

## “Songs of the Season: No EI”

by  
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**What** A family taking Christmas portraits—what could wrong? Each family member has a story to share during this funny sketch. This comedy can incorporate optional media.

**Themes:** Christmas, Family, Tradition

**Who** Marie- Mom  
Jacob- Dad  
Laura- teen daughter  
Luke- teen son

**When** Present

**Wear  
(Props)** Cast is dressed casual and appropriate for the holiday  
Christmas tree  
Camera  
Tripod  
Cell phone  
Rudolph nose (clown nose)  
Elf doll/toy

**Why** Romans 12:18

**How** If you have the capability, have the pictures taken projected on screen. Also maybe include the pictures Laura and Marie describe in their monologues.

**Time** Approximately 10 minutes

Lights up on **Marie** setting up a camera on a tripod, checking the focus, etc., before calling to her family, offstage.

**Marie:** Okay, let's go! Picture time!! *(she checks the setting, the Christmas tree, etc. that it is all perfect, then seeing that her family isn't with her)* Luke! Laura! Living room NOW!!

*Jacob enters finishing his tie.*

**Jacob:** Let's go kids, hurry up!! *(to Marie)* Marie, can you straighten this up for me?

**Marie:** I thought we'd take the picture with the tree right there off our left shoulder, just enough to....

**Jacob:** Sounds great, babe. Real artistic. Luke, get down here!! Laura, get off the phone!!

**Laura:** *(entering)* I'm just sending a text, Dad, calm down. Besides, can't we just use the pictures we took at Thanksgiving?

**Marie:** Those were from the fall...

**Laura:** Fall, winter, same thing.

**Marie:** No, different themes, different decor, different color palettes.

**Laura:** It's only been a month.

*Luke enters, headphones on and obnoxiously loud.*

**Jacob:** Luke, take those off. *(Luke doesn't hear him)* Luke! Luke!!! *(takes the headphones off his son)* Thanks for joining the rest of the world. Alright, both of you, *(as an airline stewardess might)* electronic devices off and safely stored in the containers on the sides of your pants. Family picture time!

**Marie:** *(placing her family)* Ok, Luke...here. Laura, next to your brother...

**Luke:** Why can't we just use the Thanksgiving pictures.

**Laura:** Already tried it, save your breath.

**Marie:** And dad...behind them here... *(looks through camera)* Luke, scoot over a bit. Laura, move that way. Jacob, take that thing off your head *(he has put a bauble from the tree on his head)* Okay...perfect. Don't move!

*She runs to take her place, takes the ornament off Jacob's head again, who gives a fake frown before smiling weakly at the camera, the kids give obviously fake smiles. A flash of light, Marie runs to look at the camera.*

Come on guys, that was terrible. Is it too much to ask for you to ACTUALLY smile?

**Luke and Laura:** Yes.

**Jacob:** Alright, you two. Smile big. For REAL this time. Then we'll go eat at El Taboscoe's.

**Laura:** There's no "El," dad. It's just "Taboscoe's." *(pulling out her cell phone)*

**Luke:** Like we tell you every time.

**Jacob:** Hey, no texting until we get done.

*Laura sighs dramatically and puts it away.*

**Marie:** *(at camera)* Ok, Luke, look this way...tilt your head

*Luke cranes it sideways at a weird angle and gives a goofy smile.*

**Jacob:** *(smacking his son in the head)* Smart-aleck.

**Marie:** Ok, big smiles. REAL smiles.

*She runs to her place again. We see the flash, the family freezes and Laura steps out and addresses the audience directly.*

**Laura:** Stevens Family Christmas Portraits: A history. By Laura.

In the beginning, it was simple: go to a studio, pose, take the shot, pay the man, go eat, go home. Then my mom decided to become "artistic," thus, beginning a long period of thematic costumes, like elves and reindeer and presents. She actually made us wear giant boxes. I think she finally got tired of us whining and all the sewing, and the costumes stopped. Then came her "sweater" period. Two years of matching Christmas sweaters...all ugly. Finally, several years ago, my dad talked her into taking a photography class. So, now we take our pictures at home. It's not that we hate taking pictures, but it always ends up being this big ordeal. Mom wants different settings, various poses, "artistic" framing, blah blah blah. What should take a few minutes winds up taking hours and we get into a big fight, then we go eat at Taboscoe's, which my dad loves for some reason. It's not even that good. Why can't we just send some generic Christmas card and quit worrying about pictures? Just once, please?

