

CHRISTMAS LETTERS

by Gail Gaymer Martin



CHRISTIANPUBLISHERS

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Christmas Letters

A children's
Christmas program

by Gail Gaymer Martin

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)

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INTRODUCTION

Christmas Letters is a children's Christmas program. It 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 throughout the program.

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 program 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 will be written on plain writing or typing paper, but the letters of the biblical characters should be 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

The song written for this program is sung to the traditional Christmas tune *Venite Adoremus*. It is the same tune used in the Christmas carol “The Snow Lay on the Ground.” If this tune is unfamiliar to you, please refer to the music we’ve included on page 9. The lyrics are original and written by the author. The verses are to be sung one at a time by groups of children after each set of readings, as is indicated in the script. The refrain may be sung by all of the children and may also include the congregation or audience. The groups of children who sing each verse may be divided according to Sunday school classes or grade level. The words to the “Christmas Letter Song” are also printed in their entirety on one page for easy distribution and memorization.

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*
4 *her feet while MOTHER reads.*)

5 Dear Grandchildren,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Letter to Joseph

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

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 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 exits. CHILDREN come
forward for the song.*)

SONG: “The Christmas Letters Song,” verse one

GROUP 1: (*Singing*) To Joseph long ago, an angel came
And told him do not fear, and feel no shame.
For Mary is to be a mother mild,
To bear on earth God’s Son, a holy child.

ALL: (*Refrain*) Oh Jesus, holy babe, from heaven above,
You came to earth to be God’s saving love.

Letter to Mary

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, MARY rises.*)

MARY: (*An older child steps forward dressed as Mary 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 long and 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 exits. CHILDREN come forward for the song.*)

SONG: "The Christmas Letters Song," verse two

GROUP 2: (*Singing*) Oh, Mary, virgin pure, the chosen one
To be the mother of God's only Son.
To Bethlehem, you came by law's decree
God's plan for us, so told in prophecy.

ALL: (*Refrain*) Oh Jesus, holy babe, from heaven above,
You came to earth to be God's saving love.

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 as the INNKEEPER rises.*)

INNKEEPER: (*An older child steps forward dressed like an innkeeper 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 *(The INNKEEPER exits. CHILDREN come forward for the song.)*

SONG: "The Christmas Letters Song," verse three

GROUP 3: *(Singing)* Then on that holy night in Bethlehem

No room was there to house our God-made-man.

An innkeeper, in kindness, saw their plight,

A manger was Christ's bed that blessed night.

ALL: *(Refrain)* Oh Jesus, holy babe, from heaven above,

You came to earth to be God's saving love.

Letter to the Shepherd

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

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

Love, _____ *(CHILD 4's name)*

1 (*CHILD 4 exits as the SHEPHERD rises.*)

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

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

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

14 On the night that Jesus was born, we were watching
15 the sheep as usual, but *that* night we noticed a special
16 brightness in the sky over Bethlehem. We wondered what
17 it might be. Suddenly, the heavens seemed to open with a
18 brilliant light, and we were very frightened. Some
19 shepherds covered their eyes, and some fell to their knees.
20 The angel's voice filled the sky, and others joined in, telling
21 us about the miracle in Bethlehem. It was then we
22 understood about the strange light and some of us decided
23 to go into Bethlehem and see for ourselves what the angels
24 told us.

25 Signed, A Shepherd (*The SHEPHERD(S) exits. CHILDREN*
26 *come forward for the song.*)

27

28 **SONG:** "The Christmas Letters Song," verse four

29

30 **GROUP 4:** (*Singing*) The shepherds watched the sky o'er
31 Bethlehem;

32 They saw a star aglow, and wondered then.

33 The heavens soon were filled with angels bright

34 Who told them of the Savior born that night.

35 **ALL:** (*Refrain*) Oh Jesus, holy babe, from heaven above,

You came to earth to be God's saving love.

Letter to an Angel

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

What is it like to be an angel? Do you know God? What do you do in heaven? How did you feel appearing to the shepherds?

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

(CHILD 5 exits as the ANGEL(S) rises.)

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

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

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

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

Signed, An Angel *(The ANGEL(S) exits. CHILDREN come forward for the song.)*

SONG: "The Christmas Letters Song," verse five

1 **GROUP 5:** (*Singing*) With angels' joyful news, may hearts be
 2 stirred,
 3 The plan for our salvation, God's own Word.
 4 Then, sing we now the angels' song again,
 5 "Glory to God on high, and peace to men."
 6 **ALL:** (*Refrain*) Oh Jesus, holy babe, from heaven above,
 7 You came to earth to be God's saving love.

Letter to the Baby Jesus

11 **CHILD 6:** (*CHILD 6 steps forward with a letter and reads.*) Dear
 12 Baby Jesus,

13 We know you can't talk or walk yet, but we wonder
 14 how you felt coming to earth. You are God's Son, but
 15 you were born to a young woman here on earth. We
 16 wonder how you feel knowing you are our Savior. You
 17 are sinless, but you will go through pain and sorrow
 18 and disappointment so that *our* sins are forgiven. Here
 19 you are in a lowly stable, surrounded by hay and
 20 animals, when you should be in a cradle in a palace,
 21 because you are a king.

22 We thank you, Jesus, for being born, for loving us, and
 23 for giving your life so that we may also live eternally.

24 Love, _____ (*CHILD 6's name*)

25 (*CHILDREN come forward to sing.*)

27 **CHILDREN'S SONG:** "Away in a Manger" (Traditional carol)



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