



## Christmas poems - Let the children perform them

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If you are thinking of doing a school concert during the Christmas season, it is well worth considering the possibility of children from different classes reciting a Christmas poem, for poems benefit greatly by being taken out of books and off screens, and learnt well and performed. They can bring in quite an amount of drama with small poems too.

The advantage of using poetry is that a poem is small enough, especially for younger children, to learn at home and then to practise during classtime. A good idea is to divide your class into groups of four. Give them a poem and suggest that they decide together how they will do their poem. You will soon see how very inventive children can be. I have seen some of my own poems sang in a group, done as rap, and performed as small dramas, and it is wonderful for the writer of the poem to see how children can adapt their poem with ideas of their own.

Children may like to decide if they should wear costumes for their performance and what each person might like to wear also, and what other things they may need as props for their performances.

Two poems which I have written, in particular, spring to mind for a Christmas Concert, but, of course, there are others:

### **THE BEST DONKEY OF THEM ALL -**

[http://www.whiteheadm.co.uk/html/the\\_best\\_donkey.html#bestdonkey2006](http://www.whiteheadm.co.uk/html/the_best_donkey.html#bestdonkey2006)

This delightful poem relates the story of the little donkey who was chosen by God to carry Mary to Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus Christ. He is old and tired, and he feels that his working life has really come to an end, but, as he says "But there again I'd like the job for I feel quite young inside" (yes, like many of us). You need a narrator, someone to speak the part of the donkey and an angel. The children might even like to use puppets for this particular poem, but puppets or not, they would need a donkey.

Projecting scenes onto a whiteboard could well be another answer, whilst the children read the various parts. I would suggest that more than one narrator is used for this particular story.

## THE NATIVITY PLAY AT SCHOOL

[http://www.whiteheadm.co.uk/html/nativity\\_play.html#nativity](http://www.whiteheadm.co.uk/html/nativity_play.html#nativity)

When I wrote this poem, I was 100 per cent sure that it should be acted. There are so many parts for children to play.

You need narrators for this poem – and I would suggest that various children each do a verse. The poem opens with children talking one to another:

**The nativity play's at school today - we must be there on time.  
Our teacher told us yesterday "I want you here by nine!"**

In fact one child could be the teacher here. There are enough parts in this play for many of the children in your class to have a small part.

The poem continues and perhaps one and another person could be talking about what is happening:

**There's such a lot of costumes and tea-towels on display!  
The Virgin Mary looks enchanting for today's her *special* day.**

You can have the various characters displaying themselves for the parts they will be playing and in comes the first one, The Virgin Mary. As the poem continues, one by one the children will be grouping themselves for the performance.

There are lots of dashes displayed in this poem, but I can imagine the narrators pausing before uttering their thoughts – eg: **And one's doing what he shouldn't do - he's eating chewing-gum.** I can imagine a change in expression when the last statement is made, because children will realize that this definitely isn't allowed in the nativity play.

## Other poems

There are lots of other short poems that I feel sure children would like for their school Christmas concert. Here are some of them:

## THE BEAR THAT NOBODY WANTED –

[http://www.whiteheadm.co.uk/html/the\\_bear\\_2006.html#bear2006](http://www.whiteheadm.co.uk/html/the_bear_2006.html#bear2006)

is a delightful poem. It tells the story of the toys who were left in the store for the Christmas period, but they actually had a wonderful time and at the end of the poem everyone knows it:

**BUT . . . when you come to see us in our usual places  
Be sure that you notice the smiles on our faces.**

**LOOBY LOO'S STORY** – [http://www.whiteheadm.co.uk/html/looby\\_loo\\_2006.html](http://www.whiteheadm.co.uk/html/looby_loo_2006.html)

### **CHRISTMAS FAIRIES**

[http://www.whiteheadm.co.uk/html/christmas\\_fairy.html#christmasfairy](http://www.whiteheadm.co.uk/html/christmas_fairy.html#christmasfairy)

### **THE ELEPHANT'S CHRISTMAS PARTY** –

[http://www.whiteheadm.co.uk/html/the\\_elephant\\_2006.html#elephant2006](http://www.whiteheadm.co.uk/html/the_elephant_2006.html#elephant2006)

### **THE CHRISTMAS STORY -**

<http://www.whiteheadm.co.uk/html/christmasstory.html#Christmasstory>

All of these poems have a story to tell for Christmas which children will love.

You will also find many Christmas weather poems, which I know that children love. The most popular is "The Winter Picnic" and it is this poem which I have seen performed to rap, and sang. Another very popular poem is "Jack Frost" for he is such a busy person during the icy weather.

Whichever poem you choose, the children can listen to my voice recording attached to the poem when they learn it at home, and hopefully, perhaps my voice expressions will help them. However, I am sure that children will have very definite ideas of their own.

I hope that you have lots of fun with your classes over the Christmas season, and if you have Skype in your classroom, you can always invite me into your school to meet the children and see their performances. Children love to meet the poet who has written for them. See my website for this: Go to **JOSIE WHITEHEAD - CHILDREN'S POEMS** on Google or click: [http://www.whiteheadm.co.uk/html/josies\\_poetry.htm](http://www.whiteheadm.co.uk/html/josies_poetry.htm)

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