

# Christmas Hope

## A Christmas Eve Play written by Brian T. Whitaker, Whitaker Writings

### Summary

Tom, Jackie, Erin, and John are a typical American (non-Christian) family. As Christmas approaches, they have many plans for a big family celebration: tons of gifts, followed by a cruise the week between Christmas and New Year. Then, through no fault of his own, Tom loses his job with no warning and no severance. Even a healthy marriage and family like this one gets tested in times like this. And this family that has looked forward to Christmas celebrations together now has to cancel all of their plans and forego all of their gifts so they can save every penny possible.

In the midst of their struggles, Tom and Jackie each independently seek counsel from their neighbors and Christian friends, Matt and Annie Tyler. In the course of these conversations, each one rediscovers the Jesus they had heard a little about growing up but had never thought much about, and learns more about the true meaning of Christmas. Moreover, each one learns about his/her need for a personal relationship with Jesus.

In the end, the family comes to Christmas with nothing but their newfound faith and a deep appreciation for the greatest Gift of all. There is hope that the Lord will somehow meet their needs in the days and months to come, if they place their trust in Him.

**Running time:** Approx. 30 minutes, not counting gospel presentation.

This was originally designed to be part of a Christmas Eve service that included worship and a time of candlelight carols (these elements are not included in this script).

**Copyright © 2009 by Brian T. Whitaker, Whitaker Writings, LLC. All rights reserved. No part of this script may be used for purposes other than those granted here.**

**Purchase of this play from [www.whitakerwritings.com](http://www.whitakerwritings.com) includes rights to duplicate the script for cast members within your own church. Copies of this script may not be given to another church. Purchase also includes rights to present this play in your church.**

Scripture quotations taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version ®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

# Christmas Hope

Written by Brian T. Whitaker, Whitaker Writings, LLC

## Cast

**Tom**—Dad, late-30’s to mid-40’s

**Jackie**—Mom, late-30’s to mid-40’s

**Erin**—Daughter, young teen—roughly age 15 or 16

**John**—Son, young teen—roughly age 12 or 13

**Matt Tyler**—neighbor/Christian friend of Tom

**Annie Tyler**—Matt’s wife, neighbor/Christian friend of Jackie

## Contextual notes

This play was written for the year 2009, and includes day-specific dates for that year. For future years, the dates herein should be changed accordingly (see “Timeline” below). All time references in the script have been noted in **red** so they can be identified and adapted to the current year.

Other additions/modifications will need to be made in the lists of popular gifts for “last year” and “this year.” See Scenes 1, 3, and 5. In the script these are noted in **blue**.

## Timeline

Scene 1: Thursday

Scene 2: Friday

Scene 3: Sometime a few days later

Scene 4-5: Saturday, one week after job loss, and at least 2-3 days before Christmas [This is the key date to identify, then base all other dates relative to this date]

Scene 6: Christmas morning

## Scene 1

*Lights up.*

*John and Erin are watching TV in the living room. Dad enters through the door. He sees John and Erin first.*

**Tom:** *(to John)* Hey, kids!

**John:** *(without looking up from TV)* Hey, Dad. *(still without looking up from TV, shouts behind him to the other room)* Mom, Dad’s finally home!

**Erin:** *(likewise without looking up from TV)* Mom’s ticked you missed supper again, Dad.

**John:** *(still not looking up, talking to Erin)* Not that it was worth being here for....

*Now both kids look up from TV at each other and make gagging motions to each other, then look up just in time to see that Jackie has entered the room and seen them. She glares at the kids, and the kids run out of the room. Jackie turns her glare to Tom.*

**Jackie:** *(disappointed, but not really angry)* Tom, I thought you were going to try to be home by suppertime tonight. You’ve missed supper so many nights lately, and you promised tonight would be different.

**Tom:** I know, Jackie. And I’m really sorry. *(Jackie starts to say something, and Tom raises his hands quickly to stop her.)* AGAIN. I know, I know. I say “I’m sorry” and “I’ll try harder” a lot. And I mean it. But the Peterson account is the firm’s biggest account. We’re gonna get it again, but it’s taking a ton of work. And that means a ton of hours.

**Jackie:** *(her countenance softens quite a bit)* I know. I want you to do well in your job. I’m thankful for your job. But you work 60 hours or more a week. I want you HERE, too.

