

CHRISTMAS LETTERS: THE MUSICAL

Based on the Play by Gail Gaymer Martin
Music and Lyrics by Christy Long



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Christmas Letters: The Musical

A children's musical in letters and song

based on the play by Gail Gaymer Martin
music and lyrics by Christy Long

CAST OF CHARACTERS**Mother****Boy****Girl****Child 1****Child 2****Child 3****Child 4****Child 5****Child 6****Joseph****Mary****Innkeeper****Shepherd(s)****Angel(s)****Choir**

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PRODUCTION NOTES

Introduction

This children's Christmas musical is suitable for Sunday school or a Christian school. The program is written for twelve specific characters as well as shepherds and angels, which may be one or more children. It has been written for minimal memorization. Only three characters, the Mother, Boy, and Girl, must memorize a small number of lines. All the other speaking parts, which include six modern-day children, Joseph, Mary, and the Innkeeper, are in the form of letters, so they may be read and a microphone may be used, if needed. Other children may be involved in singing the songs interspersed between the reading of the letters.

The letters written from the shepherd and the angel may be divided into shorter responses so that the part may be assigned to more children. The letter preceding those readings would then be addressed to "Dear Shepherds" or "Dear Angels," rather than the singular.

The letters written to the biblical characters will be signed by the name of the actual child reading the letter, and the biblical character will address the answer to that specific child. If the letters are assigned in smaller parts to involve more children, the Bible character may answer, "Dear Children" or "Dear _____ and _____" (using their names), for example.

Setting, props, and costumes

This musical may be presented in the church sanctuary, a Sunday school area, or on a stage. No backdrop is necessary. The scene opens with an easy chair (or any chair) at Center Stage. The opening three characters may remain on the stage throughout the program if desired.

For greatest effect, the modern letters should be written on plain notebook or computer paper, but the letters of the biblical characters should be written on a parchment-type paper or buff-colored paper that is rolled like a scroll.

Simple costuming may be used for the various biblical characters. The modern-day children dress accordingly. The Mother could wear an apron or dress in a more mature style, or you may ask a teen or adult, such as a Sunday school teacher, to fill that role.

Music

This musical features six original songs with piano accompaniment. One song follows each pair of letters. Solo parts are suggested throughout. Smaller groups may prefer that the choir sing every song without solos, or various groups of children may sing one song, divided according to Sunday school classes or grade level. Do what works for your group's size, age, and experience.

SONG LIST

1. Part of the Plan
2. Little Baby Boy
3. Maybe a Stable
4. Hey, I'm Tryin' to Work Here!
5. Pierce the Darkness
6. Welcome

1 (MOTHER enters with a letter in her hand.)

2 **MOTHER:** Here's a letter to you from Grandma. *(She sits on a*
3 *chair.)* Come here and listen. *(CHILDREN enter and sit at her*
4 *feet while MOTHER reads.)*

5 Dear Grandchildren,

6 Because your grandpa is recovering from a bad case of
7 the flu, we cannot be with you this Christmas, but you are
8 always in our minds and hearts, even when miles
9 separate us.

10 Our Christmas gifts to you will arrive in the mail, but
11 the best gift we can give you cannot be delivered by the
12 post office. It is our gift of love to you, just as Christmas
13 celebrates the best gift of all, God's love to us through the
14 birth of Jesus.

15 As you enjoy all the Christmas surprises, always keep
16 God's gift centered in your heart, for that is the most
17 important and precious gift you will receive.

18 All our love, Grandma and Grandpa *(MOTHER folds letter.)*
19 It's nice Grandma let you know why she can't come, and
20 also what Christmas means to her. Letters are wonderful
21 ways to share our news and our thoughts.

22 **GIRL:** *(Rising)* Let's write a letter to Grandma after Christmas
23 and tell her all of the things that happened here during
24 the holiday. *(BOY rises.)*

25 **BOY:** Good idea. You know, *(Pause)* what if we could write
26 letters and find out about all the things that happened
27 when Jesus was born?

28 **GIRL:** The Bible tells us what happened!

29 **BOY:** But I mean like how the shepherds felt when the angels
30 sang, "Glory to God in the highest" *(Luke 2:14).*

31 **GIRL:** That would be really interesting! We could write to
32 Joseph and Mary, and even the baby Jesus. Just
33 imagine — *(As the first reader, CHILD 1, steps forward, the*
34 *other characters are seated.)*

35

36 **Letter to Joseph**

37 **CHILD 1:** *(Steps forward with letter and reads.)* Dear Joseph,

38 The Bible tells us that an angel appeared to you in a

dream and told you about Mary and the baby Jesus. Were you frightened when you saw the angel? How did you feel when you were told that Mary was going to have a baby? Did you wish you didn't have to go to Bethlehem?

