

THE BEST PLACE TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

Story by Eleanor Miller
Music by Roland Caire, Jr.
& Eleanor Miller



CHRISTIANPUBLISHERS

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The Best Place to Celebrate Christmas

A musical tour of Christmas around the world

story by Eleanor Miller

music by Roland Caire, Jr. and Eleanor Miller

This play is dedicated to Stacey Vesterfelt, my very first choir member, and now my very special friend.

Eleanor Miller

The authors wish to thank their families: Wally, Cherie, Jamie, and Patrick Miller and Gwen, Brandon, Graham, and Alex Caire. And, of course, God, who makes it all possible.

Eleanor Miller
Dr. Roland A. Caire, Jr.

CAST

Narrator

Teacher

Teen Angels

(Unlimited number. Speaking parts for 7)

Little Angels

(Unlimited number. Speaking parts for 11)

Confused Little Angel

St. Lucia

(Nonspeaking role)

Joseph

Mary

(Nonspeaking role)

Shepherds

(Optional number)

Wise Men *(Three)*

Innkeepers *(Two)*

Chorus *(Angels)*

Note: Cast list can be adjusted to accommodate size of performance group. Extras may be part of the choir and/or representatives of each location: girls who process with St. Lucia (Sweden), African children, Island residents, Tannenbaum actors (Germany), California kids, carolers (France), Spanish dancers (Mexico).

PRODUCTION NOTES

Costumes

The entire cast is dressed in angel attire. Special characters in the cast are dressed in the same angel pattern with the addition of fabric remnants, hats, or whatever is appropriate to achieve the proper effect.

Little Angels may dress in traditional white angel gowns. We recommend *not* using wings since they restrict movement. We found it best to have all Little Angels, Shepherds, Wise Men, Innkeepers, Mary and Joseph dress in the same pattern and white fabric.

Teen Angels may dress in more contemporary attire (white pants or tights and turtlenecks with a white tunic over it) to reflect an adolescent fashion sense.

Because the Nativity scene takes place in a Mexican setting, the costuming in this scene should reflect the culture. Mary can add a white lace mantilla or shawl over her head and shoulders. Joseph may wear a poncho or Mexican vest over his gown. The Wise Men may wear sombreros and ponchos and carry gifts. The Shepherds may carry staffs and wear vests like Joseph. The Innkeepers may drape a Mexican-print fabric over one shoulder.

The teacher may wear a more elaborate angel costume or an old-fashioned white lace dress.

Sets

A backdrop may be painted on fabric, foam board or plywood. The basic scene throughout the play is heaven. The setting is an old schoolhouse in heaven. The painted scene should be that of heaven and clouds with a schoolhouse top and the name of the school — “Angel Training Academy.”

Plywood risers of varying heights may be made to represent the old-time school benches. This serves a double purpose. It allows each child to be seen and gives the impression of a classroom. Bookshelves on wheels or a cart may be used for the

library scene while singing “Where, Oh Where?”

Props

Books, travel brochures, pens and paper are needed throughout the play. Also needed is a Bible.

Note: Each country will require additional sets, props and costuming.

Additional Sets, Props and Costumes According to Countries

Sweden

St. Lucia wears a lighted candle wreath on her head. You can purchase little battery-operated candles and set them in a little green garland wreath. She also carries a small basket of food. The little girls who follow her may wear white robes and hold lighted candles (these may be battery-operated also).

Africa

The children that make the pilgrimage up the mountaintop wear colorful fabric scarves on their heads (tied like turbans). They may also wear fabric tied around their waists.

The Islands

Atmosphere is essential here. Palm trees, beach chairs and tall cups or coconuts help set the mood. Costumes may be as simple as leis around the children’s necks. Sun hats, sunglasses and Hawaiian shirts with shorts may also be worn.

Germany

We chose to be creative here. We acted out the story of tannenbaum as the song was being sung. We did this behind a syke. The syke was made of white fabric stretched across a 6’ by 8’ wood frame illuminated from behind with a standard oodlight.

California

Props may include travel brochures, beach towels, beach chairs, a surfboard (made of cardboard or foam board, painted), a limo (made of cardboard or foamboard, painted), a camera, rollerblade skates, and shopping bags. The California kids should wear trendy summer clothes and sunglasses.

