

A script from



“Give the Gift Back”

A Christmas Play

by

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SYNOPSIS

This play begins by portraying the typical "manger story" telling of Christmas in a sort of tongue in cheek way. A Wiseman is picking his nose, the shepherds are "baaaaing" too loudly and Joseph almost drops baby Jesus, to name just a few. The audience is led to believe that they are actually watching what they came to watch. But soon the action turns not to the Christmas pageant play they just witnessed but to the players and what Christmas Eve looks like in their homes when the show is over and exactly where the Christmas spirit can be found when the manger is put into storage for another year.

TIME

Approximately 25-30 minutes

CAST

- Dee:** Late 30's to early 50's. She's the "Christmas Pageant" Director. In her home life, she lives alone in a very big empty house. She has no family coming to Christmas, and we discover she really has no Christmas plans to speak of, except a lonely Holiday all alone at home.
- Angie:** Or "Angela" late 30's early 40's. Her husband is Robert. They have 2 children, Ellie and Jordan)
- Robert:** Late 30's early 40's. Married to Ellie. Ellie and Jordan are his kids.
- Ellie:** Preteen or teenage girl. Angela and Rob are her parents. Jordan is her little brother.
- Jordan:** School age, preteen or teenage boy. Angela and Rob are his parents and Ellie is his older sister.
- Joel:** School age or preteen boy. He lives with his Grandpap and father.
- Grandpap:** Late 50's to late 60's. He lives with his grandson, Joel and is in general poor health.
- Julia:** Teenager, not yet 18. Her older sister is Liz. They lost their parent's a few months ago.
- Liz:** Early to mid 20's. She has legal guardianship of her little sister, Julia, after their parent's passing.
- Extras:** School age and preteen children to fill in as sheep, wisemen, shepherds, angels, etc. for SCENE 1 in the Pageant.

COSTUMING

Think "character appropriate".

Dee just gets back from directing a Christmas pageant. She could be dressed in full Christmas sweater, jewelry, even reindeer antlers.

Joel and **Grandpap** should be in modest and mildly colored clothing, even visibly worn apparel. **Grandpap** can wear a flannel or a "Mr. Rogers" cardigan. **Joel** can be in simple t-shirt and maybe even a rip in one knee of his jeans; mismatched coats and hats, etc.

Liz and **Julia** should be younger and trendier and subtly dressed similar to one another and hair similar though not obviously "matchy matchy".

And **Angela**, **Robert**, **Ellie** and **Jordan** are considered "well off" so there clothing should be sharp, clean, and current but age appropriate.

SET DESIGN AND PROPS

Each scene uses the same neutral couch, end table, side table, coat rack, and Christmas tree but all these (excluding the tree) are relocated about the stage to denote somebody else's home for each scene.

Side note for how the Christmas tree can be done: Stand the Christmas tree smack dab center stage for each scene. On one side it is prettily decorated and the other it's completely devoid of decoration. The tree gets turned to the appropriate side based on which scene is being played.

Dress each individual scene with appropriate throws, pillows, table coverings, etc. according to the household we're watching.

For **Angela** and **Robert's** house, they have "younger" children so the scene could be dressed with a Christmas throw over the back of the couch, lots of presents, Christmas table coverings, maybe children's Christmas art displayed. Their tree is the well decorated side of the tree. be dressed with a Christmas throw over the back of the couch, lots of presents, Christmas table coverings, maybe children's Christmas art displayed. Their tree is the well decorated side of the tree.

For **Grandpap** and **Joel** they can have a blanket for **Grandpap** to wrap in on the couch but probably not table coverings and minimal if any decorations. Think sparse. Their tree is the undecorated tree with no presents below.

Liz and **Julia's** home has their parent's touch. Maybe a crocheted blanket over the couch and similar maternal accents in pillows and

coverings as well as a full box marked “Christmas decorations” that obviously never got put up. Their tree is undecorated as well but they have presents below it.

For **Dee**, her house isn’t very “Christmas-y” but it is well decorated, **almost** like it’s all dressed up with no place to go. The one difference in her house is she has a full size dining room table in her home which plays fully into use in the final scene. Her tree is the prettily decorated one.

