

# Riverbend School

## THE BEST GIFT OF ALL

### CHARACTERS

Joseph -  
Mary -  
Martha - (smallest girl)  
Naomi -  
The Angel -  
Rachel - (action only)  
Elizabeth - (action only)  
Exha "

Time: The First Christmas Day

Setting: One of the roads that leads to Jerusalem.

Props: Silver vase, gold arm band, toy, apple.

At Rise: A group of children are seen entering from the left. They carry gifts as described.

### Action:

Joseph This is the road and we must hurry with our gifts.

Martha Last night he was born in a manger in a stable. And today all the people are happy and we come bearing gifts for him.

Mary What are you bringing, Joseph? I'm bringing this fine vase. It is made of silver.

Joseph I'm bringing an arm band of gold. Rachel is bringing a jar of new sweet honey.

Mary And my sister Elizabeth is bringing a fine toy: a lamb carved from wood. What are you bringing Martha?

\*at the question Martha hangs her head\*

Joseph Yes, Martha, tell us.

Martha I am bringing the baby an apple. \*the other children look at each other\* I polished it and polished it and now see. \*She takes the apple from the folds of her dress\* How it glows. Like a jewel.

Joseph You mean - you mean your gift is an apple?

Martha Yes. I helped my mother all day and sang to the baby when he cried and brought my father his sandals when he came in from working in the fields. My mother rewarded me with this apple. It is the prettiest thing I have ever owned, and I am going to give it to the Christ child.

Mary            Only an apple!! \*laughs with other children\*

Martha        I thought it looked so pretty. I did not eat it myself - although I wanted to. I wanted to save it as a gift.

Joseph        You are a very foolish girl. But come. We must hurry. \*all children hurry off the right side\*

\*Martha stands looking at the apple\*

Mary            \*running back\* But Hurry, Martha, even if your gift is not so fine. We will tell how you did not keep it for yourself but saved it for a gift. Then your gift may be accepted, too.

Martha        I will follow behind you. \*Mary goes off the stage on the right side. Martha starts to follow slowly. She meets a ragged little girl. Naomi, who is coming on the stage from the right - Naomi is weeping\*\* Why do you cry little bird?

Naomi         Because my mother is so poor. And I am so poor. I have not had anything to eat all day. My little brother is lying in the fields. He, too, is crying, because he is hungry. \*She cries again\*

Martha        You must not cry. Today is a day of rejoicing. I am going into the city. There will be a great celebration. Perhaps you will find something to eat there. Come with me.

Naomi         My brother is too little to walk so far. \*\*she sees the apple in Martha's hand.\*\* Oh, how beautiful that is! Like a large ruby. How red and how round. And how good it must taste.

Martha        I am taking it to the Christ child as a gift.

Naomi         It will be the best of all gifts.

Martha        My mother said that God made it. The sun warmed it into color. And, the rain he sent made it sweet to taste. He made this out of a pretty, sweet-smelling flower. Smell. \*\*Naomi smells the apple.\*\*

Naomi         It smells like the wind on a sunny day. You must bring your fine gift to the city.

Martha        The other children laughed at me.

Naomi         It will be the most beautiful gift of all.

Martha        I wish you would come with me.

Naomi         I can not. I am so hungry, and my brother is so small.

Martha        \*\*starts to follow after the other children, Naomi sits by the road and starts

to cry. Just as Martha is about to go off the stage, she turns around and sees Naomi crying. Martha hurries back.\*\* There, little girl, take this apple. You are hungry. I cannot see you weep.

Naomi \*\*joyfully\* But the gift.

Martha I will listen to the stories that the other children tell of their gifts.

Naomi But this would be the finest gift of all.

Martha There will be many gifts laid in the manger. But you are hungry. You must have this.

Naomi \*\*taking the apple\*\* Oh thank-you! Thank-you! I will give my brother half and he will stop crying and be happy again.

\*\*Naomi skips off happily with the apple. Martha sinks down on the side of the road and starts to cry. A beautiful angel in a white robe appears.\*\*

Angel Why do you weep, my child?

Martha I gave my gift to a hungry child. And now I have no gift for the Christ child. \*\* She cries harder. The Angel places a hand on Martha's head.\*\*

Angel Do not weep. God has seen your gift to the hungry child. Because you thought of another and not of yourself, your gift is twice as precious as all the gold and silver and sweet-smelling perfume. When you gave it to the hungry child it was as though you had given it to the Christ child. So be comforted. Your gift was the best of all. \*Martha looks up and smiles - curtain close -\*

The End.