

The “W” in Christmas

If you’re a parent, you’ve probably experienced some version of this: Christmas is approaching, and your 6- or 7-year-old has been preparing for a school program – perhaps memorizing a special song or part in a skit. Then on the big day, you watch from a folding chair in the back of the gym, along with all the other parents and grandparents, while each class files in. The excited kids scan the crowd for familiar faces and wave. Then, at their teacher’s direction, they sit cross-legged on the floor, waiting for their shining moment in the “Winter Pageant.”

Have you been there? I have, many times. A friend shared this lovely story with me about one such elementary school pageant, and I thought I’d pass it along. I don’t know where it originated or even if it’s true. It doesn’t really matter; the message – about the true meaning of Christmas – is the same either way. I hope you enjoy it.

...Because the public school system had long since stopped referring to the holiday as “Christmas,” I expected only songs about reindeer, Santa Claus, snowflakes, and good cheer. So when my son’s class rose to sing, “Christmas Love,” I was surprised.

The kids were resplendent in colorful sweaters, mittens, and stocking caps. Those in the front row had been assigned large cards with capital letters on one side, which I soon saw would spell out the title of the song. As the class sang “C is for Christmas,” the first child held up that letter. Then the next, “H is for Happy,” was added, and so on until the message would be complete: “CHRISTMAS LOVE.”

The performance was going smoothly, until the little girl with the “M” raised her letter high, but unfortunately upside down, making it a “W” instead. Some of the kids watching snickered, but the girl, completely unawares, continued to hold her “W” proudly in place until all the letters were revealed. Then a hush fell over the audience and eyes widen. In that instant, we were reminded why we celebrated the holiday in the first place. For when the last letter was held high, the message read loud and clear: “CHRISTWASLOVE” ...and He still is.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.” (John 3:16-17)

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