France

This scene takes place in front of a cathedral. You may choose to have one drawn and painted on cardboard. In front of the cathedral are carolers. Carolers should wear knit scarves and hats. They may stand by a lamp post and white picket fence.

Mexico

This is the Nativity scene. You will need a stable (very simple —just a frame) and a doll wrapped in a blanket to represent the baby Jesus. You may choose to have the innkeepers stand under a wood door frame (also very simple). The costumes should reflect the Mexican way of dress as previously explained. This is a very beautiful scene when creatively choreographed with Spanish dancers.

Note: The individual sets, props, and costumes can be as simple or as elaborate as you choose. However, remember that continuity is important. You want the action to flow well. You've got to make sure it's believable to your audience.

1 *(The lights are down. The TEEN ANGELS, LITTLE ANGELS*
 2 *and their TEACHER are On-stage as the NARRATOR speaks.)*

3 **NARRATOR:** Let's take a peek behind that cloud

4 And see what the angels are up to now

5 English, history, anatomy?

6 It's the Angel Training Academy!

7 *(Lights on. TEACHER is walking around checking students'*
 8 *work.)*

9 **TEACHER:** All right now, class, since Christmas is upon us, I
 10 have a *very* special assignment for you.

11 **TEEN 1:** Assignment?

12 **TEACHER:** Don't worry. *This* assignment is going to be *fun*!

13 **TEEN 2:** Fun?

14 **LITTLE ANGEL 1:** F--un!

15 **TEACHER:** Yes! Each of you is assigned to find the *best place* to
 16 celebrate Christmas.

17 **TEEN 3:** The *best place*? Like *where*?

18 **TEACHER:** That's the assignment!

19 **LITTLE ANGEL 2:** *(Thinking)* The best place to celebrate
 20 Christmas?

21 **TEEN 4:** I've got it! We could celebrate Christmas at a party!

22 **TEEN 5:** How about at the shopping mall? *(All agree excitedly.)*

23 **SONG:** "Christmastime Is Comin' for You!"

24 **ALL:** *(Singing)* The stores are stayin' open all night,

25 The Christmas trees are loaded with light,

26 There's gonna be a fancy to-do,

27 Christmastime is comin' for you!

28

29 The kids are on vacation from class,

30 Preparin' for a holiday blast,

31 The world is lookin' shiny and new,

32 Christmastime is comin' for you.

33

34 Ev'ry one is jumpin' 'cause the day is gettin' near,

35 We've got a lotta things to get done.

1 We're all gettin' ready for the party of the year,
2 A festival that's second to none!

3
4 It's a time to giggle and laugh,
5 Get ready for a bash-and-a-half,
6 Dig a hole and bury your blues.
7 Christmastime is comin' for you!

8 TEACHER: I'm not so sure you've got the right idea for this
9 assignment. You may need to go on a *search* for your
10 answer.

11 TEEN 1: A *search*?

12 LITTLE ANGEL 3: Like a scavenger hunt?

13 TEACHER: Well, you could say that. Instead of gathering
14 objects, you need to gather ideas, facts, clues!

15 LITTLE ANGEL 3: This *is* gonna be fun!

16 TEEN 6: Sounds like *research* project to me!

17 LITTLE ANGEL 4: Let's get started!

18 TEEN 2: But how?

19 TEEN 3: Where?

20 LITTLE ANGEL 4: Books are a pretty good place to start!

21 (*Lights out. TEACHER exits. Library scene.*)

22 NARRATOR: To the school library in search of a clue,
23 Wondering exactly *what* they should do.

24 The best place to celebrate

25 Is what they're assigned,

26 But there's just *one* book

27 They *really* have to find. (*Lights on. A group of LITTLE*
28 *ANGELS are struggling through books.*)

29 CONFUSED LITTLE ANGEL: This is *so hard*!

30 LITTLE ANGEL 5: Just keep looking. We've gotta find
31 something!

32 CONFUSED LITTLE ANGEL: I don't even know *what* I'm
33 looking for.

34 LITTLE ANGEL 6: Not *what* — *where*! We're looking for a *place*!

35 TEEN 5: Oh, come on! Finding the best place can't be *that*

1 hard. All we have to do is find out how different places
2 celebrate Christmas and decide which place is best!

