

Christmas in Coaltown

By

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Concept by Tim Preece

Theme:

This Christmas play presents a strong salvation message as a young lady is able to lead a group of coal miners to the Lord as they are trapped in a collapse in a coal mine just a few days before Christmas.

Biblical Reference:

The Christmas Story

Approximate Running Time:

60 minutes

Props:

New Testament Bibles to be handed out to eh students.

2 Back packs.

A bell to indicate that school has begun.

Lunch pails.

Mining helmets.

Emergency light for George.

Cast of Characters:

Amanda: Amanda is a high school student whose heart is open to God's message. She is kind to her classmates and respectful to her parents, yet bold enough to state her mind. She is dressed in conservative clothing.

Christy: Christy is a good friend of Amanda's. She is more outgoing and willing to question things she doesn't understand. She too is dressed in conservative clothing.

George: Amanda's father. He is a hard man who is not willing to allow others to influence him, but his attitude changes after he is stuck in a life-threatening experience. He is a coal miner and there is plenty of evidence of his occupation in his appearance.

Stu: One of George's friends. His congenial but confident demeanor is a stark contrast to that of George's. He's got to be a great friend to George if he's willing to put up with his brusqueness. He too is a coal miner and the evidence of his occupation is evident in his appearance.

Mary: Amanda's mother. She is a kind lady who struggles with submitting to her husband even though she doesn't always agree with him. She is respectful, but shares her opinion as best she can. Her demeanor should echo that of Amanda, making it apparent that Amanda got her respect and boldness from her mother.

Beth: Beth is a missionary from Africa. She is in town to spend the holidays with her family and has been invited to teacher's classroom to tell the kids of her experiences. She obviously has a great report with teens.

Teacher: A high school teacher who invites Beth to come to her classroom to share the Good News of the true Christmas story. She is dressed conservatively but nicely.

Miner: A fellow worker with George and Stu. He too is showing the evidence of the coal mining in his costuming.

Student 1: Other classmates of Amanda and Christy. These students are boys.

Student 3, 4, 6, 7: Other classmates of Amanda and Christy. These students are girls.

Student 2, 5, 8: Other classmates of Amanda and Christy. These students can be either boys or girls.

There is room in the play for extras to play as other classmates and coal miners as your stage and cast permit. They would not have specific speaking roles, but they will help set the scenes.

There is also room in the play for a choir to sing between the scenes. Traditional seasonal hymns or contemporary music can be selected to be sung between scenes or as action takes place in the mine. The selection of the songs and the timing of the music are at the discretion of the director.

Scene I

Scene: The interior of a high school classroom in a rural town. The number of students present depends on the number of extras available. Teacher has invited Beth, a missionary from Africa, to come to her classroom to tell the students some of her experiences in Africa - and to tell the true Christmas story. As the scene opens, the classroom is getting ready for class on another school day. Students are reading, organizing their papers, talking amongst themselves, etc. Beth is at teachers' desk, talking to her before class begins. Christy, Amanda, and student 1 enter and go to their desks to prepare for class.

Christy: This is it! We officially have less than one week until the big day!

Student 1: I know. I can't wait for my favorite day of the year.

Amanda: Are you talking about Christmas?

Christy: Duh! Of course. I mean, it's the day you hit the big jackpot. The magical day we get a ton of good stuff without having to do a single thing. It's my favorite day of the year too. So, what kind of presents do you think you'll get this year?

Student 2: I don't really care what I get - as long as I don't get any clothes this year.

Student 3: Oh, I hate when I get clothes for Christmas. I'd rather get a gift card so that I can go shopping for myself. My parents rarely buy stuff that I would actually wear. And I have this aunt...

Student 4: Oh, say no more. I know what you mean, it's like our parents are using the holiday as an excuse to buy stuff we need so they don't have to spend money any other time during the year on that stuff.

Student 5: Yeah, mine too. Hey, did you ever get school supplies for Christmas?

Student 6: I never got anything like that, but one year I did get a bunch of books for Christmas.

Student 4: I wouldn't mind getting books. I love reading new books.

Student 3: I love reading too but these weren't the kinds of books I would want to read. They were these old books that my mom wanted me to read on Christmas vacation.

Student 7: I hope I get some more dolls for Christmas. I just love dolls.

Student 2: Do you mean the dolls you play with or the kind that just sit on the shelf collecting dust?

Student 7: I don't let my dolls sit on the shelf. I love playing house with them. My grandfather made me 3 doll houses and I play with them every day.

Student 1: How can you play with doll houses every day? Doesn't that get boring?

Student 4: Girls don't get bored as easy as boys do. We can play with the same toy for hours more than boys can.

Student 6: Unless it's video games. I think that most boys can play video games longer than I can play with my dolls or play house.

Student 3: I used to play with dolls all the time when I was younger, but I don't anymore.

Student 8: Last summer my mom started to teach me how to sew - you know, cross stitch, embroidery, hemming...

Student 1: Hey, the new dodge truck has a hemmi.

Student 8: Not a hemmi, a hemm-ing, like the hem on the bottom of your pants.

Student 1: Oh. [Pause.] I still like the hemmi better.

Student 8: [Rolling her eyes.] You boys just don't get it.

Student 1: I don't care if I get it or not. I still like the Dodge Hemmi better than any stupid sewing thing you're talking about.

Student 8: [Turning away from Student 1.] Anyway, as I was saying before I was rudely interrupted, I learned how to sew last summer and I'm hoping my mother will buy me a sewing kit for Christmas this year.

Student 7: Well, I'm still hoping to get dolls for Christmas this year - even if [Students 1's name] things they're boring to play with. Did you know that Barbie is the number one selling toy of all time?

Student 1: I never got anything boring like the stuff you're talking about. I think my parents will give me a ton of great stuff again this year. I'm looking for technology this year!

Student 3: You do get great stuff. I wish I got stuff like the stuff you get at Christmas. I could use some new technology too.

Amanda: I'm not sure if I'll get much this year. My parents never asked me for a list. They told me not to expect much because things have been a little tight lately. You know how that goes.

