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Schoolhouse Meeting
The Christmas Entertainment

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The benefits of education and of useful knowledge, generally diffused through a community, are essential to the preservation of a free government.

Sam Houston.

Cultivated mind is the guardian genius of democracy. . . . It is the only dictator that freemen acknowledge and the only security that freemen desire.

Mirabeau B. Lamar.

THE CHRISTMAS ENTERTAINMENT.

The Christmas tide, with its spirit of giving, affords opportunity for one of the most valuable special-day programs of the year. The afternoon or evening of the last school day before the Christmas holiday is usually the best time for the children's exercises, and for the school or community Christmas tree if one be given. Remember that the Christmas spirit can not be felt where one merely receives. The joyous and loving spirit is developed through doing for others. The school, as well as the home, should help the children to experience the joy of giving and of making others happy. Pupils and teacher should look forward to this day as the great occasion for making others happy and thus increasing their own happiness. For several weeks before the holidays the story lessons and the general spirit of the school should emphasize this idea. The opening exercises afford excellent opportunity for doing this through reading of Dicken's "Christmas Carol," Van Dyke's "First Christmas Tree," and similar stories in which the Christmas spirit is well portrayed.

If a Christmas tree is arranged, let the preparation of the tree and the making of the presents be the work of the children themselves. Organize the work and divide it among several committees. Let one committee secure the tree and the ever-green decorations for the house; another help arrange and carry through the program; another prepare and put up the decorations; and so on. The little children should spend happy hours stringing popcorn or cranberries, cutting out gilt stars, making cornucopias, paper chains, etc., with which to decorate the tree. The older children can make such things as paper bells and boot-shaped bags of netting to hold candies and nuts or apples that others have provided, or that have been secured by funds raised by another entertainment. Others will do other things needful. The teacher must see to it in a quiet, tactful way that no child is left out of the work or is forgotten in the preparation of presents.

The teacher should give the children suggestions and personal help in preparing presents for their playmates, friends

and parents. The following suggestions will help the teacher to think up appropriate gifts that children can make. Usually the child can think of something that the parent needs about the house which can be made.

Little children can make paper boxes into which candy made by the older children is put, or can make little booklets of drawings and cuttings, pleat mats, or raise a little flower in a pot or can at school. The older boys can make such things as a wood box, or window box, a fireless cooker, seed tester, brood coop, gate latch, or walking cane. The girls can make mats or baskets of pine needles or shuck or raffia, dustless dust cloths (sprinkle cheesecloth with mixture of equal parts of boiled linseed oil and vinegar, and leave rolled up for a day), dustless floor mops, stove holders, articles of wearing apparel, glasses of jelly, boxes of candy, etc.

A SUGGESTED CHRISTMAS TREE PROGRAM AT THE SCHOOLHOUSE.

Decorations: Outline the top of blackboard, window frames and picture frames with wreaths of evergreen, brightened by sprays of red berries or small red paper bells. Hang garlands of the same material woven on barrel hoops at regular intervals on wall spaces. These garlands may be connected with festoons of green. Another pretty arrangement is to bring the green festoons from the four corners of the room to the center of the ceiling from which is suspended a large red Christmas bell. The Christmas tree itself, placed in a conspicuous part of the room, naturally forms the most attractive part of the decorations.

Spanish moss, relieved with bunches of evergreen and bright berries, makes graceful festoons. Palm leaves, bamboo, cedar branches and small long leaf pine trees may also be used to good effect in decorating bare spots and wall spaces.

PROGRAM.

1. Christmas hymns, sung by school: "Joy to the World," Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," or "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear." For words and music, see Church hymnal.
 2. "The First Christmas Eve," recitation by a pupil.
 3. "O Joy Bells" or "Holy Night", sung by the school.
 4. Eugene Field's "Christmas Song," recitation by the third grade pupils.
 5. "A December Spelling Lesson," by the primary grade.
 6. "The Christmas Welcome," sung by the school to the tune of "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp."
 7. "Long Ago on Christmas Day," recitation by a little girl.
 8. Luther's "Cradle Hymn," sung by little children. [See church hymnal, or booklet of carols from "Christ Child in Story and Song," for sale by Claton F. Summey, Chicago, price 35c.]
- [After the singing of the cradle hymn there is a good opportunity for the presentation of a picture from the upper grades to the primary grades. This picture may be a photograph or a Perry print of one of the madonnas framed by boys of the

manual training class. The presentation speech might contain a short sketch of the child life of Jesus and a few words on the work of the painter. Let some child from the primary class be appointed to accept the picture with some such appropriate words: "We thank you, our dear fellow pupils, for this beautiful picture and for the spirit in which it is given. It will be with us all the year to remind us of this happy Christmas."']

9. A well-told Christmas story, by teacher, visitor, or pupil. The following are good selections:

"Tiny Tim," from Dickens; "The Night Before Christmas"; "The Three Kings of Cologne," by Eugene Field; "The Parable of Good St. Christopher," by Helen Hunt Jackson; "Shadow," from Payne's "Southern Literary Readings"; "The Other Wise Man," Van Dyke; Birds' "Christmas Carol," by Kate Douglas Wiggin.

