

A script from



## **“An Evening in December”**

by  
Curt Cloninger

- What** Sam reminds his family to slow down and remember the true meaning of Christmas. **Themes:** Christmas, Family, Nativity, Jesus, Slowing Down, Busy-ness, Focus
- Who** Sam- grandfather  
Maggie- mom  
Jeff- dad  
Tim- teenage son  
Amanda- young daughter
- When** Present-Christmas Season
- Wear (Props)** Boxes and other items you would find in an attic  
Crèche (Nativity Scene)  
2 sets of car keys  
Living room set- couch, chairs, coffee table  
Coats for Sam and Maggie  
All characters should be dressed in warm casual clothes
- Why** Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 2:1-20
- How** The first scene can be created with a black stage and a few boxes for Sam to go through. The living room scenes can be as elaborate or simple of a set as you are able. Be sure and practice the timing of the conversations so that it feels natural. The first scene with the family should have a lot of energy and a sense of urgency, but by the end the family has slowed down.
- Time** Approximately 15-20 minutes

An old man, **Sam**, enters an attic carefully, picking his way through the boxes, and careful not to bump his head. He searches for, then finds two boxes marked "Christmas Decorations," opens one and begins to unpack some of the contents. He talks to himself and to Rachel, his wife who has died three years earlier.

**Sam:** Well, let's see here. *(He blows dust off a box.)* You haven't been up in this attic for awhile, have you Sam? *(Reading the labeling on one of the boxes)* Let's see here... "Miscellaneous Kids' Memorabilia." Nah, not for now. *(Reading)* "Tax records 1962 through 1976". Definitely not for now. Or ever. *(Discovers Christmas boxes)* Ah, here we go. "Christmas Decorations". *(Looking around)* Huh! Just two boxes? Boy, it always seemed like we had so many of these...these decorations. Just two boxes. Hmm. *(Pulls a photograph out of one of the boxes. It is of himself and Rachel, his wife, who is now dead)* Now, what's this? Well, I'll be. There we are...me and Rachel, standing in front of some silly looking back-drop. *(Looking at it more carefully)* Ah, now I remember. Rachel had a coupon and we took it at the Wal-Mart. *(After a beat)* Oh, Rachel... it feels sorta funny going through all this Christmas stuff without you. You had yourself some mighty fine decorations, didn't you, honey? Mighty fine stuff. I just don't quite know what to do with it all. You were always the one to put up the decorations. I was always the one to put up the lights. I remember the first year we got all these red and green Christmas lights. I must've strung a thousand of these things all over the house, the trees. Must've blown out twenty fuses 'til I got it right. Well, I haven't done lights in three years, Rachel. The kids are still coming over here for Christmas, but I haven't done lights...it just seemed like too much trouble.

*(After a beat)* Well, this year, Rachel, I'm gonna go over to Maggie's house. She and Jeff and the kids, they insisted I come over there. They want to worry over me...fuss over me, I think. I'll let 'em. I told 'em I'd come over there for Christmas Day. Maggie said, "No, Pop. You've gotta pack a bag and come over for the whole week." I said, "Maggie, that's silly. I just live across town. I've got yard work to do." But, Maggie...you know how she is-just like you were, Rachel...stubborn as a mule...she insisted. *(After a beat)* The kids are really doing good, Rachel. You'd be proud of 'em. They look out for me...drop in on me all the time...drive me crazy. I drop in on them too. I try to get out a lot. I even went on vacation with 'em this summer. You should've seen me at Disneyworld. I was a hoot on that Space Mountain. You would've loved it. *(After a beat)* I sure do miss you, Rachel. I do indeed. I'm doing good, but sometimes, especially this time of year...well, it just doesn't really seem like Christmas without you. I just can't ever seem to get started on it... Christmas...*(changing the subject)*

Well, Maggie asked me to bring some decorations over. So, I thought I'd dig around up here and find something. The problem is, I just can't seem

to remember exactly what you did with all these things. It just always seemed...right. Everything did...the way you did Christmas. I remember, you had that thing you'd put on the front door and that ugly silver star you'd always put up on the tree. And all those little doo-dads you and the kids, and then the grandkids always made. *(He spots the crèche in the box)* Ahhh...and this thing. This...this "crèche," you called it. That always seemed like a fancy name to me. You bought it in Colorado that summer. That must've been forty years ago. I remember I didn't want to buy it 'cause it was so expensive. You called me a Scrooge. You said, "Sam, if we can't splurge a little bit on a nativity scene, then there's something wrong with us!" We must've argued all the way from Denver to Estes Park. But you won. We bought it. *(Carefully handling all the pieces)* All these tiny pieces. Forty-year investment, Rachel. I'd say it's been a good one. Every year, you'd clear out a place on the table, put down this piece of felt. We'd get all the kids together and you'd very carefully unpack the crèche...all the little tiny figures. We'd give the kids each one figure. They'd hold it real gentle. And then I'd get out the Bible and read the story. And then very carefully the kids would place the figures, one by one, and I'd talk about who each figure was. And then last of all, you'd take that tiny little Jesus figure and put him in that manger.