3 TEEN 6: Yeah, she's right! How many different places can there
4 be?

5 LITTLE ANGEL 2: Well, I've heard that Christians all over the
6 world celebrate Christmas.

7 TEEN 2: The whole world? This is gonna take forever!

8 LITTLE ANGEL 6: We'd better get busy! (*All are lled with*
9 *excitement as the TEEN ANGELS pass out the books.*)

10 SONG: "Where, Oh Where?"

11 LITTLE ANGELS: (*Singing*)

12 We'd better take a look in each and every book,
13 There's gotta be a way to find
14 The answer that we need. All we have to do is read,
15 We've really gotta use our minds.

16
17 Where, oh, where can the best place be
18 To celebrate his birth?
19 Is it somewhere we can see,
20 Is it on heaven or earth?

21 TEEN ANGELS: (*Singing*)

22 Well, one thing is for sure, we only can endure
23 A very little time to find
24 The answer to all this. A party we could miss.
25 We don't want to work overtime.

26
27 Where, oh, where can the best place be?
28 Finding it could take all day.
29 It's as simple as A-B-C,
30 Let's find it and be on our way!

31 ALL: (*Singing*)

32 We've gotta search the world, each and every boy and girl
33 We've gotta find the book that tells
34 Places that all celebrate the best time of the year.
35 We've got to know, we just can't wait.

- 1 **TEEN ANGELS:** (*Singing*) She's put us to the test,
 2 **LITTLE ANGELS:** (*Singing*) We've gotta do our best,
 3 **ALL:** (*Singing*)
 4 To find the place to celebrate Christmas this year!
 5 **LITTLE ANGEL 3:** (*Looking at book with several other LITTLE*
 6 *ANGELS surrounding her*) Hey, we've found something! It
 7 says here that in Sweden, Christmas is celebrated for an
 8 entire month.
 9 **TEEN 1:** A whole month! Now that's what I call a party.
 10 **LITTLE ANGEL 8:** Shhh! Listen!
 11 **LITTLE ANGEL 3:** The book says it all begins on December
 12 thirteenth with the celebration of St. Lucia Day. Lucia was
 13 a brave young girl who lived in Sicily in the fourth
 14 century. Christians weren't liked very much then, so they
 15 had to hide in dark tunnels. Lucia carried food to them
 16 every night and wore candles on her head to light the
 17 way.
 18 **LITTLE ANGEL 8:** Years later, she appeared to some people of
 19 Sweden during a terrible famine. In their vision, she wears
 20 candles on her head and brings them food. Ever since then
 21 at Christmas, the oldest daughter of each family dresses
 22 up like Lucia and brings food to each family member. The
 23 younger children of the family sometimes follow her in a
 24 procession with lighted candles.
 25 **SONG:** "Queen of the Light"
 26 **ALL:** (*Singing while LUCIA and YOUNG GIRLS process*)
 27 Long ago when the people of God were in hiding,
 28 Lived a girl named Lucia who came in the night.
 29 On her head she wore candles so her path would be
 30 bright,
 31 And they called her "Queen of the Light."
 32
 33 She would come and bring food so they wouldn't go
 34 hungry.
 35 She would tell them how God was her source of delight.

1 If their hearts would grow fearful,
 2 She would settle their fright,
 3 And they called her “Queen of the Light.”
 4

5 Many years later the people of Sweden would pray,
 6 There was no food and the springtime was still far away.
 7 Lucia came to bring food and to show them the way,
 8 Now they remember her there on St. Lucia’s Day.
 9

10 Long before all the rest of the fam’ly has wakened,
 11 Young girls rise from their pillows and dress up in white.
 12 On their heads they wear candles,
 13 Bringing food in the night,
 14 Like Lucia, “Queen of the Light.”

