

A Seasonal All Age Worship Service

(SAAW018)

Crib Service

“The Gift that Lasts”

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CRIB SERVICE - "THE GIFT THAT LASTS"

Aim of Service: To present the story of the birth of Jesus, the gift that lasts, using puppet camels, drama and carols.

Use of Script: A half hour Crib service suitable for Christmas Eve. It contains the words for the puppets and the dramas, and suggestions of Carols to sing.

Main themes: Birth of Jesus

Biblical references: Matthew 2:1-12, Luke 1:26-38, 2:1-20

Characters:



The script is a dialogue between a male camel puppet called "Cameron," who is rather grumpy, and his wife, a female camel puppet called "Camilla." Each puppet is operated by one person from behind a screen and so it is essential that the voices are heard; radio-microphones are ideal. Puppets and puppet screens can be purchased from many sources including <http://www.onewayuk.com/>

As well as the puppets there are a number of other actors:

Actors: Interviewer, Five children / teenagers: Bill, Ashley, Tom, Holly and Alice, Mary, Angel Gabriel, Joseph, Innkeeper, Three Wise men, as many non-speaking angels and shepherds as you like

Props: Argos catalogues, clipboard, pen, bowl with bread dough, baby Jesus, manger, gold, frankincense, myrrh

Outline of Service:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Welcome | Welcome and opening prayer |
| Carol 1: | <u>O come all ye faithful</u> (v.1 + chorus) |
| Drama: | "What do you want for Christmas?" |
| Puppets Act 1: | "Talking with the interviewer" |
| Puppets Act 2: | "Mary and the Angel Gabriel" |
| Carol 2: | <u>The angel Gabriel</u> (v.1-3) |
| Puppets Act 3: | "Mary, Joseph and the Innkeeper" |
| Carol 3: | <u>Away in a manger</u> |
| Puppets Act 4: | "Shepherds and angels" |
| Carol 4: | <u>Angels from the realms of glory</u> (v.1-2) |
| Puppets Act 5: | "The Wise men" |
| Carol 5: | <u>O what a gift!</u> (chorus, v.1, chorus) (Pat Uhl Howard © 1967 American Catholic Press) |
| Puppets Act 6: | "Talking with the interviewer" |
| Talk: | Invitation to "unwrap" the Christmas gift that lasts and Prayer |
| Carol 6: | <u>Christmas, it's Christmas</u> (Alan Price © 1996 Song Solutions Daybreak) |

Welcome: Welcome everyone and say an opening prayer

Carol 1: O Come all ye faithful (v.1)

Drama: “What do you want for Christmas?”

(Enter the five young people chatting together. They walk to the front of the church and form two groups: one group with Bill and Ashley and the other group with Tom, Holly and Alice. Both groups stand looking at an Argos catalogue each and mime pointing at different things as they turn the pages. After a while an interviewer walks on with a clipboard (containing the script!) and pen and addresses the congregation)

Interviewer: Oh good, some young people....now I can try and get some help with my article. What an assignment to be given by my editor.....write an article called: “The Christmas gift that lasts”.

Perhaps I’ll start by asking these young people what gift they actually want this Christmas.....then I could come back in a few months’ time and ask them which gift actually lasted. Great....let’s make a start.....these guys certainly seem to know their way around those Argos catalogues.

(Walks towards the group with Tom, Holly and Alice in it and says)

What do you all want for Christmas then? Have you made up your minds yet?

Tom Oh yes.....I have known for months what I want.

Interviewer: And what is that?

Tom I want a radio-controlled hovercraft.

Interviewer: Mmm.....and where will you be able to use that?

Tom We live near a large field, so I can’t wait to take it out and give it a go. I know what I shall be doing each weekend after Christmas.

(Bill from the other group looks up from the Argos catalogue he is studying and says)

Bill: Oh I had one of those last year.....it didn’t last five days before it broke. I think you’d be better off with the new Xbox Tom.

Tom: Really.....oh how disappointing.....I had set my heart on one of those hovercrafts as I love being outside.

