

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY®

Christmas Carols
— FOR A —
Kid's Heart



Illustrations by Sergio Martinez

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Christmas Carols for a Kid's Heart

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Introduction

Just say the word *Christmas*. It's enough to bring giggles and shivers of anticipation to any child, no matter how old he or she is. Like the fun of trimming the tree with popcorn and homemade decorations collected over the years, it has been our pleasure to pull these treasured carols from our musical collection.

Hot roasted turkey, spicy Christmas puddings, church services aglow in soft candlelight, a brightly lit Christmas tree, children unwrapping presents, cards and photos from friends afar—the traditions may vary, but whatever they are, it's the children who are sure to be the focus of attention. Little wonder our own childhood memories have endured over so many years. Memories of long-ago Christmastimes dust off the childlike delight we yearn to keep alive in our adult hearts. It's a season for family togetherness, for sharing and caring and giving, for keeping alive old traditions and starting new ones. It's a time for quietly focusing on the reason we celebrate the season.

Everyone has a favorite Christmas tradition, and for us, it's the singing of carols. Christmas just isn't, well . . . *Christmas* unless we're happily harmonizing on an old carol, belting out the words at the top of our lungs. The velvety richness of musical notes and the beauty of time-honored words are like presents piled high under the tree. We just can't wait to open them

with singing! And there are so many Christmas carols to choose from, we can hardly decide which one to open first.

Christmas carols are timeless. Their beauty and value resist the passing of the years. The warmth of their melodies meld our hearts together with those who may no longer sit around our dinner tables. Or on horseback, as in Joni's case . . .

One snowy night, my parents lined us up at the back door and began dressing us in our coats and scarves. "Daddy, why are we going to the horse stables *now*?" my sister Jay asked. "It's not time to go riding."

"You'll see," my father said, a gleam in his eye.

Our truck rumbled through the quiet streets of town toward the stables. The windshield wipers slapped away wet snow, and the engine whined as our tires slid. It was almost Christmas, and the houses in our neighborhood were covered in blankets of white, with sparkling colored lights lining the eaves, windows, and doors. Within an hour we were back on those same streets—not in the old truck, but on horseback. With thermoses full of hot chocolate in our saddlebags, we guided our horses up and down our street, stopping under every lamppost to sing Christmas carols.

It felt strange to sit on top of my pony and look down on the same sidewalks where I rode my bike during the summer. And it was wonderfully strange to wave to our neighbors as they opened their doors to chime along on "Silent Night." I felt as though the Christmas carol had turned a key in my heart: "Silent night! Holy night! All is calm, all is bright . . ." (from my book *The God I Love*).

The tender story from God's Word comes alive every time we sing these carols. The celebration of the birth of the Christ-Child tunes our childlike hearts to see the brightness of His star.

The Creator of the world chose the music of angels to usher in the first Christmas. And the music of the carols is still introducing us to the best part of the season.

Whatever else might change, the carols we sing at Christmas remain the same throughout the years. They are beloved for that very reason. Carols never date or sound old-fashioned. Instead, they fill our anxious hearts with peace. They bring us joy.

We hope these hymns and the deep meaning of their message become part of your family's Christmas tradition. As you pass them on to the children you love, may you, too, sense the joy of creating a treasured Christmas memory that will warm your hearts for years to come!

All is calm, all is bright.

Joni Eareckson Tada
Agoura Hills, California

Bobbie Wolgemuth
Orlando, Florida



The First Christmas

LUKE 2:1-19

In those days a decree⁺ went out from Caesar Augustus⁺ that all the world should be registered.⁺ This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor⁺ of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea,⁺ to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,⁺ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed,⁺ who was with child.⁺ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory⁺ of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior,⁺ who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you; you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host⁺ praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among
those with whom he is pleased!”

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they went with

haste⁺ and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying⁺ and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

⁺All words marked in this way are defined in the “Do You Know What It Means?” section at the back of this book.

Christmas Carols



*For unto you is born this day in the city of David,
a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*



James Beal

Angels We Have Heard on High

No Ordinary Announcement

TRADITIONAL FRENCH CAROL

And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. . . . And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host. . . .”

LUKE 2:9-11, 13

Many, many years ago, all the angels in the heavens were called to come before the throne of God for a special event. God wanted to pick one special angel to send on the most important journey ever taken by one of the heavenly hosts. The angel was selected and given instructions, then sent out across the wide expanse of the universe. He flew by spinning planets and soared past twinkling stars. Finally the angel arrived at the edge of a small galaxy. He hovered for a minute and then proceeded past more suns and stars until he arrived on the edge of the atmosphere above one certain planet. That planet was earth. The angel did not pause but continued his flight across continents and oceans until he stopped above a barren land tucked up against mountains on one side and an ocean on the other. It was the little country of Judah.