***Main prop:** “THE GIFT”. It’s implied in the play that each family of characters gets a “gift” of some sort to take home with them Christmas Eve after attending the Pageant. And the “gift” is a gift bag or something similar that holds a regular old grocery bag or white kitchen bag, an empty sandwich bag, an invitation, and a “bank” or coin box of some sort.

DIRECTOR’S NOTES

The play can be done straight through scene after scene. But it’s also designed to accommodate between the scenes any choirs, words, prayers, message, etc. that you might want to incorporate into the entire event.

At the conclusion of the play, each actual audience/congregation member/family is then given the same style “Gift” as the actors illustrated with the same components and challenged, like the characters were, to “Give the Gift Back” this Christmas. Together, on their own Christmas Eve, they are encouraged to go home and participate in one or more of the service/outreach activities the characters in the play describe and perform.

And I encourage you to think bigger. You could even create the whole performance around service opportunities and getting people to give the gift back in more ways than just those mentioned in the play. Have tables set up in the back of the performance space or a nearby fellowship area for people to view and sign up for as many other service opportunities as you would like to focus on! Angel trees, soup kitchens, caroling in a local retirement community, writing cards to our troops, sponsoring a child, you name it! This is an opportunity for a Christmas drama to not just be something people come to watch, but that calls them into action to “Give the Gift Back”!

SCENE 1 – The Pageant

The scene is a Christmas play. A children's choir dressed as angels starts singing "Hark the Herald angels sing" and the lights come up. We see Mary and Joseph with Jesus in a manger. A shepherd and his sheep are still stage right. Three Wiseman stand stage left and a donkey is nearby the manger.

The shepherd and their very loud sheep walk toward the manger and bow. And the Wiseman walk toward the manger and bow. One of the wiremen is picking their nose. The sheep is loud above the choir singing. Mary picks up the baby, almost dropping it at one point, and carries it the shepherd to see, then to the Wiseman who put their gifts down at Jesus' feet one by one. Mary and Joseph move to center stage and everyone, including the angel choir bows down as the song ends.

Applause by the congregation

Dee: *(To the audience)* Thank you all for coming this evening. We hope you enjoyed our Christmas Pageant and we just want to wish you all a...

All: MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!

Dee: *(To the cast)* Good job everybody. That was great. Alright. Make sure your costumes get back downstairs and remember which props you're supposed to take off. *(To the Wiseman who was holding the gold who was picking his nose)* You got gold right here, why you trying to find some up there? *(She turns to talk to Robert)* Robert, thank you so much for doing this. I know it's a lot of practice and time. And Jordan, you were a great shepherd. Thank you.

Jordan: It's a step up from playing the donkey last year.

Dee: And Ellie, you were a wonderful Wiseman.

Ellie: Thanks.

Dee: Where's Angela? I want to thank her too.

Rob: I think she was grabbing one of those gifts for us. Here she is.

Angie: *(Putting down the gift and hugging each of her kids)* Kids! You did so great. And Dee! What a wonderful, wonderful job. It was so great. I cried.

Rob: She cries at commercials.

Angie: *(Hugging her kids again and getting a little choked up)* I do not. Ok, I do.

Ellie: Can we go home and open presents now?

Jordan: Yeah! Yeah!

Rob: As soon as you put your costumes away and get your coats on. *(They run out in a hurry)*

Angie: *(Shouting after them)* Meet us by the front doors! *(To Dee)* Christmas. It gets crazier every year.

Rob: I think Jordan just knocked over the coffee maker. Dee, Merry Christmas, and great job. *(Shakes her hand then leaves quickly)*

Angie: Yes, I better go. The troops are getting restless. Merry Christmas, Dee.

Dee: Merry Christmas Angela. *(Picking up the gift and shouting after her)* Angela! Your gift!

Angie: *(Coming back to grab it)* Oh yes. *(Leaving again)* See you next Sunday?

Dee: Yep, see you there. *(Exit Angela)* *(To everyone left)* Make sure everything gets offstage guys! Joel! Buddy. You're not riding that home are you?

Joel: Yeah.

Dee: In this weather?

Joel: My dad needed the car for work and my mom is... and Grandpap is sick. So...

Dee: I'll get you a ride, ok? Just wait for me in the hall. I'll be out in a minute.

