

Another Charlie Brown Christmas

A Children's Christmas Church Play Written in Screenplay Format
by Thomas A. McKean

Introduction

I was asked by the children's director of my church to write this play for the kids to do during the Christmas service. I had a great time writing it and trying to picture what Charlie Brown and the other characters would say.

But once it was written, the children's director turned it down because she wanted something longer. They ultimately ended up doing a kids talent night and great fun was had by all.

Still, that leaves the play. So here it is. If any of you are thinking you may want to do this in your own church (and let me know, I would love to see it!), be advised there may (or may not?) be some legal issues with the ownership of the characters.

I wrote this mainly for the writing exercise. So far as I know, there is no law against that. I also believe I can put it on the web under the "fair use" license. But I don't know about actually performing the play.

Of course, no one in the powers-that-be is likely to know that you are doing it anyway, but still it is good for churches to remain above-board on these kinds of things.

This is the short version. Coming later (I hope?) will be the longer version the children's director is waiting for, which will include many more of the Peanuts characters.

Also coming later, if I can find time, will be an author's commentary.

But that, as they say here in VA, is "down the road a piece."

Thomas A. McKean
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INT - SCHOOL - DAY.

One year after, "A Charlie Brown Christmas"

We are in an elementary school room. Desks are lined up in a row and children are writing. It is here we find CHARLIE BROWN sitting at his desk in class. Outside, snow is falling. LINUS is sitting next to Charlie Brown.

CHARLIE BROWN

(Looking out the window)

Gosh. Just look at all that snow falling outside. Soon the bell will ring and school will be over. Maybe I'll even see that little red-headed girl.

Charlie Brown looks up to the teacher, MISS OTHMAR.

CHARLIE BROWN (CONT'D)

What's that, Miss Othmar? You want us to write a short essay tonight on what Christmas means to us? And it's due tomorrow? Good grief! What? Why am I upset? BECAUSE NOBODY KNOWS THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS!

School bell rings.

LINUS

You're in trouble now, Charlie Brown. The teacher wants you to go to the principal's office!

CHARLIE BROWN

(Looks to audience)

Oh no. Now I've done it!

CUT TO:

INT - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY.

Charlie Brown is sitting nervously in the principal's office.

CHARLIE BROWN (CONT'D)

(To audience)

Good grief! Here I am in the principal's office. I'll probably be suspended.

Charlie Brown looks out the principal's window.

CHARLIE BROWN (CONT'D)

Just look at all those kids out there having so much fun. And ... And good grief! There's that little red haired girl! The little red haired girl is playing in the snow!

Charlie Brown looks toward the door of the office.

CHARLIE BROWN (CONT'D)

(Frightened)

Oh no! I hear someone coming! It's the principal! The principal is coming into the office! Good grief!

PRINCIPAL walks into the office. He is a full grown man in a business suit. Charlie Brown speaks to him as he makes his way to sit behind his desk.

CHARLIE BROWN (CONT'D)

(Nervous)

Hello, Mr. Principal, Sir. Good to see you again. I like what you've done with the office, here. May I ask you, Sir, how is Mrs. Principal doing?

Principal looks at Charlie Brown from behind his desk.

PRINCIPAL

Wah-wah-waaahhh-wah wah-waaahaah wah waaaahhhh wah wah.

CHARLIE BROWN

I'm sorry to hear that, Sir. I'm sure she'll be okay, Sir. Maybe she just needs some warm milk and cookies.

PRINCIPAL

Wah-waaahhhh-wah waaahh wah-wah.

CHARLIE BROWN

Well, you see, Sir, I kind of yelled in class, Sir. I guess I was kind of upset, Sir.

PRINCIPAL

Wah wah wahhhhhhhh waaaah wah wah?

CHARLIE BROWN

It's just this time of year, I guess. Miss Othmar told us to write an essay on the meaning of Christmas. But Christmas has gone so commerical and I just can't stand it. Everyone forgets what Christmas is all about.

PRINCIPAL

Wah wah wah-wah waaaaahhh wah wah.

CHARLIE BROWN

You do? You agree with me? I'm not going to be suspended?

Charlie Brown smiles.

CHARLIE BROWN (CONT'D)

(Very happy)

Thank you, Sir! Thank you!

PRINCIPAL

Wah wah wah waaaaahhh wah wah-wah.

CHARLIE BROWN

That's an excellent idea, Sir! I'll do that, Sir. I will write an essay that reminds people of the true meaning of Christmas!