(Tom turns away looking disappointed. Interviewer turns towards Bill and says:)

Interviewer: So what are you hoping for if the radio-controlled hovercraft was a bit of a let-down last year, and didn’t last as long as you had hoped it would?

Bill: I am rather hoping for that basketball hoop.....it looks amazing. Fancy having a basketball hoop in your own back garden, and not having to go to the park every time you play a game. I will be the envy of my neighbourhood.

Ashley: Oh you will soon get bored with it Bill.....I can assure you of that. I got one last year and it was fun for a while, and now it is just part of the furniture. I hardly ever use it.....actually I'd rather go down the park and meet up with my mates there.

Interviewer: You do have a point.....so the fun didn't last long then for you?

Ashley: Nope.

Interviewer: So if you got bored with a basketball hoop, what are you wanting in your stocking?

Ashley: I don't think it would actually fit in my stocking but I thought a chocolate fountain would be fun.

Interviewer: A chocolate fountain?

Ashley: Well I am a bit of a chocoholic and I thought it would be amazing to have a constant flow of chocolate in my bedroom. Each week a different taste sensation.....chocolate coated marshmallows, chocolate coated strawberries, chocolate coated bananas, chocolate coated sugar puffs.....

(Holly from other group looks up in disgust)

Holly: You are so disgusting Ashley.....you'll end up being sick. My friend Cara had one of those and after three days she couldn't stand the sight or smell of chocolate any longer and so her dad sold it at the car boot sale last week.

Ashley: Oh thanks Holly.....how like you to go and spoil my dream.

(Ashley and Holly pull tongues at each other)

Interviewer: Come on folks.....let's keep this nice and friendly.....Christmas isn't far away you know..... the season of good will and all that. OK Holly, so if chocolate fountains don't last long, what is it that you are dreaming of possessing this Christmas?

Holly: Well it is a bit of a toss-up between a new i-phone, although my old one is only three months old or a pair of in-line skates. I think I will probably go for the in-line skates.

Alice: I wouldn't bother if I were you.

Holly: And why's that Alice?

Alice: I got a pair last year and I had grown out of them by Easter.....you're growing so fast Holly that they won't last long. Go for the iphone....the new ones have got a really cool camera.

Holly: Yeah.....you could be right...I really want my Christmas gift to last.

Interviewer: *(turns to congregation and says)* Absolutely....but I have a funny feeling that you may want the upgrade after a few months.

Ah...Alice....what do you want this Christmas? You obviously want something that will last like your friend here?

Alice: mmm.....I really enjoy Chemistry and so I thought I might ask for that Chemistry set that I've seen advertised on the TV.....it looks simply amazing.

(Tom looks up and says)

Tom: Don't bother with it Alice.....it might look amazing when it is on the TV....but I've had one of those sets and it wasn't half as good as it looked. I managed to make a few crystals.....but it's sitting in my wardrobe gathering dust..... waste of time if you ask me.

Alice: Oh....what a pity. Well I don't know what I want then. I think I shall just have to wander around the shops a bit more and have a look and see what grabs me. But at the same time I do rather like surprises.....no....better not ask mum and dad for a surprise gift.....they'll probably go and buy me something useful or out of date.

(Young people turn to look at their catalogues. Interviewer turns half towards the congregation, but able to see camel puppets when they appear)

Interviewer: Well I don't seem to be getting very far this evening.....they keep changing their minds over what they want, and I haven't heard of any gifts that have lasted for longer than a few months.

Puppets Act 1: "Talking with the interviewer"

(Camilla & Cameron camel puppets appear. The screen the Camel puppets appear behind is at the front of the church/room, set to one side so that the Nativity drama can take place "centre-stage." As the puppets appear so the young people all exit)

Interviewer: Oh wow.....what do we have here? It looks like a couple of camels if my eyes aren't deceiving me.

Cameron: Oh dear, what do we have here? It looks like a human if my eyes aren't deceiving me. Yes....we are camels. Do you have a problem with that?

