

CHRISTMAS LOVE

Each December people vow to make Christmas a calm and peaceful experience. They cut back on nonessential obligations: extensive card writing, endless baking, decorating, and even overspending. Yet still, they sometimes feel exhausted, unable to appreciate the precious family moments, and of course, the true meaning of Christmas. One parent was able to realize the true meaning with the help of a 6-yr-old. He writes:

My son, Nicholas, was in kindergarten that year. It was an exciting season for a six-year-old. For weeks, he'd been memorizing songs for his school's "Winter Pageant." I didn't have the heart to tell him I'd be working the night of the production. Unwilling to miss his shining moment, I spoke with his teacher. She assured me there'd be a dress rehearsal the morning of the presentation. All parents unable to attend that evening were welcome to come then. Fortunately, Nicholas seemed happy with the compromise.



So, the morning of the dress rehearsal, I filed in 10 minutes early, found a spot on the cafeteria floor and sat down. Around the room I saw several other parents quietly scampering to their seats. As I waited, the students were led into the room. Each class, accompanied by its teacher, sat cross-legged on the floor. Then, each group, one by one, rose to perform their song. Because the public school system had long stopped referring to the holiday as "Christmas", I didn't expect anything other than fun, commercial entertainment -- songs of reindeer, Santa Claus, snowflakes and good cheer.

So, when my son's class rose to sing, "Christmas Love", I was slightly taken aback by its bold title. Nicholas was aglow, as were all of his classmates, adorned in fuzzy mittens, red sweaters, and bright snowcaps upon their heads. Those in the front row--center stage--held up large letters, one by one, to spell out the title of the song. As the class would sing "C is for Christmas", a child would hold up the letter 'C'. Then, "H is for Happy", and so on, until each child holding up her portion had presented the complete message, "Christmas Love."

The performance was going smoothly, until suddenly, we noticed a small, quiet girl in the front row holding the letter "M" upside down unaware her letter appeared as a 'W'. The audience of 1st through 6th graders snickered at this little one's mistake. But she had no idea they were laughing at her, so she stood tall, proudly holding her 'W'. Although many teachers tried to shush the children, the laughter continued until the last letter was raised, and we all saw it together. A hush came over the audience and eyes began to widen. In that instant, we understood the reason we were there, why we celebrated the holiday in the first place, why even in the chaos, there was a purpose for our festivities. For when the last letter was held high, the message read loud and clear: CHRIST WAS LOVE. And, I believe, He still is.

Picture source: www.hhs.csus.edu/SPA/