Joel exits as Liz and Julia move towards Dee. Julia is preoccupied with texting.

Liz: Congratulations Dee. Another success.

Dee: Thanks. And thanks for bringing Julia to practices so faithfully. She was the best Mary I have ever seen.

Liz: J.? What do you say to Dee?

Julia: What? Oh, yeah... thanks.

Dee: Where are you spending Christmas now that your parents aren't around? I mean...

Julia exits still texting.

Dee: Oh, Liz I'm sorry. I shouldn't have brought it up –

- Liz:** Oh no, Dee, it's ok. She just, well...she doesn't want to talk much about it. She doesn't want to say anything or do much of anything anymore! Unless it involves texting.
- Dee:** I'm sure it's been very hard for her, for you too.
- Liz:** Yeah, but we're getting on alright. But Christmas is hard this year. She wanted presents, but no tree, no decorations, no caroling.
- Dee:** But she loves to sing.
- Liz:** I know. But she loves that phone more at the moment. It helps her live in another world. A world where she doesn't have to care about anyone but herself. She doesn't look up long enough to even notice their gone. *(Pause)* But I don't mean to bug you with this stuff on Christmas Eve!
- Dee:** You know I don't mind.
- Liz:** I know you don't, but I do. I imagine with that big house of yours it's gonna be full of friends and family come tomorrow!
- Dee:** *(A little hesitant)* That would be nice.
- Liz:** Thanks again for all your work here. It was good for her to be a part of it. Merry Christmas, Dee.
- Dee:** Merry Christmas.

Liz exits.

Everyone has left the stage. Dee picks up her papers, puts on her coat. Picks up a poinsettia plant and looks around and sighs in relief. The scene is cleared except for the manger with baby Jesus in it.

- Dee:** Alright, who forgot to take Jesus?

BLACKOUT

SCENE 2 – The Affluent House on Christmas Eve

Ellie and Jordan rush in and tear off their coats, scarves, etc. tossing them where they please. They plop by the tree in anticipation. Rob and Angela follow.

- Angie:** Take your shoes off!
- Rob:** Hang up your coats!
- Ellie:** I wanna open this one!

Jordan: I want this one!

Angie: Jordan! Shoes!

Ellie: I wanna open this one too!

Rob: Only one tonight. Santa will bring more to open in the morning.

Jordan: Pleeese...

Angie: One.

Ellie: Then I chooooooose...this one

Jordan: I'm opening this one.

Angie: Alright. Go ahead and open 'em.

Ellie: This is from Mom and Dad.

Jordan: Mine too.

They rip open their presents in a hurry and they are all smiles, but their excitement is short lived.

Jordan: Aw Man! I wanted the blue one!

Ellie: Polka dots?

Jordan: All my friends have the blue one.

Ellie: Nobody wears polka dots mom!

The following two lines are shouted over each other at the same time

Jordan: I don't want to be the only one without a blue one, etc.

Ellie: Polka dots make me look like a freak. I showed you the outfit I wanted. Etc.

Rob: *(Has had enough complaining)* Alright stop. Enough. ENOUGH! *(They stop whining at this)* What do you guys say?

Ellie: *(Begrudgingly)* Thank you.

Jordan: *(The same)* Thank you.

Angie: Go get ready for bed.

Jordan: *(To himself as they exit)* I wanted a blue one.

- Angie:** *(Sighing and then)* Well, that was fun.
- Rob:** Didn't see that coming.
- Angie:** *(A long pause as she considers)* Didn't we?
- Rob:** Didn't we what?
- Angie:** See it coming. Last year, we got Jordan a bike. They were out of black so we got him blue. Ellie wanted a jean skirt. We got her a jean skirt, but it didn't have the right label so it's hanging in her closet with the tags on. They complain about the color, the label, their allowance is too small, their chores too many.
- Rob:** They're kids.
- Angie:** *(Pause)* Why did we go to church tonight?
- Rob:** It's Christmas Eve.
- Angie:** But why? If we don't do anything different because of it, why?
- Rob:** Because... it... well...
- Angie:** Robert... are our kids spoiled? *(Pause)* They are, aren't they?
- Rob:** Jordan doesn't even ride his bike, even after we bought him the black one.
- Angie:** Ellie has a closet of clothes, half of which don't fit or she doesn't wear.
- Rob:** We give them an allowance for chores they promise to finish later.
- Angie:** And money for the weekends even when their grades are poor, we catch them lying or they don't have any of their homework done.
- Rob:** I guess you can try to give a kid everything...
- Angie:** And they never learn how to give.