*She steps back into the family and they unfreeze.*

**Jacob:** Ok, that was good! Let's go eat! El Taboscoe's!

*They start gathering coats, etc...except Marie.*

**Luke:** Just Taboscoe's, dad. There is no "El."

**Jacob:** *(singing)* Noel, noel. Noel, noel! Luke says Taboscoe's has no "El"!

**Luke:** You set me up, didn't you?

**Laura:** Ugh, I have seven missed texts!

**Luke:** Heaven forbid you miss something crucial like what someone is wearing!

**Marie:** Stop! Don't go anywhere! We have to retake it!

**Laura:** Why?!

**Luke:** Here we go again...

**Marie:** Because it looks like the tree is growing out of my head.

**Luke:** It looks fine, Mom. Can we not do this?

**Marie:** Do what?

**Laura:** Take a million pictures and end up hating each other!

**Marie:** It's not that bad, stand right there. *(resetting camera)*

**Luke:** Yes, it is! Last year, we took pictures for an hour and a half! The year before that, it took over two hours!

**Marie:** So sue me for wanting a decent Christmas card picture! Laura, phone away, look at the camera. Jacob, you are NOT Rudolph, take that off your nose! *(runs to get in picture)*

**Jacob:** Everyone say cheeeesy enchiladas at El Taboscoe's!!

**Kids:** NO "EL"!!

*The flash catches them mid-sentence, the family freezes and Luke steps forward.*

**Luke:** Words My Dad Mispronounces: An oral history. By Luke.

One: "EI" Tabasco's, which isn't even good.  
Two: Golden "Coral."  
Three: "Hi"-unday.  
Four: "Semi" - noles, like it's a team of tractor trailer trucks or something.

And don't get me started on when we eat Japanese food! I don't know if it's early dementia or a complete failure of the American education system or dyslexia, but it's like my dad can't even read! Hearing him order sushi is physically painful. I wonder sometimes how he ever got a job! And embarrassing? That's a whole different list. Going grocery shopping is the worst. I try to stay at least half an aisle from him at the (*air quotes*) Wally World, but he just yells across the store! "Look! They've got 'cheeters' on sale!!" And like now, whenever we take pictures, he does stupid little things like pretend to be Rudolph, which just irritates us even more. Couldn't he be normal for once? It was funny when I was little, but now? It's just old. (*he steps back in*)

**Jacob:** Time to eat!

**Luke:** You know we're not done.

**Laura:** We're gonna have to retake it.

**Marie:** Well, if you two didn't feel the need to correct your father, that would have been a good shot.

**Luke:** It's not our fault, get on to Dad.

**Laura:** Yeah, he's the one playing with the ornaments.

**Jacob:** (*looking up, an ornament hanging from each ear*) I did what now?

**Marie:** Take those off, quit playing with the tree. Maybe we should take the picture on the stairs.

**Laura:** No, Mom. We tried that last year and Dad got his foot stuck in the railing.

**Luke:** Then knocked us all down the stairs.

**Marie:** Then, let's move to the porch.

**Jacob:** Why don't we take it on the swing?

**Luke:** We did that two years ago, Dad. Mom, let's just use the first picture!

**Marie:** The tree was growing out of my head!

**Laura:** You'll be the only person in the world who'll see it that way!

**Jacob:** Ooh! Let's sit by the tree and look like we're opening presents!

**Marie:** Yeah, that'll work!

*Luke passes a present to Laura.*

**Laura:** This one has your name on it.

**Luke:** Then don't break it.

**Marie:** Ok, timer is on. Here we go... *(taking her place)* Everyone smile.

*Right as picture is taken, Marie sneezes. As family freezes, she steps forward.*

"How to Take Great Christmas Picture: A learning guide by Marie". Or, "Learning from My Mistakes."

