

**Christmas Assembly
based on
'The Night Before Christmas'
by Clement C. Moore**



**Written by
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Christmas Assembly based on 'The Night Before Christmas' by Clement C. Moore

Cast of 30

Duration: Around 10 minutes (See Production Notes for longer version)

Characters

Narrator and Mr. Moore (referred to as 'I' in the poem)

Child 1 - 18

Mouse

Mrs. Moore (referred to as Mamma in the poem)

8 Reindeer

St. Nicholas

*in the text indicates 'directions explanation' in Production Notes at the end

Music 1: Jingle Bells (Whole cast singing as they file in)

Narrator: Good morning and welcome to our assembly based on Clement C. Moore's 'The Night Before Christmas'.

Child 1: 'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a **creature was stirring**,

(Mouse appears, Child 1 shakes head vigorously and beckons him away)

not even a mouse;

(Child 2 places stockings by chimney as he/she reads two lines)

Child 2: The **stockings were hung** by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;

Child 3: The **children were nestled** all snug in their beds,

(Cast lay heads on hands, as per sleep)

While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;

Child 4: And Mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,

(Enter Mr. and Mrs Moore, yawning and easing themselves onto blanket-covered chairs)

Had just **settled** our brains for a long winter's nap,

(Sound of 'brakes being applied' and accompanying abrupt halt of hoof sounds)

Child 5: When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.

(Mr. Moore springs to his feet and dashes over to the window, which he opens, looking out)

Child 6: Away to the window **I flew** like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and **threw up** the sash.

Child 7: The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
 Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,

(Enter 8 reindeer pulling a sleigh)

Child 8: When, what to my wondering eyes should **appear**,
 But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer,

(Enter St. Nicholas)

Child 9: With a little old driver, **so lively** and quick,
 I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.

Child 10: More rapid than eagles his coursers they **came**,
 And he **whistled**, and **shouted**, and **called** them by name;

St. Nicholas: "Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!
 On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen!

To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
 Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"

Child 11: As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
 When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;

Child 12: So up to the house-top the coursers they **flew**,

(As St. Nicholas stoops to pick up a present that has fallen off the sleigh, reindeer, on count of three,
 *'leap to top of the house' – disappearing off stage)

With the sleigh full of Toys,

(St. Nicholas scrambling up after them)

and St. Nicholas too.

Child 13: And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof

(Reindeer reappear 'on roof')

The **prancing and pawing** of each little hoof.

(Mr. Moore withdraws from the window, nearly jumping out of his skin as St. Nicholas lands with a thump right next to him)

Child 14: As I **drew in** my head, and was **turning around**,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.

Child 15: He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;

Child 16: A bundle of Toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.

Child 17: His eyes - how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!

Child 18: His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;

Child 1: The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;

Mouse: He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook when he **laughed**, like a bowlful of jelly.

Child 2: He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And **I laughed** when I saw him, in spite of myself;

Child 3: A **wink** of his eye and a **twist** of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;

Child 4: He spoke not a word, but **went straight to his work**,
And **filled** all the stockings; then **turned** with a jerk,

Child 5: And **laying his finger** aside of his nose,
And giving a **nod**,

(St. Nicholas *goes up chimney, and onto sleigh on roof)

up the chimney he rose;

Child 6: He **sprang** to his sleigh, to his team gave a **whistle**,
And away they all **flew** like the down of a thistle,

Mr. Moore: But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,

St. Nicholas: "Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night."

(St. Nicholas runs after reindeer pulling sleigh, shouting 'Happy Christmas' as he goes, all cast cheering)

Narrator: We hope you have enjoyed our production of The Night Before Christmas.

(*For longer version see Production Notes)

Narrator: We will finish with one of our favourite carols – we hope you all join in! Thank you and a Merry Christmas to you all!

Music 2: O Come All Ye Faithful/Hark the Herald Angels Sing/We Wish You a Merry Christmas!

Production Notes:

Cast of 30

The lines of the poem The Night Before Christmas have been distributed among 18 speakers – the remaining 12 children having parts to play on stage. As always, my starting point with cast of 30 is children filing in (singing first carol) and then seating themselves in two rows of fifteen, facing the audience. Children stand up to speak but otherwise remain seated – the exceptions being those who take part 'centre stage' i.e. Mr. and Mrs Moore, Reindeer, St. Nicholas and brief scampering around by mouse near the beginning.