Love, _____ (CHILD 1's name) (*CHILD 1 exits or rejoins CHOIR as JOSEPH enters.*)

JOSEPH: (*An older child dressed as Joseph walks forward, opens the scroll, and reads.*) Dear _____, (CHILD 1's name) After I was engaged to Mary, I learned that she was expecting a baby. I was upset and very surprised. I could not believe this news. I did not want to hurt Mary or embarrass her, but I thought that perhaps I should not marry her. I didn't know the right thing to do; I was very confused. I thought I would just quietly tell her that we would not be married.

One night an angel came to me in a dream, and when I woke I thought about what the angel had said. I wasn't really frightened of the angel, but I was astounded. I knew that it was a message from God. The angel told me that I should make Mary my wife without being fearful. He explained that the baby was from the Holy Spirit. I did what the angel told me and took Mary as my wife. I cared for her and also for Jesus when he was born.

I was worried about the trip to Bethlehem. I knew it was a long journey, but we were legally bound to go and be counted for the census. Even more importantly, it was prophesied in the Bible that Jesus was to be born there. It said, "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel" (Matthew 2:6). I knew that this journey happened according to God's plan.

Signed, Joseph (*JOSEPH stays at Center Stage while CHOIR comes forward for the song.*)

SONG: "Part of the Plan"

Verse 1:

ALL: (*Singing*) Joseph, Joseph, do not fear.

1 God has put the baby there.
 2 You have got a job to do.
 3 What the angel says is true.

4

5 Chorus:

6 It's all a part of the plan.
 7 It has been said, it has been told,
 8 "A king will come born of man."
 9 It's all a part of the plan.

10

11 Verse 2:

12 Joseph, Joseph, travel far.
 13 Soon the baby will be born.
 14 God will help you find a way.
 15 God will give you strength today.

16

17 Repeat chorus

18

19 Verse 3:

20 Joseph, Joseph, aren't you glad
 21 You are baby Jesus' dad?
 22 Caring for the Holy One,
 23 Jesus, Savior, God's own son.

24

25 Chorus: *(With modifications)*

26 It's all a part of the plan.
 27 It has been said, it has been told,
 28 "A king will come born of man."
 29 It's all a part,
 30 It's all a part of the plan.
 31 It has been said, it has been told,
 32 "A king will come born of man."
 33 It's all a part,
 34 It's all a part,
 35 It's all a part of the plan. *(CHILDREN sit down. JOSEPH*
 36 *exits.)*

37 Letter to Mary

38 CHILD 2: *(Walks forward and reads.)* Dear Mary,

How exciting to be the mother of Jesus! How did you feel when you were told by the angel that you were to have God's son? Were you worried about what people would say? Were you afraid to travel to Bethlehem to register for the tax so close to Jesus' birth?

Love, _____ (CHILD 2's name) (*As CHILD 2 exits or rejoins CHOIR, MARY rises.*)

MARY: (*An older child dressed as Mary steps forward and reads.*)

Dear _____, (CHILD 2's name)

When the angel appeared to me, I was frightened, but he quickly told me not to be afraid. When I learned that I was to be the mother of God's son, I could not believe it. I was unmarried. I was not a special person. I didn't understand why I was chosen. I didn't even have time to think about what people would say or what Joseph would say. All I knew was that I was chosen by God, and I felt very blessed. I praised him and I thanked him for the opportunity to serve him.

It was very hard to travel to Bethlehem. The trip was so long. It took days to get there. Joseph tried to make the trip easier by placing me on the donkey, but I was very uncomfortable because the baby was to be born very soon. We were so discouraged when we got to Bethlehem and couldn't find a place to stay. A kind innkeeper let us use his stable, and that is where Jesus was born.

Signed, Mary (*MARY stays at Center Stage while CHOIR comes forward for the song.*)

SONG: "Little Baby Boy"

Verse 1:

ALL: (*Singing*) Little baby boy,

Wide-eyed innocence.

Little baby boy,

Wrapped with love and care.

Little baby boy,

In your mother's arms.

Little baby boy,

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1 Shielding you from harm.