Interviewer: No I don't....I'm terribly sorry, I didn't mean to offend you. Uh... could you just make sure you don't leave any of yourum... uh....droppings around the place?

Camilla: Now look here.....we are very distinguished camels. We don't leave messes around the place.....

Interviewer: I do seem to be putting my foot in it. Well camel...

Camilla: Camilla,

Cameron: And Cameron,

Interviewer: Well Camilla and Cameron, what do you think about all of this Christmas business? A bit over-rated don't you think?

I have just interviewed five teenagers about what gift they want this Christmas because I am trying to write an article called “The Christmas gift that lasts.”

So far I have discovered that:

- Christmas gifts can break
- Christmas gifts can become boring
- Christmas gifts can make you sick
- Christmas gifts can be grown out of,
- Christmas gifts can look better on TV than in real life.

I’m left wondering whether there is any Christmas gift that lasts and why we bother with this whole charade each year.

Camilla: That’s because you are looking in the wrong place for the answer. You won’t find the answer in the Argos catalogue.

Interviewer: But I thought that the Argos catalogue was the “laminated book of dreams”

Cameron: Not dreams that will last for all eternity.

Interviewer: So do you know a Christmas gift that lasts or are you going to fob me off with a camel’s idea of a good Christmas gift.....hump warmers, two pairs of matching sandals for the hooves, sun visas for your head....?

Camilla: We were there when the greatest Christmas gift was given and we can tell you all about it if you are willing to listen.

Interviewer: Go on then.....I’ve got nothing to lose.....I haven’t got anything else for my article yet.

Puppets Act 2: “Mary and the Angel Gabriel”

Cameron: It all began two thousand years ago in a little town called Nazareth where a young girl called Mary lived. She was soon to be married to a man called Joseph.

(Table is brought on. Enter Mary carrying a bowl with bread dough in it. She begins to knead the dough)

One day she was going about her normal duties when an angel appeared.

(Angel appears in front of Mary. Mary falls down on one knee and looks terrified)

Angel: Greetings. God is with you.

(Angel and Mary freeze until their next lines)

Camilla: Well you can imagine Mary was pretty terrified.....it isn’t every day that you see an angel now is it?

Interviewer: You don’t think she was having a daydream? I’m not sure about this angel stuff!

Cameron: Oh dear, we have a right one here. Next you will be asking me if Mary had eaten something funny the night before. Angels exist OK.....I have seen them for myself. Now where were we?

Interviewer : You were telling me that an angel came to speak to Mary. But why?

Camilla: God had a special message for Mary, and so he sent His angel Gabriel to deliver it.

Interviewer: God.....do you believe in God as well as angels?

Cameron: Well who else do you think made us? We didn't just appear here by accident did we? Really.....I do wonder whether you humans know anything at all.

Camilla: Now don't go getting all grumpy Cameron.....

Cameron: Shall I spit at her Camilla?

Camilla: Definitely not Cameron.....we have a story to tell.

Interviewer: So what was God's message for Mary?

Camilla: The angel said to Mary:

Angel: Do not be afraid. God loves you. He is going to give you a baby: You will name him Jesus. He will be God's Son!

Cameron: Mary was very surprised because she wasn't even married and said to the angel:

Mary: How can this be true?

Angel: Nothing is impossible with God.

Camilla: Mary believed the angel and said to him that she would do whatever God wanted her to do and then the angel left.

(Exit Angel)

Interviewer: Wow.....that girl had courage. It can't have been easy for her to be willing to do what God wanted her to do.

(Exit Camilla, Cameron and Mary. The table is removed and in its place is put a couple of chairs. Under one of the chairs is placed baby Jesus.)

Carol 2: [The Angel Gabriel \(v.1-3\)](#)

Puppets Act 3: "Mary, Joseph and the Innkeeper"

(Enter Camilla and Cameron)

Camilla: Mmmm that's better.....just needed a quick drink to fill up the old humps.