The night was dark, and the stars gleamed above the angel. He moved breathlessly and quietly until he came to a little village tucked in the hills

of Judea.⁺ There below him lay the sleepy town of Bethlehem⁺. It was an ordinary night. Shepherds stood guard over their flocks while the little lambs slept beside their mothers. All was peaceful. All was quiet. But it wouldn't stay quiet for long. This particular angel was an angel of the Lord, and he had been sent by God on a very important mission.

Suddenly the sky opened up. Dazzling light from heaven above streamed upon the hillside. The shepherds almost fell over, for “the glory⁺ of the Lord shone around them.” They squinted through the blinding brightness and saw—with shock and amazement—the powerful angel. He had stepped through the thin veil of sky to appear to the shepherds! They dropped to their knees, filled with fear. But the angel of the Lord said, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy. . . . For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior,⁺ who is Christ the Lord.”

This was no ordinary announcement. This was a heaven-shaking moment. This was such good news that heaven couldn't contain itself. Before the angel of the Lord could say another word, the night sky burst wide open. The stars faded, and the clouds scattered. Rays of heavenly light shot out in all directions. “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,⁺ praising God and saying, ‘Glory⁺ to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased.’”

It seemed that angels from all over heaven had turned out for the celebration. Thousands of them lifted their heads, raised their arms, and sang at the top of their lungs. The singing of so many angels vibrated not only the air around the shepherds, but the ground under their feet. The angels' voices shook the earth, rattling rocks and scattering pebbles. The shepherds were breathless. They didn't know whether to cover their ears or run. They stopped and listened closer to the angels' song. They heard the angels say, “. . . on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased.” The shepherds turned to each

other and smiled. They realized they didn't have to fear these powerful angelic beings. The angels were bringing good news.

The shepherds knew a real king had been born that night—they knew because the birth announcement was delivered by real angels! Suddenly the angel of the Lord and the multitude of other angels vanished. The dazzling light faded, and the sky began to grow dark again. The shepherds looked at one another. Had they really seen what they thought they saw? Had their ears really heard what they thought they heard? Yes, they were certain of what they saw and heard! They quickly ran down the hill to find the place where the new King had been born. The sheep they left on the hill settled back down to sleep. It turned back into an ordinary night.

Or was it? It's not every day an angel crosses many galaxies to give such an important message. There's nothing ordinary about angels talking to men. And it's not every day a king is born. The angels came to announce that the awful trouble between God and people was over. God had come up with a way for people to get close to Him, a way to come back to Him, a way of peace. Jesus was God's peace, and He had been born just moments earlier in a little stable below the hills of Bethlehem.

Even though the angels were now gone and the hills were once again quiet, their song still echoed⁺ down the ravines and canyons below Bethlehem. "Gloria in excelsis Deo!"⁺ Yes, glory to God in the highest. The Prince of Peace had come to earth! The war between God and man was over.

And *nothing* would ever be ordinary again.

JONI EARECKSON TADA

Angels We Have Heard on High

D D D A⁷ D
 An- gels we have heard on high, sweet- ly sing- ing o'er the plains,
 D D D A D
 and the moun- tains in re- ply ech- o+ back their joy- ous strains.
 D B Em A⁷ D G Asus D A D G
 Glo- -- -- -- -- -- -- -- ri- a in ex- cel- sis
 D A D B⁷ Em A⁷ D G Asus A⁷
 De- o, glo- -- -- -- -- -- -- -- ri- a
 D A D⁷ G D/A A⁷ D
 in ex- cel- sis De- o.

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?⁺
Say what may the tidings⁺ be,
Which inspire your heav'nly song?
- Glo - - - - ria in excelsis Deo,⁺
Glo - - - - ria in excelsis Deo!
3. Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
- Glo - - - - ria in excelsis Deo,
Glo - - - - ria in excelsis Deo!

⁺All words marked in this way are defined in the "Do You Know What It Means?" section at the back of this book.



A Verse for My Heart

Are [the angels] not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?—Hebrews 1:14

A Prayer from My Heart

Dear Lord of all the heavenly hosts, thank You for sending angels to protect me. I'm so glad that the angels serve You and obey You too. I want to serve You and obey You too. Just like the angels! Amen.