandpa! Don't die!
Grandpa, please, wake-up!

Grandpa: *(startled)* What? Who?
What's the matter?
Oh, Jeanne, it's you.
You scared me right out of my skin, little one.

Jeanne: I thought you were dead!

Grandpa: No such luck, Princess;
I'll have to stick around another day.

Jeanne: Don't talk like that.
You promised Mommy you'd stop making jokes about dying.
You're not funny!

Grandpa: Lots of people agree with you on that one.

Jeanne: What?

Grandpa: That I'm not funny.

Jeanne: (*comforting him*) Yeah, but you keep trying.

Grandpa: I know, I'm trying; very trying.

Jeanne: (*beginning to lecture him*)
You can't be too careful when you have heart trouble.
It's a very serious thing when your heart attacks you.

Grandpa: Does what?

Jeanne: That's what mommy said could happen;
you could have a heart attack,
and you have to be very careful.

(*making him comfortable*)
There, now; don't get excited.

Grandpa: (*pushing her away*) Okay, okay, enough of this heart attack business.
If I have any more fanatical female fussing,
I'm gonna' fume!

(*regaining his composure*)
So, tell me;
why are you up at this late hour?
This whole family knocked off hours, ago.

Jeanne: (*in a warning tone*) Grandpa!

Grandpa: (*defensively*) What?

Jeanne: *(warning him about dying jokes)* Knocked off?

Grandpa: Okay, went to bed.
What are you doing up?

Jeanne: I can't sleep.
I'm too worried about Fred and Barney.

(She sits down on the floor and leans on his knee.)

Grandpa: *(leaning down to her)*
You haven't found those hamsters, yet?

Jeanne: No, and I've been looking all day!

Grandpa: You shouldn't have left the cage door open.
I told you, hamsters don't understand an "open door policy."

Jeanne: I told them not to leave, but they didn't listen.

Grandpa: You should have locked them in.
Hamsters aren't very smart.

Jeanne: I didn't want them to feel trapped,
like they were prisoners or something.
That would have ruined everything.
I worked so hard on that cage.
Did you see it?

Grandpa: Yes Princess, I saw it.
It was pretty swank,
especially those little beds you made with matching blankets,
and that "Home Sweet Home" sign should have been enough to make 'em stay.

Jeanne: I'm so worried about them.
They need me to take care of them;
they don't know how to survive unless I'm right there.

Grandpa: *(putting his arm around her)* Maybe they aren't Fred and Barney;
maybe they're Betty and Wilma and they went shopping!

Jeanne: Grandpa! You're not funny!

Grandpa: Yeah, you keep bringing that up.
Well, Princess, this may be a hard thing for you to swallow,
but did you put the cats out?

Jeanne: Did you have to say swallow?

Grandpa: Sorry.

Jeanne: Yes, I put the cats out as soon I found out my hamsters ran away.
I've tried everything, Grandpa,
and I just can't find them.

(She begins to cry.)

Grandpa: *(comforting her)* Princess, I'm so sorry your hamsters ran away,
but maybe they'll come back.

Jeanne: *(through her tears)* I told them not to go out,
but they didn't listen,
now they're lost!

Grandpa: *(grabbing for ideas)* Uh.... Hey,
how about if I read you a story to take your mind off of what you lost, okay?
How about it?

Jeanne: What kind of story?

Grandpa: Well, it's Christmas...how about a Christmas story.

(Pulling several children's books off of a nearby stack. He shows each one to Jeanne, but she's not interested.)

How about this one, The Littlest Angel?

(He removes the post-it note that is on the book. Jeanne shakes her head, "No." Grandpa holds up another book.)

How about The Grinch?

Jeanne: No, I'm not in the mood for those,
besides, you cheat when you read this one.

(pointing to The Grinch)

Grandpa: Cheat?

Jeanne: Yeah, you turn two pages at one time,
and you think I can't tell?
Well, I can.

Grandpa: You are pretty slick!
So, what do you want me to read to you?

Jeanne: *(pointing to the Bible on his lap)* This story.

Grandpa: The Bible?

Jeanne: Yes. Read me the whole thing.
I'm not sleepy.

Grandpa: Jeanne,
I can't read this to you in one night!

Jeanne: It's okay if you cheat a little,
but read the main parts.

(Grandpa opens his Bible and settles down to read. He is about to start, then peeks over the Bible at Jeanne.)

Grandpa: You and I have a lot in common with the main character in this story.

Jeanne: *(surprised)* We do?

Grandpa: Yep. He's got heart trouble, and He lost his hamsters.

Jeanne: What?
Grandpa! That's the Bible, and it's the story about God.

Grandpa: I know.
God's beloved creatures ran away,
and they've been causing Him heart trouble ever since. Listen:
(reading from his Bible in Genesis)
"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth..."

This story continues as Grandpa tells Jeanne the story of God's attempts to restore fellowship with man throughout the Old Testament covenants, finally culminating in the New Testament, at the cross, as God takes the punishment on Himself that was intended for man.

