

# Mom's Christmas

By Lindi Anderson

(Based on a true story)

*'Tis love we get when love we bring (Children's Songbook, 138–39).*

The Christmas season had just begun, and the little drugstore was almost dancing with decorations. Mom stopped to admire a porcelain nativity set on the store's glass counter. "Isn't it beautiful, Lindi?" Mom asked. She had wanted a nativity set for a long time, and this one gleamed softly as if someone had brushed each figure with Christmas magic.

After Mom walked away, I studied the delicate pastel pieces. Mary and Joseph gazed down at baby Jesus while shepherds, Wise Men, and angels watched. It was just what Mom had always wanted. Excited, I looked at the price tag, but a tight knot formed in my stomach. Fifty dollars! How could I ever come up with that much money?

As we walked home under a gray winter sky, I remembered the sparkle in Mom's eye as she held the baby Jesus figure. She deserved to have that nativity set! She had been a single mom since the divorce, and she didn't buy things for herself very often.

I kicked the snowdrifts as I formed a plan. I had steady babysitting jobs, and I could ask my older brother Ryan to help earn money. I wouldn't even need all the money at once—I could put the set on layaway and pay for it a little at a time. Maybe Mom could get her nativity set after all!

At home, I told Ryan my idea. He agreed to help, and we eagerly gathered all the money we had: five dollars. It was just enough to put the nativity set on layaway.

The next day I sprinted to the drugstore, afraid that someone had already bought my treasure. I pulled open the door, and my eyes raced to the glass counter in search of the set. It was still there! Relief flooded over me as the clerk took the precious nativity set to the back room until Ryan and I could pay the full price.

As Christmas grew closer, all Ryan and I could think about was Mom's special gift. Little by little, our earnings added up until we finally made our last payment. We brought the set home, wrapped it, and hid it under my bed. It would be a Christmas surprise!

On Christmas Eve, Ryan and I kept exchanging glances, hardly able to contain our secret. I went to bed more excited about our gift than I was about the presents I might get.

The next morning, I couldn't even pay attention to my presents. I just kept looking forward to the moment when we would bring out Mom's surprise.

When all the gifts from under the tree were opened, Ryan looked at me and nodded. "Hold on, Mom," he said. "I think we forgot one."

I grabbed the present from my room and set it on Mom's lap.

"Open it!" Ryan and I exclaimed.



Last Christmas I focused on giving part of myself by making presents. I worked hard, and it paid off because I felt excited for others when they got my gifts. A peaceful feeling came over me. I know it was the Spirit.

**Joanna G., age 10, Arizona**

# mas Surprise

Slowly, Mom tore off the bow and peeled back the wrapping paper. She gasped as she lifted out the baby Jesus figure and cradled it in her palm. “Thank you,” she whispered.

As I watched Mom’s face glow with joy, I realized that Ryan and I got the best gift that year. Mom’s nativity set was beautiful, but we had learned to forget ourselves and think of others—truly a gift to remember. ♦

*Mom really wanted the porcelain nativity, but could I come up with the money?*