**Tom:** And I want to be here. Hey—**today’s December 10**, and we have this whole month to look forward to. I have off Christmas day, then we have that big surprise we haven’t told the kids about for the day after Christmas.

*The kids come bursting into the room from behind a wall; they’ve obviously been listening in on this conversation.*

**John:** Surprise?! When are you FINALLY gonna tell us about the surprise?! C’mon, tell us, please?!?!?

**Erin:** Yeah, stop torturing us! It’s hard enough to wait for all of the presents we get for Christmas. WHEN are you going to tell us about this big surprise for the day after? You know, I should call Child Protective Services about this torture. There’s gotta be a law against it.

**Jackie:** Maybe we should tell them, Tom. They will need to pack, you know.

Sample pages only.  
Please purchase  
script at  
[www.whitakerwritings.com](http://www.whitakerwritings.com)

Sample pages only.  
Please purchase  
script at  
[www.whitakerwritings.com](http://www.whitakerwritings.com)

## Scene 2

*Lights up.*

*Just as the day before, John and Erin are watching TV in the living room. Dad enters through the door.*

**Erin:** *(shocked)* Whoa, Dad. You're home before supper today! What's up with that?!

**John:** Yeah, Dad, you're never home this early, especially on a Friday!

**Jackie:** *(coming in from the other room, wiping her hands on a towel)* Tom, is that you?  
*(smiles a big, warm, smile and starts toward Tom to give him a big hug)* Hey, you're home for supper! I'm so happy to see you!

*Through all of this, Tom's facial expression has stayed blank with distant-looking eyes. Something's obviously wrong. At this point, Jackie starts to pick up on it.*

**Jackie:** *(stops in her tracks, her face suddenly falling with worry)* Tom, what's wrong?

**Tom:** *(still with a distant look in his eyes)* Jackie, can we talk?

**Jackie:** Sure...um...Erin, John, can you give your Dad and me a moment alone, please?

*Erin and John quickly turn off the TV and exit.*

**Tom:** *(looking more in the distance than at Jackie)* After all of that work, we lost the Peterson account today. And since that's 35% of the firm's income, they had to let some of us go. And since the Peterson account was my primary account, I was a logical choice.

**Jackie:** *(slowly digesting the news)* “Choice”? What are you saying?

**Tom:** *(now looking directly at Jackie)* I'm out. I got laid off. No warning, no severance, no job.

**Jackie:** *(now with a distant look in her own eyes)* Tom, **it's December 11**. It's just **two weeks until Christmas**, our big vacation, all of our plans....

**Tom:** *(snapping a bit)* I know that, Jackie. I didn't plan for this to happen. I didn't even do anything wrong. The Peterson company filed for bankruptcy first thing this morning, which left us completely hanging. Without that account, we're sunk. And now I'm out of a job in one day's time.

**Jackie:** What are we going to do?

**Tom:** *(stares back off in the distance)* I don't know. I just don't know.

Sample pages only.  
Please purchase  
script at  
[www.whitakerwritings.com](http://www.whitakerwritings.com)

Sample pages only.  
Please purchase  
script at  
[www.whitakerwritings.com](http://www.whitakerwritings.com)



Sample pages only.  
Please purchase  
script at  
[www.whitakerwritings.com](http://www.whitakerwritings.com)

## Scene 4

*It's Saturday, December 19.*

*Note: Scene 4 depicts conversations that are happening concurrently in different places: one in the family's home and one at a local coffee shop. Both pairs of people are on stage simultaneously, and lighting comes up and down on the side of the stage where the visible conversation is happening at the moment, though the conversations continue (silently) while the lighting is out. Staging, lighting, and timing are important here.*

*Lights up on Jackie and Annie, who sit down together in Jackie's living room, cups of coffee in hand.*

**Jackie:** Annie, thanks for coming over again. You and Matt have been such good neighbors over the years. I'm glad we could call on you right now when things are so bad.