10. "A Christmas Lullaby," by little girls, sung to tune of "Holy Night."

11. "What Would You Say?" recited by a little boy.

12. "Hail! Old Father Christmas," sung by the school. [See "Christ Child in Story and Song."']

13. "The Boundary of Christmas," recited by a little boy.

14. Song, "Carol, Brothers, Carol," sung by the school. [See "Christ Child in Story and Song."']

15. "Santa Claus' Substitute," recited by a little girl.

16. Distribution of presents from the tree.

17. Song, "Merry Christmas to You All," by the school.

Good night.

SUGGESTED MATERIAL FOR THE CHRISTMAS PROGRAM.

QUOTATIONS.

After the opening song, a number of short appropriate quotations such as the following may be given by individual pupils in order to give a large number of pupils a share in the entertainment.

God bless us every one.—*Dickens.*

Three good cheers for old December!
 Month of Christmas trees and toys,
 Hanging up a million stockings,
 For a million girls and boys.

Little wishes on white wings,
 Little gifts—such tiny things—
 Just one little heart that sings,
 Make a Merry Christmas.—*Dorothy Howe.*

Welcome Christmas cheer,
 Hark! the Christmas bells are ringing,
 Ringing through the frosty air,
 Happiness to each one bringing,
 With release from toil and care.
 Ring ye bells merrily,
 Ring ye bells cheerily,
 Welcome sweet to Christmas cheer.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS EVE.

It was midnight on the hilltop, and the fire was dim and low,
 While the weary shepherds slumbered round the embers' dying
 glow,
 When a light shown round about them, brighter far than light
 of day,
 And they saw an angel standing in its pure and living ray.
 He was dressed in white apparel and his face was gravely
 sweet,
 And he spake unto them gently as they bowed them at his feet.
 "Fear ye not," for they were troubled; "news of peace and
 joy I bring;
 For tonight in David's City, Christ is born, your Lord and
 King."
 As he spoke, adown the heavens, borne as on the ocean's swell,
 Angel forms came floating nearer, angel voices rose and fell;
 "Unto God the highest glory. Peace on earth. To men good
 will."
 Pealed the anthem, that triumphant echoes down the ages still.

As the angel vision vanished and the song grew faint and far,
Clear and radiant in the heavens steadfast shone the guiding
star;

Then they traveled on and onward till they reached a lonely shed
Where the King of all the nations in a manger laid his head,
And the night was hushed and holy, while the star shone over
them,

And the angel song rang softly, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Nineteen hundred years have fled since the shepherds heard
that song,

Since Judea's hills were brightened by the presence of that
throng;

But adown the distant ages, when the Christmas time draws near,
And our hearts and homes are brightened with the Christmas
warmth and cheer—

When our hearts with love grow warmer as the light glows
in a gem—

Softly steals the angel's message "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

—*Selected.*

JOY-BELLS. (Song)

Oh, joy-bells, oh, joy-bells,

Today peal forth in silv'ry tones,

Oh, joy-bells, today your gladdest chimes peal forth,

'Tis Christmas day, 'Tis the Christmas song,

Let the tones be gay, let the tones be strong,

Ye joyful bells, ye joyful bells, your chimes peal forth,

In silv'ry tones, ye joyful bells, your chimes peal forth.

Oh, joy-bells, oh, joy-bells,

Again peal forth in silv'ry tones,

Oh, joy-bells, again your gladdest chimes peal forth,

'Tis the Christmas day, 'Tis the Christmas song,

Let the tones be gay, let the tones be strong,

Ye joyful bells, ye joyful bells, your chimes peal forth,

In silv'ry tones, ye joyful bells, your chimes peal forth.

SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT.

- (1) Silent night, Holy night,
 All is calm, all is bright
 Round yon Virgin Mother and Child.
 Holy infant so tender and mild,
 Sleep in heavenly peace,
 Sleep in heavenly peace!
- (2) Silent night, Holy night,
 Shepherds quake at the sight,
 Glories stream from heaven afar,
 Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia;
 Christ, the Saviour, is born!
 Christ, the Saviour, is born!
- (3) Silent night, Holy night,
 Son of God, love's pure light
 Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
 With the dawn of redeeming grace,
 Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
 Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

CHRISTMAS SONG.

Why do the bells for Christmas ring?
 Why do the little children sing?

Once a lovely shining star
 Seen by shepherds from afar
 Gently moved until its light
 Made a manger's cradle bright.

There a darling baby lay
 Pillowed soft upon the hay,
 And its mother sang and smiled,
 This is Christ, the Holy Child.

Therefore bells for Christmas ring,
 Therefore little children sing. *Eugene Field.*

A DECEMBER SPELLING LESSON.

(Concert recitation by pupils of first grade.)

The nicest word there is to spell
Is just the one we mean to tell;
The nicest day of all the year
Is this one we will show you here.

(Each in turn holding up letter.)

C

H

R

I

S

T

M

A

S

(All together.)