PRINCIPAL

Wah-waaaaah wah wah waaaaah-wah?

CHARLIE BROWN

Yes, Sir. I would love to go play in the snow.

PRINCIPAL

Wah wah wah waaah wah wah.

CHARLIE BROWN

Thank you, Sir. And I'll remember your idea, Sir.

Charlie Brown walks toward the door to leave.

PRINCIPAL

Wah wah wah wah waaaaah wah?

CHARLIE BROWN

Oh, yes, Sir! I will, Sir. Well, have a good afternoon, Sir. And remember what I said about the warm milk and cookies.

Charlie Brown exits the office.

CUT TO:

INT - CHARLIE BROWN'S HOME - NIGHT.

Later that same evening. Charlie Brown is at his desk at home writing his report. Charlie Brown is seen writing, concentrating hard with his tongue sticking out. The words he is thinking are heard as he writes.

CHARLIE BROWN (V.O.)
 The True Meaning of Christmas. By
 Charlie Brown. Last year, when we
 were doing the Christmas play at
 this school, my friend, Linus...

Charlie Brown begins to get tired and you can hear it in his voice.

CHARLIE BROWN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 ...Reminded me of the true meaning
 of Christmas when he said these words:

Charlie Brown continues writing as we hear Linus in the voice over.

LINUS (V.O.)
 And there were in that same country
 shepherds abiding in the field,
 keeping watch over their flock by
 night.

Linus's voice begins to get softer and slowly fades out completely as we see Charlie Brown falling asleep.

LINUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came
 upon them, and the Glory of the Lord
 shone round about them; and they
 were sore afraid...

Charlie Brown is asleep and snoring on the stage, pencil still in his hand.

CUT TO:

INT - CHARLIE BROWN'S DREAM - NIGHT

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE:

Charlie Brown wakes up and sees he is still at the table.
 LINUS is standing beside him.

LINUS
 Hello, Charlie Brown.

CHARLIE BROWN
 Hello, Linus, what are you doing
 here? I'm sorry, Linus, I must have
 fallen asleep.

LINUS
 You are still asleep, Charlie Brown.
 And I'm not Linus. I'm the Ghost of
 Christmas Past.

Charlie Brown looks to the audience just long enough to say...

CHARLIE BROWN

Good grief!

LINUS

That's right, Charlie Brown. I'm here to remind you again of the true meaning of Christmas.

Linus (with his blanket) moves to center stage, where a spot light turns on and shines round about him.

LINUS (CONT'D)

(To audience)

And there were in that same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the Glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you this day in the city of David is born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, good will, peace toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known to us. And they came with haste, and Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Spotlight goes off and Linus moves back to stand next to Charlie Brown.

LINUS (CONT'D)

And that's the true meaning of
Christmas, Charlie Brown.

CHARLIE BROWN

Thank you, Linus, thank you.

LINUS

You're welcome, Charlie Brown.

CHARLIE BROWN

I just have one question, Linus.

LINUS

What's that, Charlie Brown?

CHARLIE BROWN

What are "swaddling clothes"?

Linus looks at audience just long enough to say...

LINUS

Good grief!

Before either of them can say anything else, LUCY walks in,
looking angry, as usual.

CHARLIE BROWN

Hello, Lucy. What are you doing in
my dream?

LUCY

I'm not Lucy, you knucklehead, I'm
the Ghost of Christmas Presents.

CHARLIE BROWN

The Ghost of Christmas Present? Good
grief!

LUCY

Not "Christmas Present", Charlie
Brown. "Christmas Presents." Because
I have a very long list of presents
I want to send to Santa Claus. Now
let me have your pencil, Charlie
Brown.

Lucy grabs the pencil right out of Charlie Brown's hand.

LINUS

I guess this is where I leave your
dream, Charlie Brown. Good luck!

CHARLIE BROWN

Thank you, Linus. I think I am going
to need it.

Linus walks off stage, leaving only Charlie Brown and Lucy. Charlie Brown watches as Lucy continues to write a very long list.

CHARLIE BROWN (CONT'D)

Didn't you hear what Linus was saying, Lucy? Christmas is not about receiving presents, Christmas is about giving unto others.

LUCY

Maybe that is what Christmas is to you, Charlie Brown. But me, I want to milk this holiday for all it's worth! Just think Charlie Brown, we get lots of presents and we get time off from school and we don't have to do homework. That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown.

CHARLIE BROWN

Good grief.