Christy: I know, but my parents don't really care about how much money they spend for Christmas. You know how much my mom loves to shop - especially at Christmastime.

Student 5: Speaking of shopping. Tonight my mom and I are going shopping for my Christmas presents. She said she's tired of shopping for me so she's going to let me pick them all out myself. Talk about sweet!

Student 8: Probably because you complain too much every year.

Student 5: I don't think so. So, as I was saying, she's going to take me shopping so I can pick out my own presents this year. I'm excited about the possibilities...

Amanda: That would be cool. So, what's on your big list this year?

Student 1: Not much. I just gave my parents a copy of the [catalog he's interested in] and told that I'd take it all this year.

Christy: I never thought of that. I've got a ton of stuff on my list this year. [She lists a bunch of expensive things she's interested in getting this Christmas.]

[Students take some time listing some of the things they're interested in receiving for Christmas this year.]

Amanda: Wow. Do you guys really think you'll get all that stuff for Christmas this year? You know how much that stuff costs?

Student 1: I don't think my expectations are unrealistic. I know that my mom is the clearing house for all wish lists in the family. My grandmother and my other grandmother and my aunts and my great aunts and my...

Christy: We get the point. I'll probably get about half of my list this year. You know how my parents are - they buy me stuff no matter if they have the money or not, and I love them for it! Don't worry. I'll share some of it with you if you don't get anything but clothes and "educational toys" again this year.

Amanda: Thanks for reminding me.

Student 4: Yeah, you're such a tender heart.

Student 7: I'll give you some of my old dolls if I get a bunch of new ones.

Student 8: And I can patch any of their old clothes that need patching. Or, if I'm lucky, I'll get some doll patterns and I can make you some new clothes, if you'd like.

Christy: Thanks, but I think I'd just let them sit on a shelf. I don't know if their clothes will get holes in them if they just sit on a shelf.

Student 8: Probably not.

Student 7: Mine might, 'cause I play with them a lot more than she does.

Student 8: Well, I can make your dolls new clothes if I get the patterns.

Student 7: Cool.

[The school bell rings and the teacher rises to address her class.]

Teacher: Quiet down class.

Christy: We'll talk more about this later.

Amanda: At lunch.

Teacher: As you know, this is a very special week. I'm sure I don't have to tell you that there are just a few more days until Christmas. I'm sure that each of you is counting down the days until you'll be able to unwrap the wonderful presents you'll find under your Christmas tree on Christmas morning.

[There is a general commotion as the students share what they hope will be under the tree.]

Teacher: Yes, yes, I know. You all have a wish list that's about this long *[arms as far apart as possible]*. But did you know that there were no gifts on the very first Christmas? Did you know that Santa and his elves weren't part of it either? The very first Christmas was very different from how we celebrate it today. There was no mistletoe or holly or snow or candy canes or Christmas trees or frosty the snowman.

Christy: It doesn't sound like it was any fun then.

Student 2: Or about as fun as getting nothing but clothes.

Student 3: Or educational toys.

Student 7: Or dolls.

Student 8: Or sewing stuff.

[Students laugh.]

Teacher: That's right, in many ways the very first Christmas wasn't very fun. But it was one of the most special days in the history of the world! Today's going to be a special day too because I have a very special treat for you this morning. First of all, we're not going to be doing our regular school work today. *[That brings some smiles and comments.]* You know that we had a party planned for you this afternoon, but I thought we'd do something special this morning as well.

Christy: *[To Amanda.]* I hope it involves presents.

Teacher: I have a special friend who came a long way to be with us this morning. She lives in Africa and she works as a missionary. Does anyone know what a missionary does?

[Silence.]

Teacher: Nobody?

[Silence.]

Teacher: Well, then I'm really glad that I invited her to be with us today. I'll let her tell you a little bit about what she does. Her name is Beth and she and I have been friends since we were about your age. So, show her respect by giving her your attention. [Turning to Beth.] They're all yours.

Beth: Thank you Mrs. Peterson. My name is Beth and I used to live around here - and it's true that your teacher and I used to be best friends in high school. But when I graduated from college I moved to Africa so that I could help the people who lived there.

Christy: What kind of help do you give them?

Teacher: Christy, we raise our hand when we have a question.

Student 4: Yeah, Christy.

Christy: Yeah, okay, I forgot. [She raises her hand.]

Teacher: Christy.

Christy: What kind of help do you give them?

Beth: Great question. We do a lot of different things. We teach them how to raise their crops so they have more food. We teach them the importance of having clean drinking water and we even drill wells for them so they do have clean drinking water. We teach them how to make their clothes so they'll last longer. We teach them how to use medicine and take care of their bodies so they'll live longer too. By the way, does anyone know what disease kills many of the people of Africa?

Student 5: [With arm raised.] Cancer?

Beth: No...

Student 1: Heart attacks?

Beth: No...

Amanda: AIDS.

Beth: That's right. HIV/AIDS is a serious problem in Africa. They don't have the doctors and hospitals, the medicine and education that we have here in America and HIV/AIDS is spreading in many areas of the continent. Well, those are a few of the things I do almost on a daily basis as a missionary. I could sit here and tell you stories of my experiences for hours - and maybe I'll tell you a few of those stories in a little bit. Right now I wanted to tell you that there is one other thing that we do in Africa - and I think it's the most important thing that we do there. Any ideas as to what it is that I'm talking about?

Christy: *[With her arm raised.]* Feed them?

Beth: Nope. We do feed them and we teach them how to grow their own food. But that's not the most important thing we do.

Student 1: Teach them how to read?

Beth: Close. We do teach them to read and write. Did you know that most of the people in Africa can't read or write? But that's still not the most important thing we teach them. Anyone else have a guess for me?

Student 8: Teach them to sew their own clothes?

Beth: Not the most important...

Student 6: Does it have to do with politics?

Beth: No, I absolutely hate talking about politics *[in a jokingly manner]*. Let me give you the answer. Are you ready for it? *[Pause for dramatic effect.]* The answer is that I tell them about Jesus Christ.

Christy: *[With her arm raised.]* What's so important about telling people about Jesus Christ?