15 **LITTLE ANGEL 2:** *(With an open book in hand)* Listen to this! The
 16 oldest Christmas celebration takes place in Africa.
 17 Christians make a pilgrimage to the top of a mountain
 18 where they perform a very special and beautiful
 19 Christmas service. Every Christmas Eve, it’s the *children*
 20 who tell of Christ’s coming, by marching up and down the
 21 streets shouting — Egbona — *what?*

22 **SONG:** “Christmas on the Mountaintop”

23 **ALL:** *(Singing while AFRICAN CHILDREN mime climbing and*
 24 *praying)* Egbona hee! Egbona hee! Egogo vo!
 25 Egbona hee! Egbona hee! Egogo vo!
 26

27 Christmas on the mountaintop! Closer to the Lord!
 28 Praising him, we never stop singing in accord!
 29

30 Egbona hee! Egbona hee! Egogo vo!
 31 Egbona hee! Egbona hee! Egogo vo!
 32

33 Ev’ry year on Christmas day all the faithful climb.
 34 At the top we kneel to pray to the One divine!
 35

- 1 For a thousand years and more we climb the mountain
 2 high.
 3 Celebrate the birth of Jesus closer to the sky.
 4 He has saved us all and when this world comes to an end,
 5 He will come again!
 6 *(The CHOIR divides into three parts for the ending.)*
 7 **PART 1:** *(Singing)* Egbona hee! Egbona hee! Egogo vo!
 8 Egbona hee! Egbona hee! Egogo vo! *(Repeat)*
 9 **PART 2:** *(Singing)* Christ is come! Christ is near!
 10 Christ is come! Christ is near! *(Repeat)*
 11 **ALL:** *(Singing)*
 12 Christmas on the mountaintop! Closer to the Lord!
 13 Praising him, we never stop singing in accord!
 14 **PART 3:** *(Joining PARTS 1 and 2)* Christmas on the
 15 mountaintop!
 16 Christmas on the mountaintop!
 17 Christmas on the mountaintop!
 18 **ALL:** *(Singing)* Christ is come!
 19 **TEEN 6:** *(Paging through a book)* We haven't found a thing in
 20 these books!
 21 **TEEN 2:** Those little angels are getting ahead of us!
 22 **TEEN 6:** We can't let that happen!
 23 **TEEN 4:** Maybe the answer isn't in a book. Look at what I've
 24 found.
 25 **TEEN 6:** What is that?
 26 **TEEN 4:** A travel brochure! *(A group of TEEN ANGELS gathers*
 27 *around. TEEN 4 reads brochure.)* Come and discover the
 28 islands for Christmas. Relax in the sun on our silky white
 29 beaches and enjoy one of our many tropical treats.
 30 **TEEN 3:** Hey, what are we waiting for?
 31 **SONG:** "Christmas in the Islands"
 32 **ALL:** *(Singing as ISLAND RESIDENTS cavort.)*
 33 Here the sun is shining bright.
 34 Not a snow ake in sight.
 35 But no one here seems to mind.

1 Christmas in the islands is ne!
 2
 3 With the sun and the water so clear
 4 Why the baby Jesus wasn't born here?
 5 Couldn't nd a place more divine.
 6 Christmas in the islands is ne!
 7 Chorus:
 8 Oh-oh, oh-oh, oh-oh, Merry Christmas!
 9 Celebrating here is so sweet!
 10 Oh-oh, oh-oh, oh-oh, Merry Christmas!
 11 Here it is a tropical treat!
 12
 13 Picture me out on the sand,
 14 Coconut juice in my hand,
 15 Palm trees swaying in time.
 16 Christmas in the islands is ne!
 17 *(Repeat chorus)*
 18
 19 Celebrate here now, what would it hurt?
 20 Almost like heaven on earth.
 21 No better place to unwind.
 22 Christmas in the islands is ne! *(Lights off.)*
 23 NARRATOR: They're having such fun, and yet it appears
 24 A few little angels are ghting back tears.
 25 They seem so bewildered about what to do.
 26 They're working so hard in search of a clue. *(Lights on.)*
 27 CONFUSED LITTLE ANGEL: I give up!
 28 BOYS IN THE GROUP: So do we!
 29 LITTLE ANGEL 1: Give up?
 30 CONFUSED LITTLE ANGEL: I'm not so sure I even know
 31 enough *about* Christmas to know *where* to celebrate it.
 32 LITTLE ANGEL 1: You don't know about Christmas?
 33 CONFUSED LITTLE ANGEL: Well, I know it's the celebration
 34 of the birth of Jesus, but I don't know much about *how* it
 35 happened or *where*. I wonder all the time what it must