2

3 MARY: *(Singing)* A child like any child,

4 My little baby boy.

5

6 Chorus:

7 Rock-a-bye my baby,

8 Hear this lullaby.

9 Rock-a-bye my baby boy.

10 When I hold you close,

11 Look into your eyes,

12 I gaze into the face of God.

13

14 Verse 2:

15 ALL: *(Singing)* Little baby boy,

16 How did you get here?

17 Little baby boy,

18 You're a miracle.

19 Little baby boy,

20 Oh, why do they come,

21 Bowing down to you, little baby boy?

22

23 MARY: *(Singing)* A child like any child,

24 My little baby boy.

25

26 Repeat chorus

27

28 Verse 3:

29 Little baby boy,

30 In my heart I know,

31 Little baby boy,

32 Soon you will grow.

33 Little baby boy,

34 You must do,

35 Little baby boy,

36 God's will for you.

37 But for now you're still my child,

38 My little baby boy.

Repeat chorus

ALL: (*Singing*) Little baby boy, little baby boy, little baby boy.
(*CHILDREN sit down. MARY exits.*)

Letter to the Innkeeper

CHILD 3: (*CHILD 3 comes forward with a letter and reads.*) Dear

Innkeeper,

Why didn't you or another innkeeper find a room for Mary and Joseph? What made you decide to let them use your stable?

Love, _____ (*CHILD 3's name*) (*CHILD 3 exits or rejoins CHOIR as the INNKEEPER rises.*)

INNKEEPER: (*An older child dressed like an innkeeper steps forward and reads.*) Dear _____, (*CHILD 3's name*)

Bethlehem was a small village. When Caesar Augustus decreed that everyone must be registered for a taxation in the town of their ancestors, many, many people came to Bethlehem. We were not prepared to house so many travelers to our village. As it was, all the innkeepers of the city used every available space. Even the townspeople opened their homes to distant relatives, but there was not enough room.

On that night, when I looked at the couple at my door, I knew that they must have a place to stay. The baby was to be born soon, and so I thought of the best place I could. Our stable was attached to the inn, as they usually were, and it received warmth from the inn as well as from the animals housed there. I thought clean hay and warmth was better than no place at all. (*Pause*) Although, if I had known who was being born, I would have given them my own bed. The stable was not a place for the Son of God to be born.

Signed, The Innkeeper (*INNKEEPER stays at Center Stage while CHOIR comes forward for the song.*)

1 **SONG: “Maybe a Stable”**

2

3 **Verse 1:**

4 **ALL:** (*Singing*) No room in the inn,

5 No bed to be had.

6 Not a nook, not a cranny,

7 Not an inch to lay your head.

8 Ask who you will,

9 The story’s the same,

10 Because of the census,

11 The king is to blame.

12 It’s wall-to-wall people like you’ve never seen.

13 The folks in this town are packed in like sardines.

14

15 **Chorus:**

16 **INNKEEPER:** (*Singing*) Maybe a stable, maybe a stall.

17 Clean hay and a manger or nothing at all.

18 I’ve nothing to offer this Bethlehem night,

19 So maybe a stable will do for tonight.

20

21 **Verse 2:**

22 **ALL:** (*Singing*) On this silent night, on this holy night

23 King Jesus is laid in a manger tonight.

24 Who would have known, who would have guessed

25 A smelly old barn is where Jesus would rest?

26

27 **INNKEEPER:** (*Singing*) I’m not a cruel person, believe me, it’s
28 true.

29 The fact is the same, there’s no room for you.

30

31 **Chorus:** (*Partial*)

32 Maybe a stable, maybe a stall.

33 Clean hay and a manger or nothing at all.

34 I’ve nothing to offer this Bethlehem night,

35 So maybe a stable ...

36 **Bridge:**

37 I can see you are weary from your long, rough ride,

38 But really, dear Mary, there’s no room inside.

1 But if you are willing to bunk with a cow,
 2 Then, yes, a room is available now.

3

4 Chorus: (*Partial*)

5 Maybe a stable, maybe a stall.
 6 Clean hay and a manger or nothing at all.
 7 I've nothing to offer this Bethlehem night, so ...

8

9 Repeat chorus

10

11 ALL: (*Singing*) Will do for tonight.

12 Maybe a stable. (*CHOIR sits down. INNKEEPER exits.*)

13

14 Letter to the Shepherd

15 CHILD 4: (*CHILD 4 steps forward with a letter and reads.*) Dear

16 Shepherd,

17 What does a shepherd do? Is it lonely at night on the
 18 hillside? On the night that Jesus was born, did you know
 19 something was happening in Bethlehem? Were you afraid
 20 of the angels?

