

THE FORGOTTEN CHRISTMAS STORY

by Rachel C. Hoyer

GENRE: Comedy

SYNOPSIS: Mark Stilman and his wife get a lesson in the true meaning of Christmas from their pastor, a group of carolers and their own children.

DIRECTOR'S TIP: You will need to allow extra rehearsal time for this piece since there are so many characters (choir, pastor, etc.), as well as special effects (videotape, songs, etc.). Rehearse the family and choir separately, and have a blocking rehearsal before you begin run-throughs so you won't waste time once the entire cast is present.

TIME: Over 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 10

TOPIC: Sin

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Luke 2:1-20

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Christmas

SUGGESTED USE: Christmas Service, General Church Service

CHARACTERS:

ANDY STILMAN—age 14

SHANNON STILMAN—age 12

CAROLINE STILMAN—age 35 40

MARK STILMAN—age 35 40

CHRISTMAS CAROLERS—any number; can be played by worship team or choir

SHADOW PUPPETS—four to six actors to pantomime the Christmas story behind a screen (carolers can double as pantomime actors)

PASTOR—best if played by congregation's actual pastor

PROPS: Christmas tree, family room furniture, gifts under tree, popcorn, cookies, needles and thread for popcorn, tray with four mugs for hot chocolate, box of Christmas ornaments, TV/VCR with remote control, videotape with "fall of man" clip, box of tangled Christmas tree lights

COSTUMES: Casual holiday attire

SOUND: Four wireless mics (choir can share one to three additional mics depending on number of people in group). Sound effects needed: Christmas music, doorbell, microphone for TV/VCR

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LIGHTING: General stage for family room scene; specials for choir (optional); back lighting for projection screen to do shadow puppets

SETTING: The Stilman family room

Lights up on a cozy family room. Instrumental Christmas music is playing softly in the background. SFX: CHRISTMAS MUSIC. A bare Christmas tree is flanked by chairs and a coffee table. There are gifts under the tree but no ornaments on it. After a beat, ANDY ENTERS, carrying a large bowl of popcorn. He eats some of the popcorn. SHANNON ENTERS behind him, carrying a tray of Christmas cookies.

SHANNON: Andrew Mark Stilman, cut it out. You're not supposed to eat that. (*Hollering off:*) Mom! Andy's eating the popcorn!

ANDY: Shut up, Shannon. You're such a brat. There's like a gallon of popcorn-it'll take us six years to string it. I'm just trying to save us time.

SHANNON starts to retort when CAROLINE ENTERS, carrying a tray with four mugs of hot chocolate and marshmallows.

CAROLINE: Andy, stop eating the popcorn. Shannon, don't tattle—it's annoying. And it's Christmas Eve. Can't we all just get along tonight? Have some fun together?

SHANNON: But, Mom ...

CAROLINE: Don't "but, Mom" me, young lady. Now start stringing popcorn and have some fun. Dad's on his way up from the basement, so happy faces, everyone! (*She pats one on herself.*)

ANDY and SHANNON start to string popcorn. ANDY continues to sneak bites of popcorn when no one is watching. MARK ENTERS, laden with a large box of Christmas ornaments.

MARK: (*Out of breath*) Merry Christmas, everyone! (*To CAROLINE*) Are we hanging bricks on the tree this year? This box was not this heavy last year.

CAROLINE: It's the same ornaments every year, dear. You're just getting-

MARK: (*Cutting her off*) Don't say it. The box is heavier, that's all.

CAROLINE: Okay, troops. Let's get started. Andy, you're doing great with the popcorn-keep it up. Shannon, unpack the delicate ornaments first, then we'll get out the clunky stuff from Grandma. Mark, help me untangle the lights.

ANDY keeps stringing/eating. SHANNON starts to unpack the box. MARK hesitates.