

## JULIE'S STORY-GLIMPSES OF GOD IN EVERYDAY LIFE

# Hark the Harold

### PREACH IT, TEACH IT DEVOTIONAL

#### SCRIPTURE STUDY

Luke 2:1-17  
Matthew 2:1-11  
John 1:1-8

#### PRAYER FOCUS

Dear Jesus,  
Help me to slow down and see  
Your glory. I want to be pure and  
holy like You.

In Jesus' Name,  
Amen



#### THE CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

A child's Christmas is always magical-twinkling lights, reindeer hooves, sugar cookies and snowy skies. On Christmas eve of my fourth year, I was decked to the max. I donned my red velvet dress, lacy socks and black patent Mary Janes. Mommy scrubbed my face 'til it was raw and brushed my teeth well for the first time since I polished off my Halloween candy.

Our family arrived at church shortly before the sun went down. Miraculously, Mom had kept me out of mud and mischief for a full hour. I stood in the cherub choir assembly line with thirty other wiggling, squiggling four-year-olds. In just a few short minutes, we would shuffle onstage and sing "Silent Night" in hushed tones around the manger.

However, backstage looked more like hell than heaven. Little demons tussled and scuffled with each other-pulling hair, whining and kicking each other in the shins. Undaunted, "...use your inside voice" Mrs. Francie would say, but to no avail. Meanwhile, the mother-helpers gingerly grabbed the bratty kids first and shoved square white tablecloths over their heads. The trick was to wedge the little singers between the chair and the table while pinning the bows on at the collar. Red bows, some vertical, some horizontal and some resembling Boy Scout knots were hastily attached to each caroler.

Before we went onstage, Mrs. Francie cleverly bribed us. She promised that any child who sang without hair-pulling, hand-waving or booger-picking would be rewarded with a block of Christmas fudge following the concert. Such a reward would definitely motivate us to behave, but some of the moms wondered if they really wanted to take their little charges home hopped up on sugar and caffeine.

Finally, all conceded that the show must go on. We lumbered onstage holding each other at the waist like a mini-conga line. Then, upon the director's cue, we made a sharp right face and looked the congregation members square in the eye.

Mrs. Dudley, the organist, eagerly awaited her cue to charge through the intro to "Joy to the World." Most organists love this hymn because it only uses one organ foot pedal. It's tough to mess it up. Though outwardly pious-looking, Mrs. Dudley had a seedy side. She had been known to moonlight Saturday nights on the organ at Richie's Roller Rink.

Occasionally folks would see her weave in her Chevy because she indulged in too much of her homemade Egg Nog and Rum Cake. But what would you expect? Our Baptist pastor stole her from the Lutheran Church down the street when our old organist kicked the bucket. No one expected her to be a tea-totter. Sotted or not, Mrs. Dudley was the best in the business.

Before Mrs. Francie lifted her hand to give the first downbeat, I stopped to ponder. I glanced down at Freddie and Sara in their Mary and Joseph bathrobes. Sara cinched the part when she managed to go an entire minute without blinking or moving. Freddie was the tallest tike in kindergarten, so he donned his paper beard with pride and tried to look fatherly.

Baby Jesus was always a hit because He was pinky plastic with glassy blue eyes that almost seemed real. This Baby Jesus never cried or missed his cue. Mrs. Francie picked Eddie and Dicky to be shepherds because neither could carry a tune in a bucket. Ralphie, Todd and Buddy, the three kings came from the first grade class. Mrs. Francie observed that they exuded self-importance and dignity. The kindergartners knew the truth. The only reason they seemed self-assured was because they beat up unsuspecting five-year-olds on the playground. That didn't seem like "wise" behavior to me!

Daisy, Mrs. Francie's weimeraner donned paper ears to play the donkey and Mrs. Dudley's two white cockapoos stood in for sheep. You had to use your imagination, but when our choir started "harking the herald", our chubby faces shone with Christmas glory. Some of us would squeak out the high notes and others would sing during the rests, but Jesus in His love didn't seem to care. He was just glad we wished Him a happy birthday.

I saw Christ in the faces of my Mom and Dad. I wondered at His glory in the candlelit manger. I felt His hope warm my heart. That Christmas Eve was the first time I experienced what big words like "come and worship" really meant!

- Read the Christmas story in Luke 2:1-17. List all the emotions expressed in the story (amazed, terrified, etc.) How did each of the characters in the story react? Why do you think they felt that way? If you had witnessed that manger scene firsthand, what would you have felt and why?
  
- Read Matthew 2:1-11. Meditate on the great lengths to which the wise men went to find the Christ child. What can you learn from their zeal? How do you see God's glory in His creation?
  
- Read John 1:1-8. John describes Christ's coming with the metaphor of "light" and "darkness." To what do these two words refer? List them here? How has Christ revealed Himself to you in a personal way? Spend some time praying for Him to do so in a fresh way this Christmas.