- Interviewer: Is that it then? Mary was going to have a baby.....admittedly a special baby because God gave it to her?
- Cameron: Oh no, there is much more. Mary was going to get married to Joseph but before they were married, Joseph had to take a trip to the city of Bethlehem.
- Camilla: Some big-wig in that area wanted to count up everybody....don't ask me why.....the whole of Galilee was in chaos.
- Cameron: My poor old friend Herbert was the donkey who had to carry Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

(Mary and Joseph walk very slowly up from the back of church to the front of church stopping as they knock on imaginary inn doors as the dialogue continues)

- Interviewer: But what about Mary? It must have been terribly uncomfortable for her to ride on a donkey when she was expecting a baby.
- Camilla: I think it must have been very hard for her. Herbert told me that they had to keep stopping.
- Cameron: By the time they reached Bethlehem the place was in uproar. People had come from all over Galilee and everywhere was crowded.
- Camilla: Joseph and Mary looked for a place to stay but there wasn't a room to spare at any of the inns. All the beds were taken.

(Mary and Joseph knock on imaginary doors and then shake their heads.)

- Interviewer: Surely someone must have seen the state that Mary was in.
- Cameron: One kind inn-keeper eventually let them borrow his stable.

(Mary and Joseph knock on an imaginary door and an inn-keeper appears)

- Joseph: Do you have a room where we could spend the night?
- Inn-keeper: Sorry we are all full.
- Joseph: But my wife really needs to lie down.
- Inn-keeper: I do have a stable round the back if you like.
- Joseph: We'll take it.....thank you very much.

(The Inn-keeper leads Mary and Joseph to the front of church where they sit down on the two chairs. The inn-keeper then leaves)

- Interviewer: Did you just say that Mary and Joseph bedded down in a stable?
- Cameron: I did indeed.
- Interviewer: But that's where donkeys and horses stay.....it isn't a fit place for humans.....I mean the smell....the mess....

- Camilla: Careful Mister....please remember that we too are animals....and we have our feelings.
- Interviewer: Feelings apart.....this is unbelievable. You told me earlier that the baby Mary was carrying was.....God's Son.....no don't tell me....I wouldn't believe you if you did. Don't tell me that Mary's baby was born in that dirty place.
- Cameron: He was.
- (Mary picks up baby and cuddles it)*
- Interviewer: This is unbelievable.
- Camilla: Amazing is the word I think you are looking for. And yes...that night Mary's baby and God's only Son was born.
- Cameron: Mary and Joseph named him Jesus just as the angel had told them to.
- Camilla: They made a soft bed for him in a manger and wrapped him up to keep him warm. Jesus was the most wonderful gift ever given to humans.

(Exit Cameron and Camilla)

Carol 3: [Away in a manger](#)

Puppets Act 4: "Shepherds and angels"

- Interviewer: I have to say that this is a pretty outrageous story....now where have those camels gone?

(Enter Cameron and Camilla)

- Cameron: We just needed a quick snack.....got to keep our energy levels up you know.
- Interviewer: Mmm....
- Camilla: I can still remember the night that Jesus was born.
- Interviewer: Were you there then?
- Cameron: Of course we were.....how do you think we know all about this? We were in Bethlehem with our owner. I was just having a little nap when this singing woke me up.
- Camilla: Oh and didn't I hear about that?!!
- Cameron: It sounded like a massive choir outside our stable....so I got up and I couldn't believe my eyes.
- Camilla: There in the sky were all these angels and they were singing their hearts out. I will never forget that sight or beautiful sound.
- Cameron: I'll never forget having such a disturbed night....hmmph.

Interviewer: Did anyone else see that angelic choir practise apart from you then?

Camilla: Oh yes....the shepherds were out in the fields looking after their sheep

(Enter shepherds in the centre of the church)

In fact the angels had come to see them, not us. They had a message for the shepherds.

(Angel appears in front of shepherds and other angels gather around)

Angel: Don't be afraid. I am bringing you good news. This is happy news for all the people. Today in Bethlehem, God's Son.....the Saviour of the world was born. You can go and see him. He is wrapped up warm and snug in a manger.