The kids say I'm a tyrant about pictures, but it's not my fault. Like last year's stairs fiasco when my husband got his foot stuck in the railing. Or the swing incident two years ago when we discovered how easily a chain can break. Or the year we tried to get the dog in the picture...then he tried to eat the camera. We've tipped the tree over, we've nearly burned the house down, we've lost power. And my husband, whom I love dearly, cannot keep his hands to himself! When I was a kid, I loved when we got Christmas cards from our friends and family. It was a little glimpse into their lives once a year, a way to share with each other that "we're still here, we're doing well, hope you are as well." Then, we'd send ours out and I could just imagine my great-aunts gushing over how big we'd gotten and how lovely our picture was. It was a way to connect and, at least to me, that's part of Christmas. Of course, with Facebook and Instagram and all those other things, we're constantly connected, so my kids don't really see why Christmas pictures matter so much to me. I'm afraid we're going to lose this. Drawing together, even if it's only through a postcard. *(she steps back)*

**Kids:** Mom!!!

**Marie:** I am so sorry. Maybe we can take it again.

**Laura:** No! I'm done, this is a disaster! *(gets up)*

**Marie:** Sit back down, young lady.

**Luke:** *(shaking a gift)* This sounds like clothes.

**Jacob:** Stop that, Luke.

**Marie:** I'm resetting the timer.

**Laura:** Mom, this is stupid!

**Luke:** You're stupid.

**Jacob:** Be nice to your sister!

**Marie:** Please! Hurry!

**Laura:** No! I refuse!!

**Jacob:** Laura, get over here! *(pulls her into the shot)*

**Laura:** No! I don't want to be in this family!

**Luke:** We wish you weren't!

**Marie:** Luke!

**Jacob:** You're going to be in this picture whether you like it or not! Then we're going to El Taboscoe's!

**Kids:** There's NO "EL"!!

**Marie:** SMILE!!!

*They all smile and freeze. It's a nice picture... except for the elf that **Jacob** eases into the shot just as the camera flashes. He then steps out as the family freezes.*

**Jacob:** "Things I Do to Keep My Family Sane: An Oral History by Jacob."

One: Purposefully mispronounce words.

Two: Sing loudly at the worst possible time.

Three: Yell across the grocery store slash beach slash school yard slash church.

Four: Incorporate props into family pictures.

The truth is, I HATE taking family pictures. We all get annoyed and frustrated with each other. And, really, it's not a big deal like it used to be before social media took over the world. But I remember how my dad was. He'd get mad and refuse to be in the picture. If you'd ever seen my family's Christmas card from when I was a kid, you'd think he doesn't exist. I want to be better than that. I know my kids are embarrassed by my antics, but that's what dads do—we keep our kids humble. And even though I hate taking these pictures, my wife loves them. And I love her. So, I try to inject a little bit of humor into the procedures to make it a little less miserable for all of us. And to give my kids a target other than my wife. Because Christmas is about giving of yourself for others, right? I guess you could say that these pictures are part of my gift to my wife. It

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may take a little longer than it should to take them, but the pictures always turn out pretty ok. *(he steps back into the family)*  
Marie: *(runs to the camera)* I think that's the one!

Luke: Finally!!

Laura: Yes.

Jacob: El Taboscoe's!

Luke: It's just...nevermind, Dad.

Marie: *(showing them the picture)* It looks so good!

Laura: Yeah...except...

Marie: What?

Luke: You really don't see it?

Marie: See what?!

Luke: Nothing.

Marie: No, show me.

Laura: *(pointing at the picture on the camera)* When did we adopt an elf?

Marie: What... *(looks closer)* Jacob!!! Really!?

Luke: *(laughing)* It's actually a good picture.

Laura: Yeah, looks like it's part of the family.

Marie: It's not funny! The best picture all afternoon and there's an elf...right in the middle... *(laughs)* like it's one of the kids.

Luke: It's so ridiculous. Can we please use it?

Laura: Mom, it's so funny, and I bet no one else even notices.

Marie: Let me think about it. It is a really good picture. Maybe we can retake it later. Ok, let's go eat.

Kids: Finally/yes!

Jacob: Let's go to...

**Kids/Marie:** El Taboscoes's... *(leaving)*

**Jacob:** Guys, it's just Taboscoe's...there's no "El"

*Exits, stage goes dark.*

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