And you'd always say, "And here's the baby Jesus. He was born in this stable, but now he lives in us." And then we'd light that candle and the kids would play with the melting wax. And then they'd get bored and would run off to do something else and I'd get up to get me a cup of coffee. But you'd always stay right there. You'd be sorta straightening up around the crèche...fiddling with it. And you'd always sing that same song, sorta quiet, under your breathe, just to yourself. You'd sing...*(he realizes something)* You know what Rachel? It just hit me. That's when Christmas time began for me, every year. That evening in December when we'd do the crèche and you'd sing that song, under your breathe. That's when Christmas began. Hmm...

*Sings the first verse, a cappella, of "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas"; then carefully packs up the creche as he speaks.*

Well, it might not be such a bad Christmas this year, after all, Rachel. Maggie and Jeff, they've got plenty of room. Maybe we'll just start a new thing over at their house. I don't think I'm gonna take any of these doo-dads, though. Just this old crèche. *(Picks up the baby Jesus)* "He was born in a manger, but now He lives in us." *(He puts the Jesus figure in his shirt pocket)* I think it might be an okay Christmas, after all.

## **SCENE TWO**

**Sam** walks into the front room of Maggie and Jeff's. He's holding his little suitcase, and the box with the crèche in it. He announces his presence, but no one hears him. During this scene no one else notices **Sam**.

**Sam:** Hello? I'm here, everybody. Anybody home? *(He takes off his overcoat and drapes it over a large wingback chair)* I'm here everybody. I'm here. *(To himself)* Yeah, well...so what?! Hmmm. I wonder where everybody is? Both cars are in the driveway. *(He sees two sets of car keys on the end table by the wingback chair)* And there are both sets of car keys. I wonder where everybody--

**Maggie's** voice interrupts **Sam's** last phrase. As she delivers her line, **Sam** gets an idea to hide in the chair. He turns the chair away from the line of sight of the living room, toward the audience, and covers up his legs with his overcoat. He grabs both sets of car keys and pulls them under the coat with him.

**Maggie:** *(From offstage)* Jeff! Do you have any idea where my car keys are?

**Jeff:** *(From offstage)* No, Maggie! I'm not the guardian of your car keys.

**Maggie:** *(Rushing onstage and looking in the room for her keys, throwing her coat over the back of the wingback chair and partially covering up Sam)* Jeff, would you please come help me look for my keys. *(Reading off her "To Do" list)* I've gotta get to the Honey Baked Ham Store before it closes, I've gotta get to the cleaner's, I've gotta go by Toys Are Us to find some Mighty Morphin Something or Other's for Sam Jr.'s kids, I've gotta drop off some cookies at Peggy Green's house...I've gotta find my car keys.

**Jeff:** *(Also rushing onstage and also throwing his coat over Sam).* You made cookies?! Why didn't you tell me you made cookies?

**Maggie:** Because they're not for you.

**Jeff:** Oh. Well, the last time I saw your car keys was last week when I fussed at you for leaving them on the floorboard of your car.

**Maggie:** *(With a bite)* Well, I think maybe I've had 'em since then.

**Tim:** *(Tim rushes onstage)* Mom! You promised me you'd drop me off at the mall this evening. I've gotta do my Christmas shopping. *(Turns to his Jeff)* Hey Dad, you got any money?

**Jeff:** No, Son, I don't have any money, thank you very much. Your little sister already beat you to the trough. Which reminds me, Mag, could you stop

off at the fast cash machine and get me a little money? Eighty bucks will do.

**Maggie:** Guys, I'm running out of time here. I've gotta get the ham.

**Tim:** Come on, Mom. The mall's right on your way to the ham store. Sorta.

**Maggie:** Yeah, and then I'll "sorta" get caught in all the traffic on Pleasant Hill Road. And then I'll "sorta" have to stand in line at the cash machine. And then I'll "sorta" not get our ham, and then we'll "sorta" not have any ham for Christmas lunch. But, if I don't find my keys I'm "sorta" not going anywhere.

**Jeff:** I'll make you a deal. *(Feeling in his pockets for his keys)* I'll give you the key off of my key ring, -if I can find it- if you'll stop off and get me some cash.

**Maggie:** I'll make **you** a deal. You give me your key and you can **eat** some of the ham. You can drive this guy to the mall yourself. You can get cash, and then you can circle the parking lot to your hearts content.

**Jeff:** I can't do that, Mags. I've got choir rehearsal tonight.

**Maggie:** Ahhhh! It's not even Christmas yet and I'm already going crazy. *(Realizes that she hasn't thought about who will take care of the younger daughter)* Amanda! Has anybody seen Amanda? Somebody's got to look after Amanda tonight. *(Yells loudly for Amanda)* Amanda!