Beth: I'm glad you asked that. Since this is a Christmas party, I want to tell you the story of the very first Christmas. I'm going to tell you a story of an event that happened about two thousand years ago. It all began because there was a census throughout all the land. Today families only have to fill out a form and mail it back to the census takers, but back then families had to return to their home town to register for the census and pay a tax. There was a man named Joseph and a woman named Mary who lived in Nazareth, which was in Galilee, which is in the Middle East. They had to travel to Judea and the city of Bethlehem. For them it was a very long trip, especially because Mary was very pregnant at the time. She could give birth at any time. When they got there, unfortunately, they found that the city was full of people and Mary and Joseph couldn't find a place to stay for the night. Finally they found one innkeeper who took pity on them and offered to let them stay in his barn, which was behind the inn. So they settled down and Mary gave birth during the night. It was a little boy and they named him Jesus.

Christy: [*Arm raised.*] He was born in a barn?

Beth: Yep. Pretty strange, wasn't it?!?! They were in the middle of a dirty barn and there was nowhere to put the baby after He was born, so many laid the newborn child in a manger of hay that was right there in the barn.

Student 1: That must have been weird.

Beth: I agree. You know what else was weird? Now that Jesus was born, all of Heaven wanted to tell the good news. There were these shepherds out in the fields watching over their sheep by night. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared to them and they were really afraid. Can you imagine what it would have been like to see an angel of the Lord out there in the dark of night? They were afraid.

Student 1: I would have been afraid too.

Beth: Me too! But the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

As soon as the angel announced the birth of Jesus, hundreds of angels filled the sky. They began to praise God and said, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

Amanda: Can you imagine being in that field? It must have been awesome!

Beth: That's exactly what the shepherds thought. They had to go and check out this baby the angels told them about - there was no question about it. They went to Bethlehem and found the baby lying in the manger - just as the angels told them. As soon as they left the barn they went out and told everyone they could find all that had happened to them. They returned to see Jesus again before they went back into the fields. But I'm sure they were never the same again.

Amanda: Is that the end of the story?

Beth: No, that's just the beginning. That's all we know about that night, but some time after Jesus went home, wise men from the east, who had seen a new star shining in the sky that was over Bethlehem, came to see the baby Jesus. The new star was a sign of Jesus' birth. These wise men bowed down before Him and worshipped Him because He was the newborn king, and they knew that He was special. They presented Him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and of myrrh. They too left to tell others of the great things that they had seen.

Christy: Now those are presents.

Beth: Yes, they were. You know, most of us think of Christmas as a day when we get presents. But the real reason there is a Christmas is so we can celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ and think about what His birth means to us. Jesus was God's gift to us. He came so that we may have life, and have it more abundantly. Both a better life here on earth - with purpose and peace; and eternal life with God in Heaven when we die. He was the greatest gift ever given. In fact, that's why we give each other gifts on Christmas morning, in celebration of Jesus' birthday.

Student 1: I never knew that.

Beth: Your teacher and I would like to follow the gift-giving tradition of Christmas here today. We have a gift for anyone of you who wants it.

[Some commotion as Teacher brings a box of Bibles forward. Beth takes one and begins to explain what the Bible is to the students as the teacher hands them out to each student who wants one.]

Beth: This is the New Testament of the Bible. The story we were just talking about is found in Matthew and Luke, two of the first four books of the New Testament. I don't know how many of you have one of these at home, but Mrs. Peterson and I want to give one of these to each of you. When you get yours I'd like you to turn to the very last page with me. *[The students turn to the last page as they get their Bibles.]* On the last page you will find what is called the Romans Road. It's a list of verses that explain to you why Jesus was born and how He died on a cross for you and for me. There's also some more information about how to start a personal relationship with Jesus. Mrs. Peterson and I would love for

each of you to take this home and go through this last page. It will answer some of your questions about God but it may raise some new ones in your mind. That's okay.

Teacher: Beth and I will be available to you tomorrow if you have any questions about what you read tonight. Wow, we only have just a few minutes before lunch. *[To Beth.]* Are you able to join us for lunch and our party this afternoon?

Beth: I'd love to.

Teacher: Great. Why don't you get your things in order and we'll be dismissed for lunch in just a couple of minutes.

[Teacher and Beth meet together at her desk. Perhaps one or two students can meet with them there.]

Christy: What you think about all of this Jesus stuff?

Student 1: I've never heard this stuff before. The only time I've ever heard much about Jesus is when my dad swears.

Student 2: Me too.

Student 3: I never heard this Christmas story. I always thought Christmas started with Santa and the elves.

Student 4: My grandma's always asking me to go to church. I went one year on Christmas Eve. We learned this stuff there, but I don't really remember it that well. Church was kinda cool, but I felt weird being there.

Student 5: I know what you mean.

Student 6: I've got a friend who invited me to come to some kind of a youth group at her church. I never went, but it kinda sounds interesting.

Student 7: My grandparents go to church all the time. They're part of some old people group there. They go on trips and they have dinners and they go every Sunday morning, every Sunday night, and every Wednesday, I think.

Amanda: That's a lot! What do they do there all that time?

Student 7: Learn more about God, I guess. Our family goes with them a few times a year, you know, on Christmas and Easter. I think it's boring, but they sure love it.

Student 8: I go to church every week. Our Sunday church service can be kinda boring, but we have this kids and teens program that's a lot of fun. You should come with me sometime.

Student 1: You think going to church is fun?!?!

Student 8: Yeah. We get together to play some games, get to know each other better, sing some songs, and learn more about God. We also learn about missionaries like the one we met today.

Student 1: That sounds barely tolerable to me. But I still don't think I'd have any fun if I had to go to church every week.

Amanda: Well, I've never been to church or anything like that. Are you guys going to read through the back of this Bible like Mrs. Peterson asked?

Christy: I don't know. It could be interesting, but I've got a bunch of shopping to do before Christmas.

Student 1: Me too. I might wait until after Christmas and do it then. We'll have time while we're on break. Unless I get the stuff I'm hoping to get for Christmas - then I might not have time to do it.

Amanda: But Mrs. Peterson said that Beth would only be with us tomorrow. What if we have questions?

