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Family Plays

CHRISTMAS PLAYS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES



How Santa Claus Discovered Christmas

Drama by

MARTIN L. PETERSON

'Twas the Night Before Columbus Day ...
I Mean Christmas

Drama by

MAGGIE LAWRENCE

The Angels' Greatest Message

Drama by

SANDRA POUND

CHRISTMAS PLAYS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

Drama. By Maggie Lawrence, Sandra Pond and Martin L. Peterson. Three completely different short plays: *'Twas the Night Before Columbus Day I Mean Christmas* (9 m. or w.) by Maggie Lawrence presents the funniest recitation of the famous poem you've ever heard. A nerdy character who brags about his infallible memory enters the stage to recite the poem and messes up every line ... to the enormous delight of children in the audience, who prompt him. *Most of the 9 cast members may be men or women. Approximate running time: 20 minutes.* *The Angels' Greatest Message* (6+ m. or w.) by Sandra Pond presents the Christmas story in a refreshing new way, from the point of view of the angels who are chosen to announce the birth of Jesus to the shepherds. The Littlest Angel, who has dreamed of going to earth to pet a little lamb, begs to go along. *Approximate running time: 15 to 20 minutes.* *How Santa Claus Discovered Christmas* (12+ m. or w.) by Martin L. Peterson tells about the Christmas Eve when Santa Claus sprained his ankle and was confined to a wheelchair. Just as he is giving up hopes of delivering toys to all the little children in the world, a young boy shows up and offers to help him—and does. When Santa thinks they have finished the job, the little boy tells him there is one child left, and leads Santa to Bethlehem and the manger, where Santa sees the Wise Men delivering the world's first Christmas presents. *Flexible. A children's choir may be added if desired. Approximate running time: 30 to 40 minutes.* All three plays together make a full evening's entertainment. *Approximate running time: 65 to 80 minutes. Code: CL5.*

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Christmas Plays for
Young Audiences

The Angels' Greatest Message

by
Sandra R. Pound

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SANDRA R. POUND

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(THE ANGELS' GREATEST MESSAGE)

ABOUT THE PLAY

“The Angels’ Greatest Message” is a simple play, easy to stage. With humor, emotion, and a dramatically symbolic ending, it presents the Christmas story in a refreshing new way.

The cast is flexible, with a minimum of eight characters and, with the addition of more angels and shepherds, virtually no maximum. Most parts may be played by men or women.

The few props and absence of scenery make the play easy to tour. It may be played on any available space—a stage, the chancel of a church, a classroom or playroom, a lawn . . .

Its message will live in the hearts of your audiences.

Playing time about 15 minutes.

THE ANGELS' GREATEST MESSAGE

Cast of Characters

MATHIAS—a little angel

LEGARE
DANIUS
IONS
CUSH

} Angels

GABRIEL—God's private secretary

CHORUS ANGEL 1
CHORUS ANGEL 2
CHORUS ANGEL 3
CHORUS ANGEL 4

} May be double cast with above angels,
or more angels may be added

SHEPHERDS, two—or as many as desired

Most of the characters may be male or female

Place: Heaven and Earth

Time: 2000 Earth years ago

THE ANGELS' GREATEST MESSAGE

PRODUCTION NOTES

Properties

Small desk cluttered with papers; desk chair—brought on by Mathias (and helpers if necessary) during 5-second blackout between Scenes 1 and 2. Desk is removed during blackout between Scenes 2 and 3.

Several sheep, including a small lamb—brought on by shepherds during blackout between Scenes 2 and 3. Sheep may be real, toys, or cardboard cutouts covered with wool.

Shepherd's crooks or staffs—carried by one or two (or more) shepherds
Manger—placed on Stage Right while Mathias is playing with the lamb

Costumes

Angels may be costumed simply, in white robes, or imaginatively in ethereal rainbow-colored gauzy cloth. There are other possibilities, of course. Gabriel's costume may be a bit more formal. Shepherds may wear typical costumes as pictured in illustrated Bibles.

Music

Soft background music, if desired, can enhance the action, emotion, and humor of the play. There are many sacred songs, Christmas songs, and angelic tunes that would be appropriate.

Lights and Special Effects

The only necessary lighting effects are the blackouts called for in the script. If blackouts are impossible (for example, if the play is presented outdoors in daylight), Mathias's desk may be brought on and struck during a pause in the action. In either case the break between scenes must be very brief; nothing can destroy the rhythm and mood of a play more than a long dead spot.

