

# *The Gifts of Christmas*

Ward Choir Presentation for Christmas

**Song – “O Tidings of Comfort and Joy”** – (by Betsy Lee Bailey, Jackman Music) –  
Sung by Choir

**Grandmother** – Though many years have passed, I shall never forget a particular Christmas when I was a young child. We were very poor as far as worldly goods are concerned, though I didn’t know it then. A family in our town was even poorer than we were. Their mother had died and the father was working far away from home, leaving the older children to care for the younger ones.

On that particular Christmas, after we had opened our gifts, my father spoke to us of his motherless family and how they might not receive Christmas gifts as we had. He suggested that each of us choose one of our new gifts to be placed in a box, along with food and other goodies, to be taken to this family.

It was a hard decision for me, but I finally chose something from my three little presents. As a family, we loaded the box and secretly left it on their doorstep. Dad had told us that giving anonymously was the best part about giving.

Though it wasn’t an easy lesson then, I now realize the great impact this experience had on my life. As a child, I thought my father was asking me to give up a gift, but later I understood that he was actually giving me one of the most precious gifts I’ve ever received. I think of how much he must have loved me, to teach me that **loving someone** is far more important than **having something**. My father showing his love in this way helped me understand the love of our Heavenly father, who presented us the greatest gift of all when He gave His Only Begotten Son. (From a story by Ruth M. Anderson, pg. 53 *Ensign* Dec. 2002)

**Song – “He Sent His Son”** (Arr. by Betsy Lee Bailey) - Choir and Violin

**Young Mother** - One year my husband and I felt a deep desire to celebrate Christmas in a different way than we had ever done before. We wanted to teach our two small children a deeper meaning of Christmas, that it means more than lights and bright colors, more than parties and celebrations, more than wrapping paper and ribbons, more than decorating a tree, more than hugs and best wishes.

As Christmas Eve drew near, we weren’t sure what we were going to do that night, but I felt free of the stress that normally overwhelms me at Christmastime. We decided that we would spend the night in a simple celebration as a family. Our thoughts would center on the Savior. We read from the scriptures the beautiful account from Luke of the Savior’s birth. We discussed the meaning of the many beautiful Christmas symbols. We ate delicious food, sang songs, and opened a few simple gifts. Our evening together was filled with reverence, love, and gratitude for the Jesus Christ. We experienced a sweet joy we had never felt before on Christmas Eve.

On Christmas morning we wanted to continue our celebration the way it had started. We decided to share our Christmas with a lovely widow who lives alone and has no children. Her eyes sparkled when we arrived. She was emotional as we served her dinner – it was probably the first Christmas in many years she had spent with anyone.

Our unplanned Christmas taught us much. We came to understand that Christmas celebrations need not be competitions to see who can give or receive the most expensive present. Our most valuable gift is our love—love for the Christ Child, who was born 2000 years ago in a humble manger, love for our family and our neighbors, love for the beautiful world Heavenly Father has given us. Another valuable gift is our compassion—the feeling that causes us to “mourn with those that mourn,” to lift the weak, to visit the lonely, to dry the tears of those who are sad. And another gift is our gratitude—gratitude for our Savior, who taught us how to live and who lovingly and willingly bore our sins, our grief, and our weaknesses as His Father had commissioned Him to do.

We celebrate Christmas best when we live the Savior’s teachings—not just at Christmas, but every day of the year. (From a story by Patricia Merlos, pg. 14 *Ensign* Dec. 2002)

**Song – “The Gifts That Are Mine to Give”** – (by David Len Allen, Jackman Music) - Choir

**Narrator 1** - The Lamanite prophet Samuel foretold the birth of the Savior five years before it happened. The people would not let Samuel into Zarahemla to preach, so he stood on a city wall and proclaimed:

“Behold, I give you a sign; for five years more cometh, and behold, then cometh the Son of God to redeem all those who shall believe on his name.

“And behold, this will I give unto you for a sign at the time of his coming, for behold, there shall be great lights in the heaven, insomuch that in the night before he cometh there shall be no darkness, insomuch that it shall appear unto man as if it was day...

“And behold, there shall a new star arise, such an one as ye have never beheld; and this shall be a sign unto you.” (Helaman 14: 2-3, 5)

**Song – “Samuel Tells of the Baby Jesus”** – (Children’s Songbook p. 36) - Children

**Narrator 2** – Luke recorded the fulfillment of Samuel’s prophecy.

**Song – “Silent Night with Narrations from Luke 2”** – (Arranged by Betsy Lee Bailey) –  
sung by Choir

**Narrator 2** – (continues with underscoring) “And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed...And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, she being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

*Choir sings first verse of “Silent Night”*

**Narrator 2** – (continues with underscoring) “And there were in that same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.”

*Choir sings the **Glorias** from “**Angels We Have Heard on High**” and “**Silent Night**” vs. 2*

**Narrator 2** – *(continues with underscoring)* “And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us go now even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.”

*Choir sings the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse of “**Silent Night**”*

**Narrator 3** – *He came down to earth from heaven,  
Who is God and Lord of All,  
And His shelter was a stable  
And His cradle was a stall. (Hymns 205)*

“In this humble way His life of selfless service began. The Savior dedicated His life to blessing other people. As expressed by His chief apostle Peter, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good.” (Acts 10:30)

Never did the Savior give in expectation of receiving. He gave freely and lovingly, and His gifts were of inestimable value. He gave eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and legs to the lame; cleanliness to the unclean, wholeness to the infirm, and breath to the lifeless.

His gifts were opportunity to the downtrodden, freedom to the oppressed, forgiveness to the repentant, hope to the despairing, and light in the darkness. He gave us His love, His service, and His life. And most important, He gave us and all mortals, resurrection, salvation and eternal life.” (Howard W. Hunter, p. 18 Ensign Dec. 2002)

**Solo** – “**In the Bleak, Midwinter**” - (by Gustav Holst) – sung by Choir

**Narrator 4** – To give of oneself is a holy gift. We give as a remembrance of all that the Savior has given. We should give as He gave.

Christmas is a time for giving. Someone once said that he couldn’t think of what to give for Christmas. The next day in the mail he received an anonymous list which read:

Give to your enemies, forgiveness,  
To your opponent, tolerance,  
To your friend, your heart,  
To all men charity, for the hands that help are holier than lips that pray,  
To every child a good example,  
And to yourself – respect.

This Christmas, mend a quarrel. Seek out a forgotten friend. Dismiss suspicion and replace it with trust. Keep a promise. Forgo a grudge. Forgive an enemy. Be kind. Laugh a little more. Express your gratitude. Welcome a stranger. Gladden the heart of a child. Take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth. Speak your love and then speak it again.  
(Howard W. Hunter, p. 18-19 Ensign Dec. 2002)

**Song – “The Gift”** – (arr. by Bob Chilcott for the Kings Singers) – sung by Choir

**Narrator 5** – And so at this Christmas season, we sing His praises and speak words of faith and gratitude and love. It is His influence in our lives that stirs within us more kindness, more respect, more love, more concern. It is because of Him, and His teachings that we reach out to those in trouble, distress and need wherever they may be.

It is proper during this season when we commemorate His birth that we remember the Lord Jesus Christ with reverence and love. He has done for us what we could not do for ourselves. He has brought meaning to our mortal existence. He has given us the gift of eternal life. He was and is the Son of God, who was “made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

God be thanked for the gift of His Son, the Redeemer of the world, the Savior of mankind, the Prince of Life, the Holy One. (Gordon B. Hinckley)

**Song – “King of Kings”** – (by Betsy Lee Bailey) - Sung by Choir, Soloists, with violin and flute