

SHINE BRIGHT THE STARS

By Miriam C. Schuman

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STORY OF THE PLAY

The Green Crusaders, an environmentalist club of young people who are dedicated to following the Genesis directive to take care of the Earth, win the privilege of decorating the city hall lawn for Christmas. Despite complaints and confrontations with the grumpy man who lives next to city hall, the club members cheerfully set up the manger scene as the focal point of their decorations.

Meanwhile, a younger sister of one of the club members wages a persistent attack on the walls of anger that the grumpy neighbor has erected. Once the manger scene is set up, the city, faced with the threat of a lawsuit, tears down the religious decorations and insists on a secular replacement.

The club members fight a losing battle for the right to keep the religious decorations and decide to dress up in costume and take the place of the confiscated manger scene by forming a living nativity scene on Christmas Eve.

Forced off city property by city officials, and egged on by an angry atheist, the Green Crusaders are invited to create the manger scene on the lawn next door by none other than the grumpy neighbor.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7M, 5F, 9 or more Flexible)

- AARON:** Member of the Green Crusader's.
GERRY: Another member.
YUSEF: Another member.
ZACHARY: Another member.
LOUISA: Another member.
PAULA: Another member.
SHERRY: Another member.
MRS. OSSMAN: The club sponsor.
CARRIE: Aaron's little sister who often tags along.
MR. FELDSPAR: Lives near city hall.
PASTOR: Optional, his lines can be assigned to Mrs. Ossman.
BUSINESSMAN: Doesn't like the manger scene; plays Santa, Scene 7.
***PHOTOGRAPHER:** May be combined with role of reporter.
***REPORTER:** May be combined with role of photographer.
***LAWYER:** Optional.
***POLICE OFFICER:** Or other official.
***OTHERS:** Can be added for crowd scenes.
****SKATER 1:** A child rollerblading.
****SKATER 2:** Another.
****FOUR CHILDREN:** Small speaking parts.
- *Flexible parts
** The number of children can be increased or decreased to meet a director's needs.

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PRODUCTION NOTES

The cast is designed for flexibility. Many of the roles can be played by either gender with a simple change of name. Paula, for instance, could become Paul. The play can be performed with smaller or larger casts. Some characters can be dropped or merged. Some possibilities are mentioned in the parenthetical comments on page 3. The number of Green Crusaders can also be adjusted. Directors should feel free to make small changes in the text to accommodate their needs. Also, the director may use songs at the places indicated throughout the play.

COSTUME NOTES

Coats, hats and gloves; Biblical attire for live nativity scene, Santa Claus outfit, angel (long white robe), elf costume, police or other official uniform.

PROPS

2 cameras (Photographer, Zachary)
Tape recorder, pad of paper, pencil (Reporter)
Stuffed penguin or other exotic stuffed animal (Carrie)
Wind chimes - bells (Mr. Feldspar's house)
Manger scene - Mary, Joseph, baby, shepherds, camel, etc.
Decorations for city hall - stars, bells, large cardboard candy canes, cardboard snow family
Newspaper carrier bag to hang over Sherry's shoulder
2 newspapers (Sherry)
2 roller skates/blades (Skaters)
Bag to hold fixed wind chimes, tin of cookies (Aaron)
(Aaron)
Picture Carrie has drawn
Mailbox on house (For Carrie to put picture in)
Large cardboard picketing signs
Hay or straw

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SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY

Scene 1: In front of city hall on a warm November Day.

Scene 2: In front of city hall a few days later.

Scene 3: A Sunday after Thanksgiving in a room at the church where the Green Crusader's meet.

Scene 4: In front of Mr. Feldspar's house and city hall.

Scene 5: In front of city hall a week and a half later, just before a city council meeting.

Scene 6: About a half an hour later, picketing in front of city hall.

Scene 7: Christmas Eve in front of city hall.

SFX: Doorbell.

TIME: Current day, November through Christmas Eve.

PLACE: In front of City Hall.

PLAYING TIME: About 45 minutes without music. Directors can add music at places indicated and lengthen show up to an hour.

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: THE GREEN CRUSADERS are lined up in front of city hall, about to have their picture taken. The PHOTOGRAPHER is nearby, talking to the REPORTER, who has a portable tape recorder for interviewing. In his/her pocket is a pad of paper and a pencil. MRS. OSSMAN, a teacher, fusses around the group of kids. AARON enters, pulling his younger sister, CARRIE, by the hand. Carrie's stuffed animal is under her arm.)

AARON: *(Grinning.)* Hi, guys. I got stuck watching the kid.

CARRIE: Mom says you shouldn't call me that. She says my name is Carrie.

MRS. OSSMAN: I'm glad you're here. Now we can start.

AARON: Sorry I'm late. Carrie the kid, here, wouldn't leave until we found Kitty, and she forgot she'd put her in the freezer for a nap.

LOUISA: Is the cat okay? I mean, maybe you should have taken it to the vet.

CARRIE: Silly. Kitty isn't a cat, she's a penguin, and she likes the cold. *(SHE holds up the stuffed animal so that LOUISA can identify it as a penguin.)*

AARON: *(Going to stand in HIS place.)* When she was little, anything that moved was a "kitty." Be good now, Carrie. This won't take long.

MRS. OSSMAN: Good. We're ready.

PAULA: Mrs. O, we're missing Gerry. We can't have the picture without him. It was his idea to clean up the stream in the first place.

MRS. OSSMAN: I thought I saw him, Paula.

SHERRY: No. He's not here yet, Mrs. Ossman.

MRS. OSSMAN: Didn't he come with you, Sherry?

SHERRY: No. It's my brother's turn to do the paper route, and he wasn't back home yet when I left.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Ready?

STUDENTS: No!

MRS. OSSMAN: I'm sorry. *(SHE nervously runs one hand through her hair.)* We're missing one of the group.

End of Freeview

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