Lucy gathers her list.

LUCY

I've made my list, Charlie Brown. Now I only need to check it twice before I send it to Santa. I have been very good this year, Charlie Brown. I know that Santa will get me everything on this list. I will get a new doll, a new pretty dress, and a new pony.

CHARLIE BROWN

A new pony? Good grief!

LUCY

I'll see you later, Charlie Brown. I am going to mail my list. I suggest you do the same, Charlie Brown.

Charlie Brown remains silent as Lucy leaves. After she is gone, Charlie Brown turns to the audience.

CHARLIE BROWN

Good grief! Christmas is so commercial. People have all forgotten the true meaning of Christmas. How can I remind people what the holiday is all about?

As Charlie Brown ponders, in walks...good grief! In walks another CHARLIE BROWN!

CHARLIE BROWN (CONT'D)

Good grief! You're me! I mean you're you! I mean... I mean... ???

CHARLIE BROWN II

That's right, Charlie Brown. I'm Charlie Brown, Charlie Brown. I'm the Ghost of Christmas Future.

Charlie Brown turns to audience.

CHARLIE BROWN

I'll never eat pizza before I go to sleep again.

CHARLIE BROWN II

I have come to tell you how to write your essay, Charlie Brown.

CHARLIE BROWN

(To Charlie Brown)

How can I write an essay when I am so frustrated about what people think Christmas has become, Charlie Brown?

CHARLIE BROWN II

That's easy, Charlie Brown. It doesn't matter what Lucy thinks Christmas is. It doesn't even really matter what Linus thinks Christmas is. What matters, Charlie Brown, is what Christmas means to you.

CHARLIE BROWN

Good grief!

CHARLIE BROWN II

That's right, Charlie Brown. Stop listening to Lucy and go deep into your own heart. Christmas isn't about presents, Charlie Brown. Christmas is about something different to each of us. If Lucy wants Christmas to be all about her, then that's her business, Charlie Brown. If you want to get a good grade on your essay, Charlie Brown, you have to write about what Christmas means to Charlie Brown, Charlie Brown.

Charlie Brown nibbles the eraser of his pencil as he thinks for a moment.

CHARLIE BROWN

You're right, Charlie Brown. I'll write my essay and I will get an A, Charlie Brown.

CHARLIE BROWN II

I think you are on your way to an A
already, Charlie Brown.

CHARLIE BROWN

Thank you, Charlie Brown

CHARLIE BROWN II

You're welcome Charlie Brown. I better
be going, Charlie Brown. You are
going to be waking up soon.

CHARLIE BROWN

Good bye, Charlie Brown.

CHARLIE BROWN II

Good bye, Charlie Brown.

Charlie Brown leaves Charlie Brown alone on the stage.

CHARLIE BROWN

(To audience)

Good grief, Charlie Brown is right.
I didn't know that I was that smart?
Now I know what to do to write my
essay. All I need to do is think
about what Christmas means to me.

Charlie Brown puts his head down to think about how he wants
to word his essay.

END DREAM SEQUENCE:

CUT TO:

INT - CHARLIE BROWN'S HOUSE - DAY.

Charlie Brown is sleeping at his desk with his pencil in his
hand. SNOOPY comes in with his supper dish and licks Charlie
Brown to wake him up so he can be fed.

CHARLIE BROWN (CONT'D)

(Waking up)

Hello, Snoopy. Good grief! It's almost
time for school! I need to finish
writing my essay! I'll feed you in
just a few minutes, Snoopy. I don't
want to get a bad grade.

Snoopy sighs and watches as Charlie Brown begins writing his
essay.

CUT TO:

EXT - SIDEWALK - DAY.

Charlie Brown is walking to school with his essay. Snoopy is
walking with him.

He sees Linus and Lucy also walking to school.

CHARLIE BROWN (CONT'D)

Hello, Lucy. Did you finish your
list for Santa?

LUCY

(Confused)

How did you know I was writing a
list to Santa, Charlie Brown?

Charlie Brown smiles and begins to sing.

CHARLIE BROWN

Hark, the herald angels sing...

LINUS AND LUCY

(Joining Charlie Brown)

...Glory to the new born king. Peace
on earth and mercy mild, God and
sinners reconciled. Joyful, all ye
nations rise. Join the triumph of
the skies. With angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem. Hark,
the herald angels sing, glory to the
new born king.

Snoopy dances around all three of them on the stage as they
sing.

THE END.