Student 2: I don't know. Maybe I will, maybe I won't. We'll see.

Student 3: I'll do it if you guys do it.

Student 4: I'll do it. I love to read books.

Student 5: I'll have to see if I have enough time tonight.

Student 6: I don't know. I'll see what's going on.

Student 7: Yeah. I'll see. No promises.

Student 8: I'm going to read it tonight.

Teacher: All right, our time is up. It's lunchtime!

[They put their Bibles in their backpacks as the class exits for lunch.]

- CURTAIN -



Scene II

Scene: The interior of Amanda's house. We see their dining room as well as Amanda's room. The dining room has a table and other furnishings to indicate that it's a dining room of a typical lower middle class home. Amanda's room has a bed and other various furnishings of a teenaged girl in that same class. Mary is busying herself setting the dining room table for dinner for three as Amanda and Christy enter.

Amanda: Mom, I'm home. Oh, there you are. Is it okay if Christy stay's for dinner tonight?

Mary: Hello Amanda - Christy. Sure, you can stay for dinner. I'll just set another place. So, how was your day at school? Anything special happen today?

Amanda: It was a great day.

Christy: We had a Christmas party at school today.

Amanda: Yeah, and we had this lady from Africa come to our classroom to tell us the story of the very first Christmas.

Mary: Wow. That does sound like a great day. She came all the way from Africa just to tell you a story today?

Christy: Yeah, she grew up with Mrs. Peterson and now she's a missionary teaching all kinds of stuff to the people in Africa.

Amanda: She was pretty cool and I really liked the story she told about the very first Christmas. Did you know that Christmas is supposed to be about Jesus and His birthday?

Mary: [*Smiling.*] Yeah, I used to go to church when I was younger. I remember the story. Jesus was born in a manger and the shepherds came to see him there.

Amanda: You used to go to church? I never knew that.

Mary: It was a long time ago.

Christy: You were right. And then the wise men came to see him after he got home.

Mary: And they gave Him gifts of, let's see, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, right?

Christy: That's what Beth said today. She said it's all in here. [*Showing off her new Bible.*]

Mary: [*Taking the Bible from Christy.*] What's this?

Amanda: She gave all of us our very own Bible. She asked us to read through the back pages where it tells us more about God.

Mary: *[Handing it back to Christy.]* I had one just about like that one when I was your age. But that was a long time ago.

Amanda: Can we talk about this later? Christy and I want to read through these back pages like Mrs. Peterson asked us.

Mary: That's fine. Maybe we can talk about it more at dinner tonight.

Amanda: Great. We'll be in my room if you need us.

[Amanda and Christy head to her room. Mary finishes her work at the table and then exits. Once there they drop their back packs and plop on her bed with their new Bibles. They begin to read out loud as they turn the pages.]

Amanda: *[Reading.]* The Romans Road. Before we start our friendship with God we have to understand how much He loves us and He has already done for us. We have to admit that He is the creator of everything and understand that we are only humans. Turn to Romans 1:20-21 on page 225.

Christy: I'll go there. You stay on the back page, okay?

Amanda: Okay.

[She turns there and continues to read.]

Christy: "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - His eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened." *[Pause in thought.]* Yeah, that's me. I never gave thanks to God in my life.

Amanda: Everyone knows that God exists, right. All you have to do is look at the trees and the flowers and you know that it just didn't happen. But I never knew there was stuff like this about creation in the Bible.

Christy: Me either. I always just assumed that God was a good guy and all we had to do was be good and we'd get to Heaven. What's the Bible say next?

Amanda: We must realize that we are all sinners and deserve the penalty for our sin. Romans 3:23.

[Turning there.]

Christy: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Sinned? What so you think that means?

Amanda: I guess it's the bad stuff we do that keeps us from the glory of God - just like that said.

Christy: It says that everyone has sinned. I know I'm certainly not perfect.

Amanda: Me either. So, we definitely agree with that one.

Christy: Okay, so we know there is a God and we haven't reached His glory. What's next?

[Turning back to the end of the Bible.]

Amanda: God gave us the way to be forgiven from our sins. He showed His love towards us by providing a sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sins. Romans 5:8.

[Turning there.]

Christy: "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Christ died for us. I remember Beth talking about that today.

Amanda: Why would someone die for us? He doesn't even know us.

Christy: I'm not sure, but Beth said that He was born at Christmas and that He died on a cross for our sins at Easter.

Amanda: So, He died on a cross for the bad stuff that we did? Huh.

Christy: I don't get it either. What's it say next?

[Turning there.]

Amanda: If we remain sinners we will be forever separated from God when we die, but if we ask God to forgive us of our sins we will live forever with Him in Heaven. Romans 6:23.

Christy: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Amanda: I get it. Sin leads us to death and Jesus died so we can be with God in Heaven, right?

Christy: That's what it says.

Amanda: Maybe we should be writing down some questions to ask tomorrow.

[She gets a piece of paper and starts making a list.]

Amanda: What is sin? Why did Jesus have to die?

Christy: All I know is that I don't want to die. I want to go to Heaven. What's next?

[Turning to the back of the Bible.]

Amanda: Confess that Jesus is God's Son and that His death on the cross paid the penalty for your sin. Romans 10:9-10.

[Turning there.]

Christy: "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."

Amanda: That's it? We only have to confess and believe and we will be saved?

Christy: That's what it says. What's next?

[Turning to the back of her Bible.]

Amanda: This answers it. It says, you don't have to do anything other than call on the name of the Lord to be saved. Romans 10:13.

[Turning there.]

Christy: "For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Pretty simple.

Amanda: That's enough for me. It says, "If you're ready to ask God to forgive you for your sin and ask Jesus to come into your life then say the following prayer." You want to do this?

Christy: I want to go to Heaven when I die. I want to be right with God.

Amanda: Mrs. Peterson and Beth are so confident in what they believe. I don't think they would have given us these Bibles if they didn't believe it was true too.

Christy: I'm ready. Are you ready?

Amanda: I'm ready.

Christy: Let's do this together.

Amanda: Okay. Dear Lord.

Christy: Dear Lord.

