

Macy's Magical Christmas Program

Macy: Hi, I'm Macy, and welcome to my magical Christmas program. What makes it magical is that I can invite anyone, from any period of history, to join me to talk about Christmas. I can even invite imaginary characters to join me! So this morning, we're going to learn all about Christmas. And who better to start with than St. Nicholas! (snap fingers)

[St. Nicholas enters, waving to everyone, takes a seat in front.]

Macy: Welcome! St. Nick, (can I call you St. Nick?) when we think about Christmas, we definitely think about you first.

St. Nicholas: Me? A humble bishop from Myra?

Macy: Well, Christmas is all about gift-giving, and who is more famous for gift-giving than you?!

St. Nicholas: It's true, I had a reputation for generosity. Whenever I saw a deep need, how could I help but offer assistance.

Macy: Well, St. Nicholas, I'd love to hear your thoughts about what makes for a really good gift.

St. Nicholas: Oh, there is only one gift that matters at all. That is God's gift to us in the birth of the Christ child. With this tiny child, God gives us grace and mercy and forgiveness. If you want to talk about gift-giving, really that is the most amazing gift of all.

Macy: But what about you, bringing gifts to every child around the world? And all in one night!

St. Nicholas: Oh, that's not such a big deal. I think everyone knows who my helpers are. But in Christ, the infinite and eternal God comes to us in space and time. How can anyone even understand that? As for me, I am simply grateful that my little story has been made a small part of Christ's great story.

Macy: So you're not going to tell me what makes for a really good gift? Well then, how about I invite another guest to join us. I'd like to invite Ebenezer Scrooge. (snap fingers)

[Ebenezer Scrooge enters, takes a seat.]

Macy: Welcome, Mr. Scrooge. Can I call you Ebenezer?

Ebenezer: Of course you can. I'm just delighted to be here.

Macy: You know, your story has become a real Christmas classic.

Ebenezer: It truly amazes me.

Macy: I wonder if we could hear a good, old "Bah, humbug"?

Ebenezer: Oh, good heavens, no. It grieves me just to think of how greedy and how harsh I once was. All I ever thought of, all that was important to me, was money. I never gave a thought to the people around me. I wasted so much of my life. I didn't appreciate that what brings joy to life is all of the wonderful relationships we share. It's what makes life so rich. I didn't understand that giving and having a generous heart is just essential to being human!

Macy: I'm so glad to hear you say that. Maybe you can tell me what makes for a really good gift.

Ebenezer: My dear, it all depends on who is the recipient of your gift. What do they need, or what would bring them joy? But mostly it's about giving something of yourself.

St. Nicholas: Yes, absolutely! Whenever we act with generosity toward others, it's just a faint echo of God's great generosity to us, because in Christ, God has given God's whole self to us.

Ebenezer: You know, dear, my creator—I mean, Charles Dickens—wrote my story because he was deeply concerned about how greedy and selfish people had become. And he set my story at Christmas because Christmas is all about generosity—especially God's generosity.

St. Nicholas: If she wants to learn about Christmas, I think she should visit with two dear friends of mine, St. Matthew and St. Luke.

Macy: Well, OK, let's invite St. Matthew and St. Luke (snaps fingers).

[St. Matthew and St. Luke enter, take seats.]

Macy: Welcome to both of you. I'm so glad you can be here. This morning we're learning all about Christmas, and I'm wondering what you could share with us.

St. Matthew: Christmas is all about the words of the prophets being fulfilled and God's promises coming true.

St. Luke: And about God coming to live among us in the birth of Jesus.

Macy: If you met someone who had never heard the Christmas story, what would you want them to know? St. Luke?

St. Luke: I'd begin by telling them about Mary, a young woman from Nazareth, chosen by God to be the mother of our Savior. Blessed Mary, would you please tell us how it was? (snaps fingers)

Macy: You can do that too?

[St. Luke nods. St. Mary enters, stands by standing mics. As Mary speaks the angel Gabriel enters.]

St. Mary: I was so surprised, and so humbled. God spoke to me through the angel Gabriel.

Gabriel: Greetings, favored one. God is with you! Do not be afraid, Mary. God has chosen you to give birth to a son. You will name him Jesus. He will be great. He will be called the Son of the Most High. Through him, God will fulfill all the promises God made to King David long ago.

St. Mary: Here I am, the servant of the Lord. Let it be with me according to your word.

[Choir and congregation sing Holden Magnificat. St. Mary and Gabriel take seats.]

Macy: Blessed Mary, I'm hearing some very disturbing themes in your song of praise. The mighty will be pulled down from their thrones and the lowly lifted up. The hungry are filled with good things, but the rich are sent away empty? What does that have to do with Christmas?

St. Mary: That has everything to do with Christmas. Jesus was born so that God could change the world. There is so much poverty and suffering, but through Jesus, God welcomes and includes all of those who have been pushed away and excluded.

Ebenezer: And those who continue to step on their neighbors, who live by the old rules of domination and exploitation, they exclude themselves from God's great gift. It's sad but true.

St. Luke: Perhaps we should hear from St. Joseph about what happened next.
(snaps fingers)

[St. Joseph enters, stands at standing mics. Mary stands to join him.]

St. Joseph: The emperor required everyone to go to their ancestral home to register for an imperial census. Because our ancestor was King David, we had to travel to Bethlehem, the city of David. So Mary and I made the journey, all the way from Nazareth in the north, to Bethlehem in the south.

St. Mary: The journey was exhausting. It was winter, and so close to the time for me to give birth. And when we arrived, there was no place to stay. There was no room for us!

Macy: What? Did anyone think that was OK?

St. Joseph: Fortunately, there was a kind soul who made room for us to stay in their stable. At least we were out of the cold.