The lines of the poem have been distributed, as couplets, between 18 speakers (plus mouse). Thus each child has two lines to read, often accompanied by actions describing the characters - either what they look like (as with a large number of lines assigned to describing St. Nicholas' appearance); or what they are **doing**. In the case of the latter I have emboldened the print so it is clear to the reader that his/her lines are accompanied by actions on stage – so may need to be read with appropriate pauses. Some stage directions are included but in the case of, for example, physical description i.e. lines of Children 15 – 18, then Child 1, Mouse and Child 2 – describing St. Nicholas, St. Nicholas should mime everything that is being said about him.

In the case of 'pretend flight' as with the reindeer there could be a brief pause in the poem reading as the reindeer accomplish this feat! If arranged in four pairs, the first two reindeer could bark out the orders, the remaining reindeer following. Likewise with Santa coming down the chimney and then going back up again, a little stage management could be organized whereby St. Nicholas steps into a collapsible funnel representing the chimney, pulling it up then down to represent descent; and vice versa for ascent. This is just a suggestion – other far more imaginative 'props' could very probably be made available, with a little imagination!

The size of the cast is easily adaptable – with re-distribution of lines among smaller or greater numbers i.e. keeping the principal characters (Mr. and Mrs Moore, Mouse, 8 Reindeer and St. Nicholas), the total number of 56 lines (28 couplets) can be divided up in an infinite number of ways – so each child has a line to read.

Duration

As it stands, the assembly takes about 10 minutes including carol at the beginning and carol(s) at the end. The choice of carols is entirely up to the teacher and a list of suggestions is provided to help. The assembly could be further lengthened by including readings of other poems – again, a list of suggested ‘favourites’ is provided to help.

Props

Stockings (Child 2 – placing by ‘chimney’)
 ‘Kerchief’ (Mrs Moore)
 Night cap (Mr. Moore)
 Blanket-covered chairs (Mr. and Mrs Moore)
 Window frame (held up) Optional
 Sleigh (drawn by 8 reindeer)
 Chimney ‘cylinder’ (St. Nicholas)
 Sacks, toys and pipe (St. Nicholas)

Costumes

Whole cast (except Mouse, St. Nicholas and Reindeer) in night clothes
 Mouse – simple mouse costume with mask
 Reindeer – simple reindeer costumes i.e. brown clothes with head-band antlers
 St. Nicholas – fur-lined red cape and trousers (‘tarnished with ashes and soot’), sack full of toys, red cheeks and nose, white beard, pipe, large belly i.e. traditional Santa Claus appearance

Carol Suggestions

Jingle Bells
 Hark the Herald Angels Sing
 Oh Come all Ye Faithful
 Once in Royal David’s City
 Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer
 Santa Claus is Coming to Town
 We Wish You a Merry Christmas

Christmas Poems

Christmas Is Coming – English Rhyme
 The More It Snows – A. A. Milne
 Winter Morning Poem – Ogden Nash
 Christmas Bells – Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
 *When Santa Claus Comes – Author Unknown
 *Long Long Ago – Author Unknown

*I include these last two poems just in case, like me, teachers have not come across them before.

When Santa Claus Comes – Author Unknown

A good time is coming, I wish it were here,
The very best time in the whole of the year;
I'm counting each day on my fingers and thumbs-
The weeks that must pass before Santa Claus comes.

Then when the first snowflakes begin to come down,
And the wind whistles sharp and the branches are brown,
I'll not mind the cold, though my fingers it numbs,
For it brings the time nearer when Santa Claus comes.

***Long Long Ago – Author Unknown**

Winds thro' the olive trees
Softly did blow,
Round little Bethlehem
Long, long ago.

Sheep on the hillside lay
Whiter than snow;
Shepherds were watching them,
Long, long ago.

Then from the happy sky,
Angels bent low,
Singin their songs of joy,
Long, long ago.

For in a manger bed,
Cradled we know,
Christ came to Bethlehem,
Long, long ago.