Amanda: I believe that Jesus is Lord and that He died on the cross for my sins.

Christy: I believe that Jesus is God and that He died on the cross for my sins.

Amanda: Please, forgive me of my sins.

Christy: Please, forgive me for my sins.

Amanda: I also believe that God raised Jesus from the dead.

Christy: I believe that God raised Jesus from the dead too.

Amanda: Come and be a part of my life.

Christy: Come and be a part of my life.

Amanda: Amen.

Christy: Amen.

Amanda: That was pretty cool.

Christy: I never did anything like that before in my life.

Amanda: Now it says, "Now that you've asked God to forgive you of your sins and asked Jesus to be part of your life you have to learn more about Him. Ask a Christian for more information about a good church for you to go to so you can learn more about God.

Christy: We can ask about that tomorrow too.

[Christy grabs the list of questions and adds it to the list.]

Amanda: On the back page here there is a place for us to sign that we accepted Christ as our Savior and Lord and put the date. Give me the pen. *[She signs her name and gives it to Christy.]* Here.

Christy: Let's put it in both of our Bibles so we'll always remember that we did this together.

[They do just that.]

Amanda: Now the last thing here says that we should go and tell someone what we just did.

Christy: Let's go tell your mother.

Amanda: It's got to be about time for dinner anyway.

[They exit the room and enter the dining room just as George enters coming home from work at the coal mine. There is evidence of his work on him even after cleaning after a day's work. He is carrying his lunch pail and a newspaper under his arm. Mary enters when she hears all of the commotion.]

George: Hi honey, I'm home.

Amanda: Daddy, I'm so glad that you're home.

[She jumps into his arms and startles him.]

George: What are you so excited about today?

Amanda: Oh, I love you so much Daddy.

George: And I love you too, but what are you so excited about?

Amanda: Today has been the most amazing day. There was this special lady at school today who told us about Christmas and gave us our own Bibles [*showing him*] and told us to read through the stuff on the last page and so Christy and I did and we decided to become Christians.

George: WHAT?!?!?!?

Amanda: I said that today we became Christians.

George: [*Obviously upset.*] Give me that Bible. [*Reaching for it.*]

Christy: We read through the Romans Road and then we prayed the prayer that was in the back of the Bible and now we're Christians.

George: I don't want to hear about no Bible or no Christian stuff in my house. Who gave this to you?

Amanda: A missionary from Africa named Beth who came to our school today to tell us the real story of Christmas.

George: They gave this to you in school? In a public school? I'll be talking to your principal about this first thing tomorrow morning!

Mary: George, I don't think it was all that big of a deal. Beth came to their class to tell them the story of the first Christmas and gave them all a Bible. I think it was a sweet thing for her to do. I'm not sure why it's such a big deal.

George: That's because you don't understand the constitution of the United States of America. It guarantees the separation of church and state. A public school is a part of the state and this is [*indicating the Bible*] part of the church. The two shouldn't go together - ever!

Mary: I still don't see why it's all that big of a deal. What's done is done. Aren't you glad that your daughter was reading the Bible and that she has decided to become a Christian?

George: No, I am not glad my daughter was reading the Bible. Young lady, this is nothing but a bunch of lies made up by people who want to control your mind so that you give them all of your money. There is no God. Jesus Christ was some kind of a crazy man who told a bunch of lies and that's why they killed Him.

Amanda: But we read that even the creation is evidence that there is a God.

George: If there is a God then why do we have so many problems in the world? Why are there problems at work in those coal mines, huh, what did you read about that? If there's a God then why can't the union and the workers come to some sort an agreement every time they're not working together? If there's a God why did He put the coal so deep into the earth and make us work so hard to get it out? Why didn't He just put it right at the top of the surface so it was easier to get to, huh? Why do we have to work so hard to make enough money to just put dinner on the table while others, like those who own the mine, are eating high off the hog? I can't believe in a God who would allow that kind of stuff to happen - no matter what Mrs. Peterson or some strange lady from Africa has to say about it.

Amanda: I don't know about all of that stuff. All I know is that the Bible said that we're all sinners and we've got to believe that Jesus was God's son and that God raised Him from the dead and we could live forever with Him in Heaven. And I want all of that in my life.

George: That sounds all well and good, but it doesn't help put dinner on our table, does it? I don't want any daughter to be one of these higher-than-thou's who talk about Heaven and God and has no clue as to what it's like in the real world. I want my daughter to be a productive member of society. I want her to work hard for a living and love her family, just like your mother does. I don't need you believing these lies.

Amanda: How do you know that those are lies? I don't think that Mrs. Peterson would tell us lies.

George: Well, I'm your father, and I don't want you reading this stuff again. Mrs. Peterson can tell you what to do in school and I can tell you what to do at home - and I don't want any of this in my home. End of argument.

[He puts the Bible in his lunch box and heads offstage.]

Amanda: But dad..

George: I said, end of argument. When's dinner. I'm starving.

[He exits.]

Mary: Uh, in a minute, I guess. *[To Amanda.]* Just let him go, dear. We'll talk more about this later, but just let him go now. Better to let him cool off before we talk about this again. *[To Christy.]* I'm sorry about that dear. My husband can be a little touchy after a hard day at work.

Christy: I understand. You know, maybe it would be better for me to go home for dinner tonight. *[To Amanda.]* I'll call you later to see how you're doing, okay?

[They hug and Christy exits. Amanda looks at her mother, bursts into tears, and exits to her room. Mary follows.]

Mary: Oh, honey...

- CURTAIN -



Scene III

Scene: The interior of a mining cave. Various workers are moving around as they work on mining coal. Stu and George are working in the mine as the scene opens. After a few moments a horn sounds announcing a break. Various workers sit and talk amongst themselves. Stu and George grab a spot at center stage as they open their lunch pails and begin to eat their lunch. Before sitting down George puts his emergency light next to his lunch pail - where the audience can see both of them.

Stu: Just a few more days until Christmas.

George: I don't want to hear about it.

Stu: What, you got a bunch of shopping to do yet?

George: No, I just don't want to talk about it.