1 have been like.
 2 LITTLE ANGEL 4: Oh, it was great!
 3 LITTLE ANGEL 7: It was beautiful!
 4 TEEN 1: It was such a celebration!
 5 LITTLE ANGEL 7: I remember it like it was yesterday. It was
 6 a cold, dark night, and there was a star. It shined so
 7 bright, it was seen from afar.
 8 LITTLE ANGEL 4: People brought gifts to the new little king,
 9 and all of the angels there chimed in to sing.
 10 LITTLE ANGEL 7: It was so heavenly!
 11 SONG: "I Wonder Why?" (*Sung by the CONFUSED LITTLE*
 12 *ANGEL. The small group of LITTLE ANGELS that surrounds*
 13 *her may join in an echo at the end.*)
 14 CONFUSED LITTLE ANGEL: I wonder how it might have
 15 been?
 16 I wonder what it was like then?
 17 A baby born one holy night,
 18 The angels there said
 19 It was a heavenly sight!
 20
 21 I wonder why I wonder.
 22 I'm an angel, I should know
 23 Everything about my Lord
 24 From his head down to his toe.
 25
 26 But there's an awful lot
 27 About my Lord I can't explain
 28 And so I wonder, wonder, wonder;
 29 It's driving me insane!
 30
 31 (*SMALL GROUP may join in an echo here.*)
 32 I wonder why, oh little star
 33 You led the world to a place so far?
 34 How did you know what was happening,
 35 And how did those angels know what to sing?

1
2 Oh, Baby Jesus, I wanna know everything!
3 LITTLE ANGEL 7: Don't worry. You'll find an answer.
4 LITTLE ANGEL 4: We'll help you!
5 LITTLE ANGEL 1: Hey, we've found a place that sounds great!
6 ALL: Where?
7 LITTLE ANGEL 1: Germany!
8 ALL: Germany?
9 LITTLE ANGEL 1: *(Reading)* This book says it's a country full
10 of Christmas traditions, and there's no other place in the
11 world that has so many festivities.
12 TEEN 6: Hey, Germany could be our answer!
13 TEEN 5: Tell us more!
14 LITTLE ANGEL 1: Germany has given the world so many
15 customs — the Advent wreath, the stringing of bright
16 lights, the use of decorations like ornaments and tinsel,
17 and the wonderful world of toys. But best of all, Germany
18 gave the world the Christmas tree! *(Lights off as story is*
19 *acted out behind a syke.)*
20 SONG: "Tannenbaum"
21 ALL: *(Singing)* Listen as we tell you
22 Of a legend that's a part of German history,
23 All about the way in which
24 The German people gave the world the Christmas tree!
25
26 It's a tale of passion and of bravery,
27 How a man de ed an evil monarchy,
28 And the symbol left for you and me — Tannenbaum!
29
30 It was early Christmas Eve
31 When Boniface returned to those in Germany.
32 All the friends he knew had turned away from God
33 Because there was a king's decree!
34
35 And that night the King would sacrifice his son

1 Underneath a tree, in front of ev'ryone,
 2 Turning back the good that had been done. Tannenbaum!
 3
 4 Angered by the heresy, he raised a giant axe into the sky.
 5 As it fell, a lightning bolt from heaven
 6 Split the tree before their eyes!
 7
 8 Tannenbaum! (*Five times*)
 9
 10 So it was that Boniface had
 11 Shown to them the power of the God of might!
 12 Then he told them,
 13 "Take with you a r tree as a token of this holy night.
 14
 15 Place it in your homes where ev'ryone can see,
 16 Let it be a sign of peace and harmony."
 17 Now we know it as the Christmas tree.
 18
 19 Tannenbaum! (*Five times. Lights on.*)
 20 TEEN 3: We've got to do more searching!
 21 TEEN 5: The little angels have come up with some really good
 22 ideas.
 23 TEEN 7: And interesting facts! But I'm not so sure they've
 24 found the right place yet.
 25 TEEN 1: Well, con dentially, I think we've *already* found the
 26 answer.
 27 TEEN 4: Yeah, the islands are perfect. They're like paradise.
 28 TEEN 6: Hey, you can't get any better than that!
 29 TEEN 7: Maybe the place should be more exciting.
 30 TEEN 5: Yeah, the sun and blue water and silky white beaches
 31 are all great, but maybe we need a place with a little more
 32 action!
 33 TEEN 7: (*Looking at a travel brochure*) Here's one! If it's action
 34 that you crave, come to the ocean and catch a wave.
 35 Christmas in California is really wild. Come cruising with