**Amanda:** *(The young daughter hurries into the room)* Yeah, what's wrong, Mom?

**Maggie:** *(Still very harried)* Nothing! Nothing's wrong! Alright, Amanda. Here are your choices. You can either go run errands with me. You can go to choir rehearsal with your dad, or you can stay home with your big brother.

**Amanda:** Don't I have any other choices?

**Tim:** Mom! I can't stay home! I've gotta get something at the mall.

**Jeff:** Ah! Now I get it. You're finally gonna buy your Dad that chain saw from Sears, eh Son?

**Tim:** Dad!

**Maggie:** Aye yi, yi...that reminds me. Has anybody heard from Dad today?

**Jeff:** Yeah, he called this afternoon and said he'd be here around six.

**Maggie:** Well, it's six-thirty, and he's not here. Jeff, you need to run by his house on your way to rehearsal and make sure he's okay.

- Jeff:** *(Starts out of the room)* Okay, let me go get my car keys.
- Tim:** *(Also starts out of the room)* I gotta go change clothes.
- Amanda:** *(Whining)* Mom! I'm starving!
- Maggie:** Stop!!! Everybody stop! We're gonna make a plan.
- Tim:** *(Almost under his breath)* Not again.
- Maggie:** *(She takes a deep breath and launches into to "the plan"; to Jeff)* Okay, you take Tim with you to Choir Rehearsal. There's a fast cash machine right on the way to the mall. You guys get your own dinner. Amanda, you come with me. We'll stop off at Chic-Fil-A and get our dinner. Amanda, you and I will go to the ham store, we'll swing by the toy store and then we'll pick up your brother from choir rehearsal and go to the mall. *(To Jeff)* You stop off at Dad's. Tim, you go write Grand-Dad a note and put it on our front door, just in case we miss him. Tell him to come on in and get settled. We'll be back later. Come on, hands together!
- Tim:** *(Embarrassed by the whole scene)* Mom!
- Maggie:** *(A drill sergeant)* Hands in! *(Their normal, "cheesy" routine. Everyone puts their hands together, as in a huddle)* Okaaaay! **WE. ARE. ORGANIZED! BREAK!** *(They all run off in opposite directions)*
- Amanda:** *(Runs back in)* Hey Mom, I-- *(sees Sam, her grand-dad, sitting under the coats in the wing-back chair)* Grand-Dad! What're you doing here?
- Sam:** *(Crawling partially out from under the coats)* Shhhh! Come here and sit down by me.
- Amanda:** What've you got there?
- Sam:** *(Referring to box)* Oh this? This belonged to your Grand-Ma Rachel.
- Amanda:** What is it?

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**ENDING:**

- Maggie:** *(Tenderly)* I'll read, Dad. *(Takes the Bible from Sam, and reads)* "And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over

their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger"

**Sam:** *(Almost interrupting)* I'm sorry, Baby. I gotta do this part. It's my favorite. *(Taking the Bible again, he reads)* "So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told." *(Sam looks around, satisfied)* Well...that's it. That's the story.

**Tim:** Hey! What about the stuff about the wise men?

**Sam:** The wise men? Oh yeah, the wise men bringing stuff. Gold and frankincense and stuff.

**Amanda:** Hey Grand-Dad, what's Frankincense?

**Sam:** *(With a twinkle in his eye, delighted with the joke he's about to play)* Frankincense? Well, it's a little known fact that frankincense, being translated from the ancient Hebrew, Frankincense is another word for... *(produces the car keys from his pocket and drops them on the table by the crèche)* Car Keys.

**Family:** *(Together)* Dad! Grand-Dad!

**Sam:** Well, I just happened to find these in the chair here. And besides, I figured it wouldn't kill us to just stay put for one night. *(To Maggie)* You could do without a ham. *(To Tim)* You could do without a shopping trip. *(To Jeff)* And the choir can definitely do without you.

**Maggie:** *(Laughs)* Amen, Brother! You've got that right.

**Amanda:** *(Looks into the manger of the crèche and sees that the baby Jesus is missing)* Grand-Dad! Where's the baby Jesus?

**Sam:** *(Fishing the figure out of his pocket)* Ahh...the baby Jesus. He must've been in here with the...with the Frankincense.

**Maggie:** Well, you know what Mom would say about that?

**Sam:** *(As he lights the candle)* Yep. The first thing she'd say is, "If you get any of that candle wax on my good coffee table, you're dead meat, Buster."  
*(Places the baby Jesus in the manger)* And then she'd say, "And here's the baby Jesus. He was born in a stable, but now he lives in us." And of course, she'd say *(sings)* "So have yourself a Merry little Christmas now."

*Lights fade. The end.*