21 Love, _____ (*CHILD 4's name*) (*CHILD 4 exits or joins*
 22 *CHOIR as the SHEPHERD rises.*)

23 SHEPHERD: (*An older child dressed like a shepherd steps forward*
 24 *and reads.*) Dear _____, (*CHILD 4's name*)

25 Shepherding is an important job. When there is grass on
 26 the hills outside the villages, shepherds take the sheep
 27 there to graze. We don't have a lot of space to grow food
 28 for animals, and so the hills help us until the weather is
 29 too cold or wet. Then we return to the villages and use
 30 food we have stored.

31 Most shepherds like their work. At night, we sit
 32 around and tell stories or play musical instruments and
 33 sing songs. Often these are songs of praise to God, called
 34 Psalms. We feel close to God when we are out in nature.

35 On the night that Jesus was born, we were watching
 36 the sheep as usual, but that night we noticed a special
 37 brightness in the sky over Bethlehem. We wondered what
 38 it might be. Suddenly, the heavens seemed to open with a

brilliant light, and we were very frightened. Some shepherds covered their eyes, and some fell to their knees. The angel's voice filled the sky, and others joined in, telling us about the miracle in Bethlehem. It was then that we understood about the strange light and some of us decided to go into Bethlehem and see for ourselves what the angels told us.

Signed, A Shepherd (*The SHEPHERD(S) stay at Center Stage while CHOIR comes forward for the song. If using an ANGEL for verse 3, he or she also comes forward.*)

SONG: "Hey, I'm Tryin' to Work Here!"

Verse 1:

SHEPHERD(S): (*Singing*) Hey, I'm tryin' to work here,
 Watchin' the sheep eat and sleep.
 Hey, I'm tryin' to work here.
 Guarding them from the wild beasts.

Chorus:

ALL: (*Singing*) Angels burst upon the scene,
 Filling the starry night with a bright shining light.
 Listen, shepherds, to the news.
 Lay down your staff, go see.
 It's okay, leave your sheep.
 Jesus Christ is born!

Verse 2:

SHEPHERD(S): (*Singing*) Hey, I'm tryin' to work here.
 Shepherding's no nine to five.
 Hey, I'm tryin' to work here.
 Keeping these dumb sheep alive.

ALL: Repeat chorus

Verse 3:

SHEPHERD(S) or ANGEL: (*Singing*) Hey, I'm tryin' to work
 here,
 Telling the world he has come.

1 Hey, I'm tryin' to work here.
 2 Jesus, Savior, God's own son!

3

4 Repeat chorus

5

6 SHEPHERD(S): (*Singing*) Hey, I'm tryin' to work here.

7 Hey, I'm tryin' to work here.

8 Hey, I'm tryin' to work here.

9 Hey, I'm tryin' to work here. (*CHOIR sits down.*
 10 *SHEPHERD(S) exit.*)

11

12 Letter to an Angel

13 CHILD 5: (*CHILD 5 steps forward with a letter and reads.*) Dear
 14 Angel,

15 What is it like to be an angel? Do you know God? What do
 16 you do in heaven? How did you feel when you appeared
 17 to the shepherds?

18 Love, _____ (*CHILD 5's name*)

19 (*CHILD 5 exits or joins CHOIR as the ANGEL(S) rise.*)

20 ANGEL: (*An older child steps forward dressed like an angel and*
 21 *reads.*) Dear _____, (*CHILD 5's name*)

22 Angels are God's messengers. We appear on earth to tell
 23 people important things that God wants to announce,
 24 just as we did to the shepherds on the night Jesus was
 25 born, or like we did when we appeared to Joseph and
 26 Mary. Our news is not always good news. Sometimes we
 27 bring warnings to people; we tell them what they must do
 28 to save themselves and their homes and villages.

29 Yes, we know God, but so do you. The difference is, we
 30 live with God now, but you must wait until God is ready
 31 for you to come to him. When we are not delivering
 32 messages from God, we look down from heaven and
 33 watch over you. We are not always seen, but we are
 34 always there.

35 The night Jesus was born was a special night for all
 36 people, as well as for angels. We brought the world the
 37 wonderful news that Jesus was born in Bethlehem!

38 Signed, An Angel (*The ANGEL(S) stay at Center Stage while*



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