Finding Joy

By
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DEDICATION

For my Grandma Lulu, who absolutely loved Christmas, and for Carol Cobb Turner who brought the sounds of Christmas to life year after year

STORY OF THE PLAY

"Finding Joy" tells the poignant, but funny story of Lucy, a grandmother struggling with her inability to find joy this first Christmas after her husband has passed away from cancer. Surrounded by her daughter and grandchildren, Lucy tries her best to decorate. Unwrapping the nativity pieces, an angel appears and takes her into the world of the holy family where joy and difficulty also walked hand in hand. As the show closes, Lucy is able to take over her late husband's tradition of reading the Christmas story from Luke and we see the holy characters come to life in drama and song.

Performance time: About 45 minutes.

Premiere Performance

This show premiered on Dec. 20, 2009 at the Providence Baptist Church in Daniel Island, SC with the help of Don Flowers, Pastor, and Deanna McBroom, Minister of Music.

The original cast is as follows:

LUCY: Boo Shepard; LORI: Angela Rogers/Lori Carroll; GRACE: Leah Flood; EMMA: Eliza Turner; SALLY: Blair Woody; MARY: Allie Hiott; JOSEPH: Jaeson May; SHEPHERDS: John and Jonathan Painter; 3 MAGI: Carmine Batista, Scott Christie, Paul Usher and also featured the Providence Baptist Choirs.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Speaking parts: 1 m, 3 w, 2-3 girls.
Nativity non-speaking roles for 3 m, 1 w, 2 teen boys.
Also children's choir.

LUCY: Grandmother, 60s, recently widowed and grieving but has a hint of sparkle still in her.

LORI: Daughter, 30s, working mother with husband deployed. She wants to help her mother "turn the page" emotionally this Christmas.

***GRACE:** Lori's oldest daughter, 12 and pretty grown up.

***EMMA:** Daughter, 9, a bit sassy with possibly a solo quality voice, though not required.

***SALLY:** Daughter, 6, sweet, carries a baby doll.

MARY: In Biblical attire.

JOSEPH: In Biblical attire.

NON-SPEAKING ROLES:

ANGEL(S)

***INNKEEPER**

2 SHEPHERD BOYS

3 MAGI

**The children's parts could be condensed to just Emma and Sally. Also, Emma could be changed to a boy. The Innkeeper should also double as one of the Magi. There may be more than one angel at the manger, if desired.*

SONG LIST

1. *Ding, Dong Merrily on High*
2. *Carol of the Bells*
3. *In the Bleak Midwinter*
4. *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*
5. *O Little Town of Bethlehem*
6. *What Child Is This?*
7. *Come as a Child*
8. *Away in a Manger*
9. *What Can I Give Him?*
10. *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*
11. *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

See more information on songs and movement at the end of the script.

SETTING

Modern living room and a manger in Bethlehem.

STAGE RIGHT is a living room scene with an undecorated tree, fireplace, a couple of wingback type living room chairs and side tables. Several storage boxes are also visible, one opened with a few decorations pulled out.

CENTER STAGE: There needs to be acting space left open between SL and SR although the rest of the space is open for the choir and/or musicians who can be in full view, if desired.

STAGE LEFT is a manger area. Ideally, although not required, there is a manger structure with a straw floor and a stool for Mary covered with torn cloth next to “cradle” with straw. This manger can be bare wood slats that are covered with brown construction paper or burlap or palm fronds. It should be high enough to have Joseph be able to stand inside of it. In the ceiling, if possible, have white lights inside of “see-through” sheer white fabric to be used later for the star effect. These lights should be off at beginning of the play. The manger also needs a burlap-like curtain that can close off the front or be drawn back on both sides by hand and secured on hooks.

FINDING JOY

(AT RISE: CHOIR and HANDBELLS.)

"Ding, Dong Merrily on High"

Segues into

"Carol of the Bells"

(As song ends, LUCY enters slowly from SR to her living room which has only boxes and just a few decorations pulled out. Clearly she is not in the spirit of things. SHE sings under her breath from "Carol of the Bells." It is late morning Christmas Eve day.)

LUCY: *(Sort of talk-singing sadly and slowly.)* Merry, merry, merry, merry Christmas. *(Louder and almost sarcastic.)* Merry, merry, merry, merry Christmas. *(SHE puts her head in her hands and almost begins to cry.)* It's not. It's just not…. Nothing is going to make it a "Merry Christmas" …ever.

(SHE sits staring at the bare tree until there is a KNOCK on the door. Her daughter, LORI, and her children, GRACE, EMMA and SALLY, arrive and there are hugs and kisses galore with hello ad libs.)

LUCY: Hello, honey. Hello, sweetie. Hi, big girl. Hi baby girl. Come on in!!! It's so good to have you here. *(SHE stares at all of them, taking them all in with her eyes.)* Maybe I can make it through the next few days without crying now that you're here.

LORI: Oh, Mom. I know this is not going to be easy. Not for any of us.

(THEY look around and see the boxes and that nothing is decorated. LUCY is embarrassed and just sighs.)

LUCY: Your father would be so disappointed in me not having this house all decorated. He was such a Christmas nut.

LORI: Don't worry about it, Mom. We can do it now. The kids would love to help. Wouldn't you, kids? *(KIDS ad lib enthusiastic responses.)* They can hear all my memories of favorite ornaments as we decorate.

EMMA: Actually, Mom, I think we have heard all of those stories before.

GRACE: Many times, Mom. Many times.

LORI: *(Sarcastically but looking at THEM like they need to get with the program.)* Hmmm, well, lucky girls…it looks like you are going to hear them again! Now grab that box and get to decoratin'!

(SHE tickles SALLY and she smiles.)

LORI: *(Cont'd.)* OK…now here is exactly what I'm talking about. This elf is sooooo cool. Nothing says Christmas like this happenin' elf. If I just look at him, I can hear Andy Williams crooning Christmas music in the background just like the old days. Where is your old Andy Williams album, Mom?

LUCY: Ummmm, well…I hope you can understand, but ah…it's with your dad.

LORI: What? What are you talking about?

LUCY: It's ah…with your dad.

LORI: Mom, I'm getting worried about you. What are you talking about?

LUCY: It's your dad you should have worried about, you know.

LORI: What? Now, what do you mean?

LUCY: He um…well, you know how much he loved Andy Williams' album. Well, he made me promise that I would put it in his arms in the, well, you know…in the…when he died.

LORI: The coffin?

LUCY: Ah, yeah….

End of Freeview

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