St. Mary: There, in the stable, is where my little boy was born. I wrapped him in swaddling clothes. There was a manger filled with hay where he could sleep.

[Joseph takes Mary's hand and they step back to sit on the bench in front of the manger.]

Macy: That is just so outrageous! A baby born in a stable, and laid down to rest in a manger!

St. Luke: That's not the end of the story. Next, God sent angels to bring the good news of Jesus' birth to shepherds who were watching their sheep that night in the hills outside of town. Let's hear from one of the shepherds.

[Shepherds, sheep and angels come to standing mics.]

Shepherd: It was a cold night, and so dark. The sheep were huddled in close to sleep. Then suddenly, we were bathed in light. It was so bright! [Angel stands next to the shepherd.] And an angel told us about a baby who had been born.

Angel: Don't be afraid. I have wonderful, happy news for you! A child is born! A savior, who is Christ the Lord! You'll find him lying in a manger in Bethlehem.

Shepherd: And suddenly the sky seemed filled with angels singing.

Angel(s): "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth."

Shepherd: We hurried as fast as we could. We found the stable, and there they were, with the baby swaddled and lying in a manger. We were so amazed.

[Shepherd(s), angel(s) and animals join tableau with Mary and Joseph.]

[Choir and congregation sing: "Angels We Have Heard on High"]

Macy: It seems like such a sweet scene—the baby Jesus lying in the manger, surrounded by shepherds with their sheep.

St. Luke: I don't think I'd describe it as sweet. It was risky for Mary to give birth in the stable. And for the angels to announce this great event to shepherds was really surprising. Back then, people thought shepherds were dirty and sneaky. No one would invite shepherds to welcome the birth of their baby!

St. Nicholas: But God did! That's the way God is, welcoming and making room for everyone.

[Children sing “Away in a Manger” v. 1; choir and congregation sing vv. 2-3]

St. Matthew: There were other visitors, too, who came to honor the Christ child.

And they were just as surprising as the shepherds. They were the wise men, foreign astrologers who came from the east. They had seen a sign in the stars telling them a new king was born for the people of Israel, so they made the long journey to find and honor the new-born king. Why don’t we invite the wise men to come visit with us. (snaps fingers) [Macy mouths, “You too?” Matthew nods.]

[3 kings come forward to microphone(s); choir and congregation sing “We Three Kings,” v. 1.]

King 1: We came to Jerusalem, bringing gifts to find the royal child. But there was no baby in King Herod’s household.

King 2: King Herod asked his priests to search the scriptures to find out where the baby was born. They told him, “In Bethlehem.” And that is where we found the child.

King 3: But before we left for Bethlehem, the king told us, “Be sure to come back and tell me where you found the child. I too want to come honor him.”

King 1: So we journeyed to Bethlehem, bringing our precious gifts. I brought gold, a gift fit for a king, for a child born to be greater than King David of old. Jesus would embody the reign of God, which means peace for the whole human family.

King 2: I brought frankincense, an expensive kind of incense used in the temple. When it was burned as an offering to God, it gave a beautiful smell. Jesus was born to show us the one, beautiful offering God desires—for us to love and care for each other.

King 3: My gift was myrrh, a precious substance used when people were buried. Jesus came to break through death and the grave, to bring the whole human family to know life with God.

[3 kings join tableau.]

Macy: I'd bet that if even one of those wise men had been a wise woman, they would have also brought some warm baby blankets and some cute baby clothes, and also some pacifiers.

Ebenezer: My dear, you're probably right.

St. Matthew: You should know, though, that the wise men also brought danger. King Herod was a paranoid tyrant, and hearing news of a potential threat to his grip on power made him worried. When the wise men didn't return right away to tell him where they found the newborn king, he sent his troops to Bethlehem to kill every baby boy.

Macy: No! That's beyond terrible!

St. Matthew: Fortunately, God was already a step ahead of King Herod. In a dream, God told the wise men to go home by another way. God also spoke to Joseph in a dream, warning him to flee with Mary and the baby Jesus. They escaped just in time and made their way to Egypt. But Bethlehem became a place of weeping and tears.

Macy: How can that be part of the Christmas story?

St. Matthew: That is the kind of world Jesus was born into, the kind of world Jesus came to save.

St. Nicholas: And sadly, there are still people like King Herod, who act out of fear or greed or anger, who go through life creating victims.

St. Matthew: But that's not the end of the story. Jesus was born to be Immanuel—God with us. And God is with us still, to comfort us in our fears and give us strength for the journey as we follow Jesus' way of love.

[Sing "Love Has Come."]

Ebenezer: Macy, my dear. I believe there's one more guest we should invite, a dear friend of mine.

Macy: Who's that?

Ebenezer: The Sugar Plum Fairy, of course! (snaps fingers) [Macy mouths, “The Sugar Plum Fairy?”]

[The Sugar Plum Fairy dances up the center aisle, takes a seat in front.]

Macy: Welcome, Sugar Plum Fairy! I’m so glad you can join us. I’ve always wondered what fruit has to do with celebrating Christmas.

Sugar Plum Fairy: Oh, a sugar plum isn’t a fruit, it’s a candy—the sweetest, most amazing candy--so I represent everything sweet and everything wonderful. When the world is turning cold and dark, I’m a reminder of all the beautiful gifts God gives, both in Christ and in creation.

Macy: Really?

Sugar Plum Fairy: Oh yes, you can think of me as the embodiment of joy who invites you to feel warmth and delight at Christmas because God has come to us with great love.

Macy: That does make me feel warm and happy! I feel very warm and happy! And on that note, I’m afraid we’re all out of time. I want to thank all of my guests, and everyone who joined us—thank you for being here this morning! Wishing you all a merry and blessed Christmas!

[Sing “Go, Tell It On the Mountain.”]

Cast bows and exits down center aisle.