Camilla: When the angels had left, the shepherds got up quickly. They were really excited and wanted to see the new baby for themselves

(Shepherds get up and walk to where Mary and Joseph are sitting and kneel in front of them)

Cameron: They found Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus just as the angels had told them that they would. They were utterly amazed to see that God had sent his Saviour into the world.

Interviewer: The Saviour of the world.....born in a stable.....I wonder if this is the Christmas gift that lasts.

(Exit Cameron and Camilla)

Carol 4: [Angels from the realms of glory \(v.1-2\)](#)

Puppets Act 5: "The Wise men"

(Enter Cameron and Camilla)

Cameron: Oh my poor old feet....hey you don't have any decent slippers in that Argos catalogue of yours do you?

Interviewer: Never mind the Argos catalogue.....I am struggling to believe this story you have been telling me.....you haven't just made it up for my benefit have you?

Cameron: Would a camel lie? Of course not! Unlike you humans!

Camilla: Now then dear....keep your cool! All that we have told you this evening really happened. And another thing.....God put a special star in the sky when Jesus was born.

Interviewer: How do you know that?

Camilla: Humphrey told me.

Interviewer: One of your camel friends no doubt.

Cameron: His owner lives in Persia and he and some of his star-gazing friends saw this star. They knew it was a sign that a new King had been born, so they followed it for a very long way.

(Three wise men walk up from the back of church to the front carrying gold, frankincense and myrrh. When they reach Mary and Joseph, they bow down and give their gifts to Mary)

Camilla: Eventually the star led them to the place where Jesus was. Humphrey actually saw Jesus.....he said his owner had brought a special gift of gold as a sign that Jesus was a king.

Cameron: One of the other men brought a gift of frankincense and the other man brought a gift of myrrh

Interviewer: That seems a very odd gift to give to a new baby.

Camilla: It was.....but myrrh was a gift pointing to what Jesus would eventually do for you humans. He had come to love you all, and to be your Saviour.

Interviewer: The gift of a Saviour.....

Cameron: The gift of a Saviour.....that's what happened two thousand years ago....at the very first Christmas.

(Exit Cameron and Camilla)

Carol 5: [O what a gift \(chorus, v.1, chorus\)](#)

Puppets Act 6: **“Talking with the interviewer”**

(Enter Cameron and Camilla)

Interviewer: I've been thinking Cameron and Camilla.

Cameron: Mmmm

Interviewer: I have to write this article about “The Christmas Gift that lasts.” I think that I have discovered it.

Camilla: Really?

Interviewer: Yes this Christmas gift can't break

Cameron: Yes

Interviewer: It isn't boring, and can't make you sick

Camilla: Right

Interviewer: You can't grow out of it and it won't look better on TV than in real life.

Cameron: Well spit it out old chap.....or don't you humans like spitting?

- Interviewer: We don't Cameron....Listen to this: "The Christmas gift that lasts" – JESUS
- Camilla: Well done.....you have got it at last!
- Interviewer: Thanks Camilla.....
- Cameron: And shall we camels tell you why Jesus is the best Christmas gift of all for you humans?
- Interviewer: Go on then.
- Camilla: Jesus came to earth to be your Saviour.
- Cameron: He came to put things right between you and your Heavenly Father so that you can know His wonderful love, not just now but for all eternity...
- Camilla: and if that isn't the best Christmas gift of all, then I don't know what is. But there is one last thing to remember.
- Interviewer: What's that?
- Cameron: Remember.....Christmas gifts are meant to be unwrapped!

(Exit Cameron and Camilla. Interviewer writes something down on his clipboard and then exits.)

- Talk:** **Invitation to "unwrap" the Christmas gift that lasts.**
 Either:
- A very concise evangelistic address (2-3mins) or
 - An invitation to an enquirers course or
 - An invitation to take home some Christian literature or
 - An invitation to your other Christmas services.

Prayer

Carol 6: [Christmas it's Christmas](#)

HAPPY CHRISTMAS EVERYBODY!