Stu: Okay, Scrooge. I thought that most people liked talking about Christmas, it is a happy holiday, you know. But I won't talk about it if you don't want to talk about it.

George: Thanks.

[They open their lunch pails and dig into their lunches. George pulls the Bible out of his lunch pail and then puts it back quickly.]

Stu: What was that?

George: Nothing.

Stu: What that a Bible I saw in your lunch pail?

George: I said I didn't want to talk about it.

Stu: No, you said you didn't want to talk about Christmas, you didn't say anything about not wanting to talk about the Bible you're carrying in your lunch pail.

George: Oh. Well, it's the same thing. I don't want to talk about Christmas and I don't want to talk about the Bible. Isn't there some sports news we can talk about? Or how about the weather? Let's talk about the weather.

Stu: What's up with you today? I was just kidding about the Scrooge thing, but now I'm beginning to wonder if you are a Scrooge for real.

George: I just don't want to talk about it.

Stu: I'm not talking about the weather with you today, and I know that you definitely don't want to talk about sports. I've got to press this one because this is so unlike you to have a Bible in your lunch pail.

George: Okay, I'll talk about the Bible if that will make you happy. Look, my daughter got this Bible at school yesterday - in a public school. This is a total violation of the Constitution. Have you ever heard of the separation of church and state?

Stu: Yeah, I learned about the constitution when I was in school.

George: They shouldn't be passing out Bibles in a public school and encouraging the kids to read it. So Amanda comes home, reads part of the Bible, and decides she wants to become a Christian.

Stu: Oh, is that all? With the way you've been acting, I thought that something bad happened.

George: I know that it might not seem like too big of deal to you, but it's a big deal to me.

Stu: You're upset because your daughter is reading the Bible and wants to become a Christian?

George: I don't want to hear your religious views. I know you go to church and you find some sort of comfort in thinking that there is some sort of a cosmic father that looks over us, but I don't buy it and nobody in my house is going to buy into it if I have anything to say about it.

Stu: I can see why you had a tough night.

George: I found out about it just as I walked in the door last night. Amanda and I had a big fight over it. She went crying to her room and I haven't seen her since. I tried to talk to her again before she went to bed, but she told me she didn't want to talk about it and that I should just leave her alone. So I did.

Stu: What about Mary?

George: She used to go to church when she was younger, but she got over it before I met her. She cried with Amanda and then let me have it after Amanda when to bed. Like it's my fault. I'm the man of the house and I can make the rules for my own home. I don't want anyone reading the Bible, I don't want anyone talking about God, I don't want anyone bringing it up in my presence, either.

Stu: I don't know what God ever did to you, but you sure do have something against Him!

George: It's more like what God hasn't done for me. You know, you Christian guys really irk me. You live a life without a lot of money, with plenty of problems, and you go to church every week and thank God for the great things He's done for you. I don't get it. Don't you see all the bad stuff going on in the world around you? Or do you like completely ignore it?

- Stu: I don't ignore what's going on in the world around me.
- George: Really, I haven't heard you complain once about your job, your boss, or the horrible work conditions we have here. I never heard you complain about how much money we make or how life isn't fair. It's like you've got these blinders on and you don't care about anything but your family and God and the Bible and Jesus and the church.
- Stu: That's kinda' right. I do have blinders on that keep me from most of what's going on in the world. I try not to complain. I try not to care what bad things are in the world. I try not to compare my life with other people's lives. God has given me what He's given me. It's not up to me to make His decisions for Him.
- George: But it's not fair that some people are rich and living high off the hog and we've got to struggle for every little bit we get. How can God allow that to happen?
- Stu: Who am I to tell God what's fair? You think that money is the most important thing in life? So, you think that God loves the rich more than He loves us because they have more money than we have?
- George: I don't even think there is a God. I think the whole concept of God is just a crutch that man has created so that he can believe that there's more to life than what we're stuck with right in front of us - and yes, I do think that money has a lot to do with it.
- Stu: Aw, come on. How can you look at the world and not believe there was a creator? We're gonna' spend a ton of our lives down here taking this coal out of the earth so that we can heat our homes with it, generate the electricity our entire state uses, and a bunch of other stuff too. Do you think this just happened?
- George: Ha! Have you heard of the theory of evolution?
- Stu: Yeah, that's a theory I learned about in school. It's just a theory. There are many theories. Did you know that there is a theory that aliens made everything that we see? God creating everything is another theory. I'm going with the God theory - that's what the Bible says. You can go with whatever theory you choose, even if you want to believe that everything came from outer space, but I'm siding with God.
- George: If there is a God and He did put this coal here, then why did He put it so far down and make it so hard to get out?
- Stu: Man, you always look at the cup half-empty, don't you?
- George: I look at it the way it is and I see it the way I see it. At least I don't bury my head in the sand and just say "God did it." I'm willing to look at the facts and make an intelligent decision based on what I see.

Stu: It's not like that. Don't say that I'm not making an intelligent decision. Just because I believe in God doesn't make me a fool, does it?

George: Maybe not in your book.

Stu: Oh man, how can you say that? You've got this image of God like He's trying to mess with our lives, but He's not like that. God is all about love. He does everything that He does just because He loves us. He created us because He loves us. He gave us this awesome creation, including this coal, because He loves us. He sent Jesus Christ to die on the cross for our sin because He loves us. It's all about God's love. I'd rather look at life with a cup half-full philosophy than being angry all the time.

George: I don't know. I just don't know. WOAH!

[There is a great rumbling sound, the lights blink on and off, and everyone on stage is staggering around as if there is an earthquake. It would be great if there could be smoke or dust in the air. An emergency siren sounds. George's emergency light is the only light on stage.]

Stu: George, are you there?

George: *[Coughing.]* I'm here. I'm okay. *[Yelling.]* Everyone who can see my light - come to the light and we'll figure out what to do next.

Stu: What happened?

George: *[Coughing. Wiping his face.]* I don't know. *[Looking around.]* But by the looks of things it's not good. Anyone know what's going on?

Miner: I was up there *[pointing upstage. George heads in that direction; he shines his light around, and returns.]* eating my lunch and all of a sudden the floor just started shaking and then the wall up there just came down. It just came down right next to me.

