A PUPPET PLAY IN ONE ACT

Camel Carols

Based on Matthew 1–2; Luke 1–2 · Written by Carrie Elderberry



SUITABLE FOR
Ages 5 and up

PERFORMANCE TIME
8–10 minutes

CAST SIZE
6 puppets

PROPS REQUIRED
Jingle bells; Santa hats for the boys

MAIN THEME
Christmas is a time to focus on Jesus — the greatest gift of all is the forever life He gives, not the presents we hope to get.

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v.1.2 · November 2026

To print just the play on its own, print pages 5–9.

PRODUCTION OVERVIEW

Synopsis

Children discuss the true meaning of Christmas. Two boys are sure Christmas is all about Santa, until CAMI, a poet camel, and her two camel friends tease them by insisting Christmas is all about camels, singing their own silly versions of favorite carols. The boys catch on, remember that the carols are about Jesus, and the camels remind them of the best gift of all. Facts about the first Christmas are taken from Matthew 1 and 2, and Luke 1 and 2.

Spiritual Concept

It is easy to let Santa and presents crowd Jesus out of Christmas. By teasing the boys with “camel carols,” CAMI makes them say out loud what the real songs are about: the baby Jesus. Then the camels point to a gift better than anything wrapped up — Jesus gave up His life for us, and He offers us a forever life.

Age Suitability

Best for ages 5 and up. The camel-carol jokes land with even the youngest children (and their grandparents!), and the turn from Santa to the gift of Jesus gives older kids something to think about.

Performance Time

8–10 minutes

CAST & TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Characters (in order of appearance)

GIRL — Afraid of camels, and could be a little older than the boys.

BOY 1 — Could be younger than the girl, and focused on Santa.

BOY 2 — Could be younger than the girl, and focused on Santa.

CAMI — A poet camel. Her full name is Camouflage. Teases the boys to see how much they care about the real meaning of Christmas.

CAMEL 2 — Supportive to CAMI.

CAMEL 3 — Supportive to CAMI.

Prop Options

- Jingle bells.
- Try to find Santa hats for the boys.

PERFORMANCE NOTES FOR PUPPETEERS

New to puppets? General prep, technique, and voice tips live at gospelpuppets.org/getting-started.

Character Notes

CAMI is teasing, not mean. The fun is in the boys slowly catching on that the camels are pulling their legs.

GIRL's shrieking at the camels is a running gag. She misses almost the whole play, and comes back to announce that her mom didn't believe her.

Staging

Make sure the puppeteers know the tunes for the songs.

While getting ready, sing some Christmas carols. The ones altered in the play are the best as they have to do with the play, but any carols will do.

At the start, the puppets greet each other and the audience. Take time, wave, engage, ad lib, so that the audience can focus.

With thanks to Ellen McCauley, who helped write this play.

Reading the Script

CAPS = volume/intensity.

Ellipsis (…) = the author's pacing notation.

Em dashes (the long dash, —) = the author's interruptions.

The camel songs are new words to familiar Christmas tunes; the tune for each is named in the script.

CAMEL CAROLS

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(GIRL and BOYS enter and greet each other and the audience. Take time, wave, engage, ad lib, so that audience can focus.)

ALL: Hi, everybody! Merry Christmas!

GIRL: Hey, guess what?

BOY 1: What?

GIRL: My Sunday school teacher was telling us all about the FIRST Christmas.

BOY 2: Ours did too! But I was kind of SURPRISED that Santa was not part of it, not at all.

GIRL: Of course not, silly!

BOY 2: Why is that silly? Christmas is ALL ABOUT Santa!

GIRL: Well, maybe NOW it is. But not at first!

BOY 1: There WERE some presents, though, even back then.

BOY 2: I know! Gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

GIRL: Yes! Those were presents for the Baby Jesus. It is SO different now.

BOY 1: Yes, now it is all about SANTA! Yeah!

GIRL: Yes. And pestering your parents to give you lots of stuff.

BOY 2: Yeah, I'm PRETENDING to be good, for a few weeks, so that Santa will pile on the loot!

GIRL: Give Santa a rest, ok? This puppet show is about the REAL meaning, of Christmas.