1 us down Miracle Mile.
 2 **TEEN 2:** Did you say *Miracle* Mile?
 3 **ALL TEENS:** Perfect!
 4 **SONG:** “California Christmas”
 5 **ALL:** (*Singing as CALIFORNIA KIDS act out lyrics*)
 6 Chorus:
 7 We want a California Christmas, it’s got everything.
 8 Movie stars, fancy cars, and the surfer is king!
 9 We want a California Christmas, and we know what to
 10 bring,
 11 Packin’ up our summer clothes to get some sun on our
 12 wings!
 13
 14 Makin’ all our plans for a holiday trip
 15 Down to the Pacific coast.
 16 Maybe spend some time out on Malibu beach,
 17 Layin’ in the sun to roast.
 18
 19 Waxin’ up our surfboards, gettin’ in shape,
 20 Gonna try to catch a wave!
 21 It’s the only place that you can go
 22 To get the action that we crave!
 23 (*Repeat chorus.*)
 24
 25 Gonna take a ride down the Miracle Mile,
 26 Cruise it in a limousine.
 27 Gonna drive the paparazzi wild
 28 When we show to make the scene.
 29
 30 There’s nothin’ else that you can do
 31 To make you feel more alive,
 32 Than pickin’ out the things on your Christmas list,
 33 Shoppin’ on Rodeo Drive!
 34 (*Repeat chorus.*)
 35

- 1 Goin' to parties in Beverly Hills,
 2 Dressin' up fancy with all of the frills,
 3 Holiday shows at the Hollywood Bowl,
 4 Even the earthquakes rock and roll!
 5 *(Repeat chorus.)*
- 6 TEEN 1: This is it! We've got it! California's gotta be the
 7 answer.
- 8 LITTLE ANGEL 6: How can we beat that?
- 9 LITTLE ANGEL 5: No more travel brochures? *(Looking for travel*
 10 *brochures or books)* And all of the good books are gone!
- 11 LITTLE ANGEL 6: *(Picks up a book.)* This is terrible! This is the
 12 only book left.
- 13 CONFUSED LITTLE ANGEL: What are we gonna do?
- 14 LITTLE ANGEL 7: Who knows — maybe the answer is here,
 15 right under your nose.
- 16 LITTLE ANGEL 5: Well, it's our only hope. We'd better start
 17 reading!
- 18 LITTLE ANGEL 9: Maybe we need to be thinking more about
 19 the way the *rst* Christmas was celebrated.
- 20 CONFUSED LITTLE ANGEL: What do you mean?
- 21 LITTLE ANGEL 9: You know! Like how it all happened in
 22 Bethlehem — the shepherds, the wise men, the stable.
- 23 LITTLE ANGELS: Huh?
- 24 LITTLE ANGEL 9: Just listen to what *this* book says. France
 25 celebrates Christmas Eve with magnificent midnight
 26 Masses. Each church sets up a beautiful crche that shows
 27 the stable the way it was in Bethlehem. It all helps to
 28 remind everyone of the *rst* Christmas Eve. Joyful
 29 melodies of carols and beautiful bells sing out with songs
 30 of "Noel," which means — Christmas!
- 31 SONG: "Noel, Noel" *(CAROLERS sing the verses and the CHOIR*
 32 *sings the chorus.)*
- 33 CAROLERS: *(Singing)* Each and ev'ry year when it is
 34 Christmas,
 35 Children gather 'round



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by Eleanor Miller and Roland A. Caire Jr..

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