George: Shoot.

Stu: What?

George: I hate to say this, but it looks like our only way out just caved in behind us.

Miner: Now what are we going to do?

George: Let's see who's okay and who's not okay first, then we'll try to figure out how we're gonna get out of here. I heard the siren so they know we're down here. They'll be after us as soon as they can. We'll just have to start digging on our side and meet them in the middle.

Miner: How are we going to know how far we have to dig?

George: We won't. We just gotta dig as far as it takes to get us out of here.

[Miner exits.]

Stu: What about our air?

George? What are we gonna do? We gotta dig and we gotta breathe while we dig. Let's just hope there's enough air in here to get the job done.

Stu: We just have to remember that they'll be working from the other side. Man, I hope they find us in time.

George: That's the only hope we've got right now.

[Miner enters again.]

Miner: I got bad news, boss.

George: What?

Miner: We lost two.

George: Aw. Who?

Miner: Jonsey and Palmer. Everyone else is okay.

George: Where are they?

Miner: We don't know where Jonsey and Palmer are - we're assuming they're under the wall that came down. I've got everyone else working on digging through the wall.

George: All right. Good job. I'll be over there in a few minutes. Let me know how you're doing until then.

[Miner exits as George sits down in frustration. He puts his head on his hands and runs them through his hair.]

Stu: There's nothing you could have done.

George: I know, but it's not easy losing two of my men. It hurts. It hurts deep.

Stu: I know.

George: See what I mean?

Stu: What?

George: See what I mean about how can there be a God? *[Angry.]* How can there be a God who did this or allowed this to happen or

just stood by and watched this. Two men are dead and we're in a dire situation here. Where's God now!?!?

Stu: I don't know why this happened. But I know that God loves us. Nothing is going to change my mind about that. I'm not going to question Him just because I don't understand. I'm going to trust Him even though I don't understand.

George: What about this? This isn't going to change your mind? You might die down here today.

Stu: Not even this. Not even if I did die down here today.

George: How can you say that?

Stu: I just know.

[Miner enters again.]

Miner: I got bad news again, boss.

George: Now what?

Mine: It's no use digging. It wasn't a wall that came down. The ceiling fell right down and there's no way we can chip through it with the tools we have with us. It's solid rock. There's no loose dirt or coal or nothing. It's like a steel door got closed and we can't do anything about it.

George: All right. Gather everyone around and we'll take it easy to conserve our oxygen and try to think of what we're gonna do next.

[Others gather around and they sit and look at George's light at center stage.]

George: I know you all know this, but I gotta say it anyway. This light shows us all of the oxygen that's left in this cave. I know it sounds cruel, but when this light goes out it's going to be the end of us all.

[The light flickers or lowers. Everyone reacts.]

Stu: What can we do?

Miner: I don't know what we can do. We sure can't dig our way out of here with the tools we have.

George: Is there any hope from the other side?

Miner: I don't think so. I can't hear anyone on the other side of this wall.

George: They know we're down here 'cause I hear the sirens.

Stu: There's always hope from the other side.

Miner: I know we don't want to talk about this, but should we write some kind of a note for our families in case we don't make it?

George: No, that would be giving up and I don't want to give up.

Stu: Come on George. You saw the light. How long are you gonna wait to get ready if we don't make it through this?

George: All right. I guess it won't hurt anything. Does anyone have any kind of paper we can write on?

[They all begin to look through their stuff to find some paper. George opens his pail and finds the Bible right away.]

George: *[Excited.]* Here. I've got this Bible. There's got to be some blank pages in it somewhere. *[He finds one at the front and tears it out.]* Here's one. *[He hands it to Stu who looks for someone to give it to as George looks for another.]* This one has writing on one side, but the other is okay. *[He tears it out and hands it off to Stu. Then he flips through the rest of the book to the end.]* I think that's all. There's more here at the back. *[He pauses as he turns to the page Amanda and Christy filled out. He reads through it.]*

Stu: You got another one?

[George doesn't answer. Stu comes closer.]

Stu: What you got there?

George: This is what Amanda read last night. It's called the Romans Road. You ever heard of it?

Stu: Yeah, I've heard of it. You gonna read it?

George: I don't know.

Stu: *[Coming down to his level.]* George. I think there's a good chance we're all gonna die here today. *[Pause.]* I know you don't believe in God, but I think this is the time for you to read it and see what you believe after you've read it.

[The light lowers again.]

Stu: This might be your last chance.

George: Maybe you're right. I think we all need to hear this. *[Standing up.]* Everyone gather around. *[The other men gather around.]* Many of you know that I'm not a religious man, but this is a serious time for us and I think that we all need to hear this message. I think we'll all feel better if we hear it together.

[Light lowers again.]

- George: [Reading from the back of the Bible.] This is called the Romans Road. Before we start our friendship with God we have to understand how much He loves us and He has already done for us. We have to admit that He is the creator of everything and understand that we are only humans.
- Stu: Romans 1:20 says, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - His enteral power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened."
- George: Number two: we must realize that we are all sinners and deserve the penalty for our sin.
- Stu: Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
- George: Number three: God gave us the way to be forgiven from our sins. He showed His love towards us by providing a sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sins.
- Stu: Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrated His own love for us in this: while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
- George: Next, if we remain sinners we will be forever separated from God when we die, but if we ask God to forgive us our sins we will live forever with Him in Heaven.
- Stu: Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- George: Confess that Jesus is God's Son and that His death on the cross paid the penalty of your sin.
- Stu: Romans 10:9-10 says, "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."
- George: It says you don't have to do anything other than call on the name of the Lord to be saved.
- Stu: Romans 10:123 says, "For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."


George: That's enough for me. It says: "If you're ready to ask God to forgive you for your sin and ask Jesus to come into your life then say the following prayer." I've been fighting this all my life, but if I'm going to die today I want to be ready.

Stu: Most of what we believe about God comes from what we think about our own lives. We have to take God's Word at it stands and believe what we've just read. There is a loving God who cares for us. Our sin separates us from Him. We have to ask Him to forgive us for our sin and we'll be with Him forever when we die. I did this long ago in my life and I suggest that you consider this today. This might be your last day.