**Annie:** Matt and I are thrilled you called us. We love you guys, and we're sorry to hear about Tom's job.

**Jackie:** *(starting to tear up)* I just don't know what to do—or where to turn for help. We've never faced anything like this in our lives. *It's been just over a week* now since Tom lost his job. That first night we stayed up all night, but didn't really even talk to each other—we just didn't know what to say. In the week since then we've gone from hopelessness to frustration to anger to desperation to loneliness... *(Jackie descends into tears)*

**Annie:** *(reaching out to comfort Jackie)* Jackie, I'm so sorry.

*Lights out on Jackie and Annie; Lights up on Tom and Matt*

*Tom and Matt are sitting at a table, sipping from Starbucks coffee cups*

**Tom:** Matt, you've known me for... what... eight years now? I've been a hard worker. I've been a good provider for my family. My kids have all of the stuff I never had when I was growing up. Then came last Friday, and in one blow, we lost everything. I mean, I can't even afford Christmas presents for my kids now. Do you know how awful this feels?

**Matt:** Actually, yes, I do. Did you know I lost my job several years ago when the plant closed down? It was right around the time you all moved to the area.

**Tom:** No, I guess I never knew that.

**Matt:** Man, it seemed pretty hopeless to me, too.

**Tom:** So, what did you do? I mean, how did you handle it? I'm not doing so great, here.

“Christmas Hope”—by Brian T. Whitaker, Whitaker Writings

*Lights out on Tom and Matt; Lights up on Jackie and Annie*

**Jackie:** I didn't remember that Matt had lost his job. When we moved here you guys seemed so happy. You brought homemade cookies and welcomed us to the neighborhood. And that was the time Matt was out of work?

**Annie:** Yes, it was.

**Jackie:** How could you be so happy?

**Annie:** Well, it wasn't easy for us financially. But our faith in Jesus helped us keep things in perspective.

**Jackie:** *(a little put off)* Your faith in Jesus? What do you mean? What does some story about a baby in a manger have to do with losing your job and your income? I mean, we're talking about the difference between a tragedy and a . . . a . . . *(dismissively)* fairy tale.

**Annie:** *(puts her hands on Jackie's)* No, no, no, Jackie. Jesus is real. What we celebrate at Christmas is His coming to earth, though He always existed from eternity past. But I also celebrate every day that Jesus is my Savior. He's my Lord. I have a PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP with Jesus Christ.

**Jackie:** *(shakes her head, but looks curious)* A "personal relationship"? You make it sound like you sit down and chat with him like your best friend.

**Annie:** Well, actually, I do. He's the One I turn to when I need help. He's the One who takes care of my needs. He's the One who comforts me when I'm feeling hopeless.

**Jackie:** *(looks down)* Well, I'm sure feeling hopeless right now.

**Annie:** *(smiles warmly)* Jesus can help you. Would you like to hear more?

**Jackie:** *(nods, tearing up again)* Yes, I think I would.

Sample pages only.  
Please purchase  
script at  
[www.whitakerwritings.com](http://www.whitakerwritings.com)

**Tom:** What you’re telling me makes a lot of sense. And it sounds like what I’ve been looking for for a very long time. So...what do I do now?

*Lights out on Tom and Matt, Lights up on Jackie and Annie*

**Annie:** All you need to do is pray. And prayer is simply talking to God just as if He was here in this room...which He is, by the way.

**Jackie:** Really?

**Annie:** Really. I’ll tell you more about that as we look together at some Bible passages about God. But do you think you’re ready to pray and ask Jesus to be your Lord and Savior?

**Jackie:** Yes, I’m ready.

*Lights fade to half strength on Jackie and Annie and come up to half strength on Tom and Matt, as all four bow their heads in prayer together.*

*Worship team begins quiet introduction to a congregational worship song like one of these:*

*Draw Me Close (Kelly Carpenter; CCLI song # 1459484)*

*Enough (Tomlin/Giglio; CCLI song # 3599479)*

*Give Me Jesus (Fernando Ortega; CCLI song # 3295728)*

*I Give You My Heart (Reuben Morgan; CCLI song # 1866132)*

*Rescue (Jared Anderson; CCLI song # 4084763)*

*I Have Decided to Follow Jesus (author unknown; Public Domain)*

*Today (As For Me and My House) (Doerksen/Gage; CCLI song # 4157315)*

*During the song, all four finish their prayers and lights fade out; actors transition to next scene and also prepare for clothing change for Scene 6.*

**Scene 5**

Sample pages only.  
Please purchase  
script at  
[www.whitakerwritings.com](http://www.whitakerwritings.com)

## Scene 6

*The family is together on **Christmas morning**. The moods of Jackie and Tom are noticeably different now that they have accepted Christ.*