This revelation for Jeanne makes her a "little missionary," who shares this truth with her obstinate teenage brother Keith, who never could understand why God would want to come into this world as a human being.

The remainder of this script is an outline of the kinds of songs needed and the general content of the dialogue in the various scenes that weave the songs together into a Christmas musical.

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ACT 1

Scene 2: “Missing?”

(In Jeanne’s room, Beth, Jeanne's Mom, searches for her.)

MUSIC: INTRO MUSIC FOR A SONG ABOUT GOD'S LOVE (Song 3)

ACT 1

Scene 3: “Free to Choose”

(Return to Jeanne and grandpa’s dialogue about our freedom of choice.)

ACT 1

Scene 4: “Bedtime”

(Mom enters “The Living Room.” She marvels that Jeanne is still awake; dialogue about the Christmas Eve service. Beth takes Jeanne up to bed.)

ACT 1

Scene 5: “Goodnight”

(Mom is seated on Jeanne’s bed, sings her a lullaby)

SONG 3: “A Song About God's Love”

(Mom leaves, the lights fade slowly on the room.)

SONG 4: “A Joyful Children’s Song”

(Use some dry ice, or synthesized music to create a dream sequence, but make it clear that this takes place in Jeanne’s dream. You may want the toys to actually enter Jeanne’s bedroom, coax her out of bed, and have her join the parade.)

ACT 2

Scene 1: “Sleepless”

(Back at center stage, Grandpa has fallen asleep again. Jeanne enters quickly, looking out the imaginary window, down center. She startles Grandpa with her entrance. She talks Grandpa into looking for the hamsters in the barn. They stumble onto a rehearsal of the next evening's Christmas Eve program in “The Barn.”)

ACT 2

Scene 2: “Rehearsal”

(At “The Barn,” people are milling around. Adam is organizing the performers. After the scene is established as a rehearsal with small talk and the arranging of props, Jeanne and Grandpa enter. Grandpa motions to Jeanne that they will look for the hamsters later; he hushes Jeanne. They sit together on a bale of hay and watch the performance.)

SONG 5: “A Unique Christmas Song”

Something done in “Currier & Ives” costumes, or 16th century “Madrigal” costumes, something that does not “fit into” the traditional choir concert.

SONG 6: “Another Unique Song” (perhaps a quartet or a trio)

(The entire group exits the stage. No one has noticed Grandpa and Jeanne hiding behind the bales of hay.)

ACT 2

Scene 3: “The Search”

(Jeanne and Grandpa peek out from behind the hay. Jeanne slowly begins to search for her hamsters through the hay. Grandpa tells her the story of God's search for His people throughout the covenants of the Old Testament.)

ACT 2

Scene 4: “Discovered”

(Jeanne's brother, Keith and her father, Allen, enter the Barn. Grandpa and Jeanne are startled at the fury of the entrance, but Alan and Keith do not notice them. Keith and Allen argue about Keith's unwillingness to attend the Christmas Eve service because he cannot understand why God would want to become a person. The whole idea seems silly to him, so why celebrate Christmas if he doesn't believe in its meaning?)

(Keith storms out of the barn leaving Alan staring after him, helpless. Grandpa gets up and takes Jeanne by the hand. Alan notices them, and Grandpa reminds him that Alan was stubborn when he was young, too.)

ACT 3

Scene 1: “A Busy Day”

MUSIC: Play some instrumental medley of Christmas songs

(The family is bustling with the business of Christmas preparations. Jeanne walks across the stage with some firewood. Mom walks across the stage with gift-wrap and ribbon. Christmas music is playing. Dad carries large boxes from the opposite direction. This continues several times. Improvise the activity of Christmas. Mom puts a present under the tree; Dad walks by and adjusts the star on top. Jeanne comes in again and secretly shakes a present, etc. Finally, they cross and stop for a moment.)

(Mom and Dad exit talking about Keith and pointing out to the barn.)

ACT 3

Scene 2: “The Rescue”

(Jeanne enters “The Barn” and sees her brother, Keith. Jeanne shares the story of her search for her hamsters with Keith, and tells him the amazing story of God becoming a man that she heard from her Grandpa.

She tells him that if she could become a hamster, then she could find her hamsters and speak to them in their own language. That is what God did; He came to us in a form that we could understand, that is the miracle of Christmas.

She helps Keith understand "why" God came to earth, and he finally comes around to going to the Christmas Eve service.)

ACT 4 “The Christmas Concert”

This is the “formal” choir concert. The choir will have had plenty of time to change from their merry opening song clothes, into a more formal “choir-look,” if they so desire.

(The family enters down the center aisle of the church, all together. Keith is with them. He is smiling as he is being pulled along by Jeanne. The family takes a seat and enjoys the concert.)

ACT 5 “The Reunion”

(Keith enters “The Barn,” holding a hamster in his hands, the leash trails behind him. Jeanne and Grandpa walk a few steps behind. He tells Jeanne that "If it worked for God, maybe it will work for us," and he puts the hamster down, and all three of them follow the little hamster, on a leash, through the barn.)

Closing Song

The End