George: I want to be ready. You guys want to pray with me? [*They get down on their knees and bow their heads. George prays a statement and they pray after him.*] Dear Lord, I believe that Jesus is Lord and that He died on a cross for my sins. Please, forgive me of my sins. I believe that God raised Him from the dead. Come and be a part of my life. Amen."

[*The light goes out.*]

- CURTAIN -



Scene IV

Scene: The interior of Amanda's house as set in Scene II. Amanda is lying on her bed looking at the ceiling. Mary enters after speaking with someone at the door. She has George's lunch pail and emergency light in her hand.

Mary: *[To offstage.]* Thanks for stopping by and bringing me his things. *[She starts to cry.]* No, I'll be all right. Merry Christmas to you too.

[Mary crosses to the dining room table and sits in a chair. She opens the pail and finds the Bible inside. She starts paging through it and starts to cry out loudly. Amanda hears the crying and comes from her room to see what's wrong.]

Amanda: Mom? What is it?

Mary: Some men from the mine just stopped by. They brought us your father's things.

Amanda: Is that my Bible? Where did you get that?

Mary: Your father had it. They brought it with the rest of his things. I guess he still had it in his lunch pail the day after he took it from you.

Amanda: I don't think he's ever been that mad at me - ever. And now I'll never be able to apologize to him. I just wish... *[Fighting tears]* I just wish... *[crying out]* I wish I had never made him that mad at me and I wish I had the chance to tell him how sorry I was. I just wish I had the chance to see him one more time so he could yell at me and I could tell him I was sorry and we could hug and he wouldn't die. I don't want him to die! Why did he have to die!?!?!?

[They hold each other as they cry. Mary tries to comfort Amanda. Then they gain a bit of their senses again.]

Mary: Amanda, I know your father was very upset the other night, but he didn't mean anything by it. It's just that he's a very opinionated man and if he can't understand something he feels intimidated and he doesn't want intimidating people around him who try to talk him into things that he doesn't understand because he's intimidated by them. *[Pause.]* I'm not making any sense. I do know that he loved you very much and he would have done anything for you.

Amanda: I know that.

Mary: He made sacrifices for our family every day. They might not have been the kinds of sacrifices you'd have liked him to make, but he made them for us. He worked so hard so that we could have all the stuff we have around us. He was a good husband and decent father and we should be thankful for that.

Amanda: I'm going to miss him - even if he did yell at me a lot.

Mary: hum.

Amanda; Mom, you said that you went to church when you were a kid, right?

Mary: Yes, but that was a long, long time ago.

Amanda: So, did you ever ask God to forgive you of your sin and ask Jesus to come and be part of your life? Did you ever go through the Romans Road?

Mary: Yes, I did. I'm not sure if I went through the Romans Road or not, but I remember praying to receive Christ as my Savior in Sunday school when I was a little girl.

Amanda: Grandma took you to church?

Mary: Yes, we went every Sunday - rain or shine.

Amanda: Why did you stop going to church?

Mary: You know, I don't even remember why. It was such a long time ago. Sometimes we grow up and we think we can make it on our own and we think we don't need God anymore. Then there are times when we just develop a few habits that keep us from doing things we really want to be doing. I'm not sure which happened here, but something kept me from going back to church a long time ago.

Amanda: Is that what happened to you?

Mary: Well, I think it was around the time I met your father. He didn't go to church and he thought it was foolish for me to go. I guess I stopped going because he didn't want to go and I wanted to spend more time with him so I just stopped going. I thought it was only going to be for a little while, but it turned out to be longer than I thought.

Amanda: Do you think that we could start going to church again? I mean, you and me together?

Mary: I think that would be a great idea.

[*They hold each other for a minute.*]

Amanda: Every time I think about Dad and the accident there's one thing that keeps coming to my mind over and over again.

Mary: What's that?

Amanda: If you and I asked God to forgive us of our sin and we asked Jesus to be part of our lives, that means that we get to go to Heaven when we die, right?

Mary: That's what I remember.

Amanda: And if we know that Daddy didn't believe in God at all, then, then... [She starts crying.]

Mary: What, Amanda?

Amanda: Then that means Daddy won't be there with us, doesn't it?

Mary: I don't know. I mean, I'm not sure. I don't think so, but I'm not sure. Where does someone who doesn't believe in God go when they die? I'm just not sure. I can't remember what I learned when I was a child. You know, you've got your Bible in your hand. What does your Bible say about that?

Amanda: I only read it once. I have no idea where I would read something about that.

Mary: Look in the back, where you and Christy found the Romans Road.

Amanda: [*Turning there and then getting very excited.*] Mom - Mom. Look at this! [*Trying to show her and trying to talk to her at the same time.*]

[*Mary and Amanda speak their next lines over each other.*]

Mary: What? Hold still. I can't see what you're looking at. What are you pointing to? Hold the book still.

Amanda: Look, this is where we read the Romans Road. This is where we put our names. Daddy put his name here too!

[*Now back to one at a time.*]

Mary: HOLD ON! I can't hear what you're saying and what you're trying to show me. [*Taking the book from Amanda.*] Now, what is it that you're trying to show me?

Amanda: This is where Christy and I wrote our names and said that we accepted Christ as our Savior. Look, there's other names written there too!

Mary: [*Fighting back tears.*] Well, I never! Thank you God. It looks like every one of those men accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior before they died down there. Even your daddy.


Amanda: You know what that means!?!? If my teacher hadn't given me that Bible in school, and if Christy and I didn't read the back of it and pray to receive Christ as our Savior and if I hadn't told him just when he got home and then if Daddy didn't get all mad at me and take my Bible from me and put it in his lunch pail then he wouldn't have had it to read after the accident. God planned all of that so that we could see Daddy again when we get to Heaven!

[They dive into each other's arms and cry as the lights fade to black.]

Mary: This is a merry Christmas after all!

[This would be a good time for the pastor of your church to come forward and offer all those in attendance the chance to go through the Romans Road themselves and pray to receive Christ this Christmas.]

- CURTAIN -



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