More elaborate lighting effects may be used, of course; perhaps a very bright stage for heaven, a slightly dimmer stage for earth, a stage bathed in blue (rather than a blackout) for the descent of the angels to earth (Mathias's final speech in Scene 2) and the ascent of the angels to heaven

at the end of the play. Mathias's scene with the lamb and the shepherds at the manger may be played in pools of light rather than full stage lights.

Imaginative special effects can add interest: clouds hugging the stage (made with a fog or smoke machine, or dry ice dropped in water) in Scene 1; a fire (made with flickering lights, *not* a real fire) for the shepherds.

The Set

The play is designed for a bare stage, the chancel area of a church, almost any large room, or an open space outdoors. The few set props may be brought on by the actors, as noted under "properties."

THE ANGELS' GREATEST MESSAGE

Scene 1

[ANGELS are lounging comfortably in Heaven. MATHIAS enters excitedly]

MATHIAS. Hey, have you guys noticed anything strange around here lately?

CUSH. Lately? Do you mean lately as of the past ten centuries? Or lately as of the last ten thousand years?

LEGARE. Mathias, "lately" is too ambiguous a word for this place. Please, be more precise.

MATHIAS. All right, for Heaven's sake!

[At this remark all the ANGELS turn and stare at Mathias]

MATHIAS. Hey, wait a minute! It slipped out! I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to say that. *[He wipes his forehead]*

IONS. After all these millions of years, it seems you could remember.

LEGARE. You've picked up a human habit, Mathias. You wouldn't want the Boss to think you'd ever want to BE human.

MATHIAS. *[Hangs his head shamefully]* I have a confession to make . . . sometimes . . . sometimes . . . I do want to be human.

[The other ANGELS gasp and look horrified]

MATHIAS. I would. I really would. I'd like to go to Earth and watch TV and have a VCR and . . .

CUSH. Hold it! Those things haven't been invented yet on Earth. They're hundreds of years away yet.

MATHIAS. Well, I'd still like to be human sometimes. I'd like to walk on land instead of these golden streets. And—and I'd like to play with the animals. I'd like to hold a puppy or a tiny kitten. How I'd love to hold a baby lamb in my arms for just once.

LEGARE. I must admit that I dreamed of being human once, but then I thought of the darkness. I actually believe I would dissipate without the Light of Heaven.

IONS. And what about all that human pain and suffering?

CUSH. Not to mention [*lowering his voice*] you-know-what.

LEGARE. Oh, yes, sin. I shutter to think of it. Human sin. Why, it would tarnish you for the remainder of eternity.

CUSH. And who knows how much longer that will be.

IONS. Surely you haven't considered the consequences, Mathias.

MATHIAS. Yes, I have. And I know I would be miserable without the Light of Heaven for He is sweeter than words can say. I feel guilty about it, but still I would like to live on earth for just a heavenly moment. [*Excitedly*] That's why I've been noticing something peculiar going on.

LEGARE. What peculiar things are you referring to, Mathias?

MATHIAS. I'm talking about Gabriel. He's on a trip to Earth now, as we speak. And you know that he's the private secretary to the Chief. So, something is going down, er, something important is underway between Earth and Heaven.

DANIUS. We've heard about the Great Plan for thousands of years, but we've never been given a time schedule. No one except the Chief himself knows when the Great Plan might actually be put into effect.

CUSH. The Great Plan?

IONS. The Great Plan of Heaven. The Chief, the Almighty Himself, will send the Light of Heaven, that is, His Only Son Jesus, into the world to save mankind by taking their sin upon himself.

CUSH. Oh, sure, now I remember. I used to get so excited about it, but I've waited so long, and, to put it mildly, man has sunken so low in you-know-what I thought maybe God had decided NOT to risk His Precious Son Jesus on such a worthless bunch.

MATHIAS. Cush, you've got a bad attitude.

IONS. You know how God loves man. We've heard it time after time after time.

DANIUS. It is his pleasure to give mankind this kingdom.

CUSH. But they make such a mess of things. And to think, you, Mathias, would really want to live among them.

[*GABRIEL enters*]

GABRIEL. Attention! Please, brethren, lend me your attention. [*All ANGELS gather around Gabriel*]

MATHIAS. What'd I tell ya, huh?