BOY 1: And that's NOT Santa?

GIRL: No! The Bible says the gifts for JESUS were given by the Magi.

BOY 2: Oh, right. The Wise Men, or Magi, from the East.

GIRL: Yeah, my teacher also told us that "Magi" means "astrologer". Someone who studies the stars.

BOY 1: I wonder why they are sometimes called "kings"?

GIRL: I wonder if they really rode camels.

BOY 2: Don't you wish you could meet a REAL camel sometime?

GIRL: No, thanks! Camels are big, and dirty!

(Enter CAMEL, next to BOY 1. GIRL shrieks and gets away from it as if she has seen a spider.)

CAMI: Did I hear someone mention CAMELS?

GIRL: *(shrieking)* Look out! Camels are really MEAN, and they bite, and spit, and stuff!

CAMI: I beg your pardon, but we are not ALL like that. Some of us are quite genteel.

BOY 1: Oh, cool! A camel! Can I pet you?

CAMI: Be my guest! A little scratching behind the EARS, perhaps?

(BOY scratches CAMEL. Take time here, have fun.)

GIRL: *(keep shrieking)* Do you realize this is so amazing? This is a TALKING camel!

CAMI: Anything can happen in a puppet show.

BOY 2: Hey, Mr. Camel. I've been wondering—

CAMI: Actually, I am not a "Mister" Camel, I am a "Miss" Camel.

BOY 2: Oh! Excuse me! Miss Camel—

CAMI: My name is Camouflage, but you can call me "Cami" for short— all my friends do.

GIRL: This is incredible! I'm going to go get my mother!

(Exit GIRL.)

CAMI: Remind me to leave before she gets back.

BOY 1: Hey, no problem. Listen, Cami, can I ask you a question?

CAMI: Certainly!

BOY 1: Were there really camels, at the first Christmas?

CAMI: Were there camels?

(Enter CAMEL 2.)

CAMEL 2: Were there camels?

(Enter CAMEL 3.)

CAMEL 3: Were there camels? Little boys, Christmas is ALL about camels!

BOY 2: Really, is that TRUE?

CAMI: Sure, don't you know the famous Camel carol—

ALL CAMELS: *(to the tune of "Jingle Bells")* "Camel bells, camel bells, camels all the way… oooh what fun it is to ride a camel—"

BOY 1: *(cutting them off)* Cami! Stop!… that's not the way—we are supposed to sing it!

CAMEL 2: *(to the tune of "Angels We Have Heard on High")* Well, how about this one? "Camels we have seen go by, chewing on some pumpkin pie…" Yes, Christmas is all about camels.

BOY 2: Wait a minute! I know that song! That song is about ANGELS, not camels! It starts— "Angels we have heard on high"—

CAMEL 2: Not "Camels we have seen go by"?

BOY 1: No, it is about angels. ANGELS!

ALL CAMELS: Humph!

BOY 2: Christmas songs are supposed to be about the birth of Jesus…

CAMEL 3: *(ignoring him; to the tune of "Away in a Manger")* Perhaps my favorite one goes like this: "Away in the desert, there's nothing to drink, the camels are thirsty, their eyelashes blink. The pa-a-a-alm trees are swaying…"

BOY 1: *(stop her!)* Now hold it right there! I KNOW that is wrong! That song is "Away in a Manger", and it is about the baby Jesus!

CAMI: Jesus? Are you QUITE sure?

BOY 1: Yes! And Jesus was put in a manger, because there was no room for His family, at the INN. Not the desert.

CAMI: I was wondering, how long it was going to take you, to connect JESUS with Christmas.

BOY 2: Wait, what?

CAMI: I thought Santa was more important to you.

BOY 1: Oh! So… you have been teasing us? This whole time?

CAMI: Well, maybe just a little. You see, I heard you talking to that little girl about Santa.

BOY 2: Oh. Um… That. Um…

CAMI: I wanted to see how much you CARED, about the real meaning of Christmas.

BOY 1: Well, Cami, you were right. We were being greedy. And selfish!

CAMEL 3: It is so easy to forget about Jesus, during the Christmas season, and just think about all the PRESENTS you want to get.

BOY 1: Thank you for reminding us, Camouflage. I really do love Jesus.