Long pause as they look at each other and think about that. Rob gets up and moves to pick up the gift they received at church. He holds it in his hands, looking at it pensively.

- Rob:** *(As though he's repeating what the pastor preached about earlier that night quietly to himself)* "Give the Gift Back".
- Angie:** What honey?

Rob: The preacher tonight, he said "Give the Gift Back" That's why they gave us that gift at church. To remind us that we have been given the greatest gift of all time. Jesus. And that Jesus is a gift that we're supposed to give back to the world.

Angie: So, how can we give the gift back this Christmas?

They both stop and think for a few moments.

Rob: I got it. What do you say tomorrow morning after the kids open all their gifts we give them some trash bags and boxes and have them fill it with clothes and toys they don't use anymore?

Angie: I think that's a great idea. And I think we should do it too. I think Ellie gets her clothes hoarding from me.

Rob: And Jordan's love for the newest coolest toys from me.

Jordan: *(Entering)* Mom! Ellie pushed me.

Ellie: *(Entering)* You're such a baby. Go cry and tell mommy.

Rob: Guys, come in and sit down. Angie, can you grab that Bible for me?

Ellie: What are we doing?

Rob: We're going to read the Christmas story from the Bible because that's what this holiday is all about.

Angie: And after that we'll tell you the plan for tomorrow.

Ellie: What plan?

Angie: The plan to show you what Christmas is all about.

The kids look at each other confused and Rob and Angie smile at each other pleased with their decision.

Rob: *(Starts reading the Christmas story)* God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph. The virgin's name was Mary.

Ellie: Can I read the part about Mary?

Rob: Sure.

Ellie: *(Continuing)* The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. The Holy Spirit will come upon you. So the holy

one to be born will be called the Son of God" Mary answered, "May it be to me as you have said." Do you want to read mom?

Angie: Sure. *(Taking the book)* In those days Caesar issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world and everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph went to Bethlehem to register with Mary, who was pregnant at the time. While they were in Bethlehem the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to Jesus. She wrapped him up and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Jordan: Can I read?

Angie: Of course. *(Hands him the book and points)* Start right...here.

Jordan: After Jesus was born in Bethlehem Wise Men came following a star in the sky that stopped over the place where Jesus was. They saw the child with his mother Mary, and bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. *(Handing the Bible to his dad)* I like this story.

Rob: And the story of Jesus doesn't end with Christmas. Let's keep reading it.

Angie: And living it.

BLACKOUT

To read the rest of this script and perform it, download the full version at [SkitGuys.com!](http://SkitGuys.com)

ENDING:

SCENE 5 – The Empty House on Christmas Eve

Dee walks into her home. It's completely quiet. Upstage is a very large dining table and chairs. We get the idea she has a very large home but it's also very empty. She takes off her coat and gloves and things. She puts everything away neatly. There's no rush. She pulls out the gift and puts it on the table, looking at it for a while. She leaves it and goes to her answering machine. She clicks it and we hear "You have no new messages." A short pause then she clicks it again and it says "You have no new messages." She turns on some Christmas music and goes and sits down on her couch and starts to read a book or magazine or something. She looks bored and lonely. After a minute she puts down her magazine with a big sigh and says...

Dee: It doesn't feel like Christmas.

She gets up and goes back to the gift. She picks it up.

Dee: How can I "Give the Gift Back"?

She takes the gift back to her couch and sits down and reads it, taps it. We can tell she's thinking about something involving what she should do with it. She stands up with the gift in hand, moves to her dining table. Tapping the dining table a few times then she moves to her phone. She starts to dial then hangs up before finishing. She starts to walk away then moves back and dials again. She doesn't hang up this time.