CHRISTMAS!

—*Bertha E. Bush* in Nebraska Special Day Program.

THE CHRISTMAS WELCOME.

(Sung to the tune of "Tramp Tramp Tramp.")

When the summer time is passed and the harvest housed at last,
And the woods are standing bare and brown and sere,
When the frost is sharp at night, and the days are short and
bright,

Comes the gladdest, merriest time of all the year.

Chorus: Shout, boys, shout the hearty welcome!

Greet Old Christmas with a roar

He has met us with good cheer for this many a
merry year,

And we hope he'll meet us all for many more.

Then away with every cloud that our pleasure might enshroud,
And away with every word and look unkind;
Let old quarrels all be healed and old friendships closer sealed,
And our lives with sweeter, purer ties entwined.

Since we know the blessed power of this happy Christmas hour,
 We will keep its holy spell upon our heart,
 That each evil thing within that would tempt us into sin,
 May forever from our peaceful souls depart.

—*From Song Knapsack.*

LONG AGO ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

Once a little baby lay
 Cradled in the fragrant hay;
 Long ago on Christmas;
 In the manger it was found,
 And the white sheep stood around;
 Long ago on Christmas.

Led on by the shining star,
 Shepherds sought him from afar;
 Long ago on Christmas.
 And the wise men came, they say,
 All their loving gifts to pay;
 Long ago on Christmas.

And today the whole glad earth
 Praises God for that Child's birth;
 Long ago on Christmas.
 For the Life, the Truth, the Way,
 Came to bless the earth that day;
 Long ago on Christmas.—*Emilie Paulsson.*

A CHRISTMAS LULLABY.

The children are seated in little chairs each holding a doll dressed in a long white gown. They rock slowly in time to the music and sing to the tune of "Holy Night." At the first "hush-a-by" (1) they raise forefinger of right hand as if to insure silence; at (2) they kiss the dolls; (3) is sung very softly; at (4) they lay the dolls in small cradles; at "hush" in (5) they raise the forefinger again warningly; (6) is sung

softly; during (7) they rock the cradles slowly; at (8) they face the audience; and sing (9) very softly.

- (1) Hush-a-by, hush-a-by,
Christmas stars are in the sky;
Sweet the bells of Christmas Eve,—
- (2) Babies each a kiss receive,—
Hush-a-by, good-night,
- (3) Hush-a-by, good-night!
Lull-a-by, lull-a-by,
- (4) Babies in their cradles lie;
Every one in white is gowned,
- (5) Hush, make not a single sound!
Lull-a-by, good night,
- (6) Lull-a-by, good-night!

- Rock-a-by, rock-a-by,
- (7) Christmas-tide draweth nigh;
Quiet now the tiny feet,
Babies sleep so still and sweet,—
 - (8) Sweetest dreams, good-night,
 - (9) Sweetest dreams, good-night!

—*Nebraska Special Day Program.*

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

If you should see
A big, green tree,
With candles all alight,
With pop-corn strings,
And pretty things,
And tinsel shining bright,
With stars that swing
And bells that ring,
All red and green and blue,
And lots of toys
For girls and boys
And lots of candles, too;
And you should hear
Somebody near

Call out in cheery way:

“What sort of tree

Can this one be?”

I wonder what 'ou'd say?

—*Edith Stanford Tillotson* in St. Nicholas.

THE BOUNDARY OF CHRISTMAS.

(For a little boy.)

Christmas is bounded on the north by Hapipness, Good Wishes, Oyster Lake and the Isthmus of Cranberry Sauce; on the east by the peninsula of Turkey and Ocean of Goodies; on the south by Mince Pies, Jellies, and Cakes; on the west by Pleasant Words, from which it is separated by the mountains of Cheerfulness. The capitals of Christmas are Peace and Good Will, on the Christmas Tree River.

Dear teachers, friends and schoolmates, we are now on the border of this happy country, and before entering we wish you all a “Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.”

—*Michigan Special Days.*

SANTA CLAUS' SUBSTITUTE.

My papa says, 'twon't be no use
For me to go ahead
And hang my stockings up this year,
Cause Santa Claus is dead.

He says some folks have been up North
A searching for a pole,
Been all around where Santa lived
And never saw a soul.

I'm just as sorry as can be,
And papa's sorry some;
'Twon't be like Christmas time at all
If Santa doesn't come.

I asked by mamma what she thought,
And she just laughed, and said
She hadn't heard a single word
'Bout Santa being dead.

She said perhaps he'd moved away,
Or maybe he was sick;
But if he couldn't come himself
He'd send his friend, St. Nick.

—*Iowa Special Days.*

A bell is heard, and one of the larger boys, dressed in a long red coat trimmed in cotton, with high boot tops over his shoes, wearing a genial St. Nick mask with a long white beard and a stocking cap, comes in. He greets the children kindly, helps distribute their gifts, adds much to the merriment of the occasion by his witty speeches and finally with good wishes to all suddenly disappears. The meeting is then dismissed by singing "Merry Christmas to You All."