CAMEL 3: Do you know about the gift He has for you?

BOY 2: You mean a present, wrapped up?

CAMEL 3: No, even better than that.

BOY 2: I'm not sure what you mean.

CAMI: Well, a forever life is a gift, isn't it?

BOY 2: Oh! Yeah!

CAMI: And Jesus gave up HIS life, for you!

BOY 1: I've heard about that. He's given His life for us, to save us from sin and death.

CAMI: Now THAT is a gift.

BOY 2: So Jesus loved me, before I was even born?

CAMI: Yes. Now you see why Santa is not part of the Christmas story.

BOY 1: Yeah. Yeah! Cami, that was really funny how you made up new words, to our Christmas carols. Do you have any more?

CAMI: Well, as a matter of fact, we do have one more. Would you care to hear it? It is kind of jolly!

BOTH BOYS: Sure!

CAMELS: *(clearing throat; to the tune of "Jolly Old Saint Nicholas")*

A camel is a mammal
Known for majesty, and speed
A ru-mi-nat-ing un-gu-late,
That double chews its feed
A camel's got some stamina,
And that's why we were chose
To take the kings, to Bethlehem
And lighten up their load.

(GIRL enters.)

GIRL: What is going on here?

BOY 1: That's fantastic, Camouflage!

CAMI: Wait, there's more:

ALL CAMELS:

A camel is a mammal which has

One hump, or two
If you need desert transport, well—
A camel's there for you
We're known for our endurance,
We are poetry, in motion
We brought the kings to Bethlehem
To show our great devotion.

BOY 2: Wow… that's great.

GIRL: Wait! That tune is for a song about SANTA…

CAMI: One more verse!

ALL CAMELS:
A camel is a mammal
You could say, we're heaven sent
We carried kings, and gold, and myrrh
And even frankincense.

(GIRL looks at them, mouth open.)

We're humble, we don't ask for much,
A little cud, to chew
A little scratch, behind the ears, (BOY pets CAMI again)
We'd do the same for you!

BOY 1: *(to GIRL)* Where were you all that time?

GIRL: *(sadly)* My mom would not believe me. She said, it is a well-known fact that there are NO talking camels.

BOY 2: What would she think of a singing camel!

CAMI: Just as well, little girl, just as well. You know, we are ACTUALLY just puppets!

GIRL AND BOYS: Oh, right! So are we!

(ALL laugh uproariously.)

ALL: You can read all about the first Christmas in the BIBLE, in Luke, and in Matthew!

CAMI: And that is all for our puppet show for today!

ALL: That is the end! Good-bye!

(ALL bow, and exit.)

THE END

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

Discussion Questions

1. At the start, the boys thought Christmas was all about Santa. What did they learn?
2. Why do you think CAMI teased the boys with silly “camel carols”?
3. What gifts did the Wise Men bring to Jesus?
4. CAMI said there is a gift even better than a present wrapped up. What is it?
5. What is one way you could keep Jesus at the center of Christmas this year?

Related Bible Passages

Primary Text: Matthew 2:1–12 — Wise men from the east follow a star to Bethlehem, worship the child Jesus, and give him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (Summarized.)

Additional Scripture:

- Luke 2:1–20 — Jesus is born in Bethlehem and laid in a manger because there was no room for the family in the inn; angels announce his birth to shepherds. (Summarized.)
- Matthew 1:18–25 — The angel tells Joseph that Mary's child is from the Holy Spirit, and that he is to be named Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. (Summarized.)

Song Suggestions

- “We Three Kings” — The Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford — https://open.spotify.com/track/5h3LVwrD48mRLe07CvO0uk
- “Angels We Have Heard on High” — International Children's Choir — https://open.spotify.com/track/28vUiZbZyul9lFIsQVpl88
- “Away in a Manger” — International Children's Choir — https://open.spotify.com/track/4YRs1hXjsKAvq67v8qrOxW

Ministry Context

A perfect fit for the Sunday school Christmas program or any December gathering. Kids who already know the carols will love catching the camels' silly versions, and the play gently turns attention from presents and Santa to Jesus, the reason for the season. Consider singing the real carols together afterward.