*Lights up.*

*Everyone enters the room in bathrobes/pajamas/sweatpants.*

**Jackie:** Merry Christmas, everyone!

*Tom, Jackie, Erin, and John each ad lib Merry Christmas, Good Morning, hugs all around.*

*Erin and John race to the tree with expectant looks in their eyes, stop cold in their tracks, then look back to Tom and Jackie.*

**Erin:** Mom, Dad, like, aren't there supposed to be presents under the tree?

**Tom:** Erin, honey, we told you we didn't have money to spend on presents this year.

**John:** (*shocked*) No way! We thought you were joking us! You were SERIOUS?!

*Tom starts to answer, but Jackie steps in more quickly.*

**Jackie:** Erin, John, now we talked about this a few times. Since your Dad lost his job, we aren't spending any money on anything extra. And we're going to find ways to be grateful for what we have. And we truly have a lot to be grateful for, (*looks at Tom*) don't we, Tom?

**Tom:** (*looking back at Jackie with a genuine smile*) That's right, honey.

**Erin:** (*rolling her eyes and copping the teen attitude*) Ugh! What's up with this sweet, positive-thinking attitude you guys have been into the **past few days**? You even dragged us to church **last Sunday** for the first time since I can remember. What's the deal?

Sample pages only.  
Please purchase  
script at  
[www.whitakerwritings.com](http://www.whitakerwritings.com)



Sample pages only.  
Please purchase  
script at  
[www.whitakerwritings  
.com](http://www.whitakerwritings.com)

**Tom:** Yes, I guess you could say that. Your Mom and I have begun to change a bit. When we accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior, He started to give us hope and peace like we never knew before. Our CIRCUMSTANCES haven't changed—I still don't have a job—I haven't even been able to get an interview here in the middle of the Christmas season. But our HEARTS and our ATTITUDES have already started to change from the inside out. It's hard to explain, but it's very real. The words we just read from Philippians about the things we think about and the peace that comes from God—that's the kind of peace your Mom and I have felt the past few days, even though nothing has changed in our circumstances.

Sample pages only script at  
Please purchase at  
[www.whitakerwritings.com](http://www.whitakerwritings.com)

Sample pages only.  
Please purchase  
script at  
[www.whitakerwritings.com](http://www.whitakerwritings.com)

## Director’s Notes

Most of the notes you need are on the first and second pages of this script, plus in italics throughout. Only a couple of additional thoughts need to be added here.

For the set layout, the living room set would take the majority of the front of the stage. The TV should not be on the stage; the kids can watch in the general direction of a “TV” that’s between them and the audience. The coffee shop set can be stage right or stage left and take a small portion of the stage. The worship team can slip in either behind the set or just at the edge of the stage to lead the music at the end of Scene 4; the team’s entrance, of course, would need to be very discrete so as not to take the attention off the gospel message in that scene.

To decorate the living room set, very high-class furniture and decorations should be used, if available. Likewise, a big tree ornately decorated would be preferable.

Costumes in the first scene especially should be the latest fashions; this is an upper-middle-class family that spends a lot of money and does everything they can to keep a good image.

For Scene 4, this is obviously the high point in the script. Timing between the two sets is a key to keeping things flowing between these simultaneous conversations.

The transition to Scene 6 is tricky, as there are costume changes for everyone. Here are some thoughts for how this might be done. As a failsafe, the musicians could simply play a Christmas carol, or perhaps a recorded Christmas song could be played from the sound board while the actors are changing. This is workable, but it risks hurting the flow of the play. If the drama team can make it work, Tom and Jackie could change into their Christmas morning clothes during the song at the end of Scene 4, and then cover them with big coats at the beginning of Scene 5. The kids, likewise, might have lounge pants and T-shirts on under sweats or whatever they’re wearing for Scene 5. Then if more time is still needed for the kids to get ready, they can come into Scene 6 a tiny bit late, if general Christmas-morning dialogue is inserted for Tom and Jackie (perhaps making the coffee or wondering together how the kids managed to sleep so late on Christmas morning or something like that). This is all left up to the Director’s preference and whatever works best for the actors involved.

Following the play, the pastor should come and give members of the congregation the opportunity to give their lives to Jesus. I (Brian) pray the Lord uses this script to bring many people to Himself.