Dee: *(Talking on the phone)* Hello! Joel? Hi! It's Miss Dee. *(Pause)* Yeah. *(Pause)* Merry Christmas to you too. Um, hey...I was calling because...and I know you and your Grandfather might be busy tomorrow, but I was calling because I wanted to invite you to Christmas dinner tomorrow. Both of you. *(Pause)* Yeah, I can hold on a second. *(Long pause)* Oh. Well, I can come by and pick you both up, that's not a problem. *(Pause)* You can?! Oh good! Well then, tell your Grandfather I'll pick you both up around 4:30. And of course, I can take you home too. *(Pause)* Oh that's very sweet, but tell him he doesn't have to thank me. The pleasure is mine. *(Pause)* Ok, I'll see you tomorrow then. *(Pause)* Ok, Merry Christmas Joel. Bye.

She hangs up the phone. She knows she did a good thing. She sets her table for 3 spots. She sits down again and reads her magazine but it's not long before she goes back to the phone. She hesitates again, but picks it up and starts to call.

Dee: *(Talking on the phone)* Liz? *(Pause)* It's Dee. *(Pause)* Merry Christmas to you too. Um, you might already have plans for dinner tomorrow, but if not, I wanted to invite you and Julia to my house to eat. *(Pause)* Really? Well wonderful! Then I'll see you guys around 5, does that work? *(Pause)* Great. And you know how to get here. *(Pause)* Oh no, you don't have to bring anything. I got it covered. *(Pause)* I'll see you both tomorrow then. *(Pause)* Great. And Merry Christmas again! *(Pause)* Thanks. Bye now.

She hangs up the phone. Adds two more plates to the table and decides to pick up the phone and dials again.

Dee: Angela, it's Dee. *(Pause)* I hope I'm not calling too late. *(Pause)* Oh good. Well, I know you might already have Christmas dinner plans for tomorrow, but if not, I just wanted to invite you all over to my home for some turkey and stuffing and way too much pie and ice cream. *(Pause)* Sure, I'll hold on. *(Pause)* You will?! *(Pause)* That's great. I'm looking forward to it. *(Pause)* No, no, no I got everything covered for the meal don't even worry about it. *(Pause)* I'm looking forward to it too. Around 5 then? *(Pause)* Great. I'll see you all then. *(Pause)* Merry Christmas to you too. *(Pause)* Bye now.

She's done now. She adds 4 more plates. Feeling pleased at doing what she thinks God wanted her to, she picks up the gift and puts it down with a sigh and says...

Dee: Now it feels like Christmas.

She turns up the music, sits down and reads her magazine in peace.

BLACKOUT

Scene 6 – A Full House on Christmas Day

Music over all as the following scene is given with no lines from the cast. It's pantomimed.

***Dee** walks in the door with **Joel** and **Grandpap**. They have a seat at the table and soon **Dee** opens the door to **Liz** and **Julia** who take off their coats and do the same followed by **Angela**, **Robert**, **Ellie** and **Jordan** who follow suit. They all are sitting down to eat, they pray and enjoy a good meal and fun company.*

While this scene is going on, some sort of challenge/talk/short sermon should be given by a pastor, lay person, or chosen speaker encouraging them to "Give the Gift Back" in their own way. Brainstorm with your audience ways they can "Give the Gift Back" this Christmas.

Offer 1 or 2 specific ministry opportunities they can get involved with. Take a collection for a ministry or local charity of your choice. Or get creative and decide how you can lead your audience to respond and "Give the Gift Back".

BLACKOUT

For Director: Special Note

Make sure people know with a short information card/letter placed in the gift bag where they can drop off their donations/cards/etc. This is key! Don't leave 'em hangin'!

This 25 minute drama is designed to create a response by your audience. Each member of your audience should be given a "gift" of some sort at the conclusion of the production. (It could be a small, empty gift box, a gift bag, an envelope that looks like a gift or simply a picture of a gift.) And some sort of challenge/talk/short sermon should be given during Scene 6 by a pastor, lay person, or chosen speaker encouraging them to "Give the Gift Back" in their own way.

I suggest you have a few tangible suggestions/brochures and/or sign ups for ministry opportunities where they can "Give the Gift Back" immediately available to hand out, point to, etc. at the conclusion of the evening.

This drama has also been designed that between each scene you can have a choir sing, communion, a message, offering, worship singing, etc. Or perform it as one continuous drama.

“Give the Gift Back”

