

# Christmas Eve

# DROP-OFF

By Lisa Harvey

(Based on a true story)

*Freely ye have received,  
freely give* (Matthew 10:8).

Melissa ran her fingernails over the frosted bus window, making designs. It was so cold outside that the window soon frosted over again.

Camille poked Melissa. “Look what Kathy is wearing today,” she whispered, giggling.



Melissa’s eyes followed Camille’s pointing finger. Kathy sat by herself, her tangled hair sticking out of an old wool hat. Her coat was too short in the sleeves. Her canvas shoes had holes in the toes, and she wasn’t wearing socks. Kathy’s eyes were downcast.

“We shouldn’t be mean,” Melissa said. “I think her family must be really poor.”

“You don’t have to be rich to brush your hair,” Camille said.

“Shh!” Melissa warned.

When the bus stopped, Melissa watched Kathy get off the bus and walk with her little brother toward a small house. No Christmas decorations were visible. No lights. No tree. When Melissa got home, Kathy’s sad face wouldn’t leave her mind. It didn’t seem fair that some people had so much and others so little.

After dinner, Melissa went to their Christmas tree and

picked up each of her presents—one from Grandma, one from her best friend, and one from her little brother.

Melissa took her presents over to the table where her parents were talking. “I want to give these away,” she blurted out, before she could change her mind.

Mom and Dad looked surprised. “Why?” Dad asked. Melissa told them about Kathy.

“I know her family,” Dad said. “Their father died a few years ago, and there are four children in the family.”

“May I give her my presents?” Melissa asked.

“We can do even better than that,” Dad said.

Mom smiled and nodded. “We certainly can.”

Melissa’s family spent the next two days in a frenzy. They cut and decorated another tree, baked more Christmas goodies, and bought food for another Christmas dinner. They gathered clothes for the children—socks, shoes, hats, coats, gloves, shirts, pants, and dresses.

Then Melissa and her brothers opened their presents and rewrapped the ones they wanted to give away. Melissa’s present from her brother was a doll she had been wanting since September. She thought about giving Kathy one of her other presents instead. Then, thinking how happy it would make Kathy, she wrapped the doll in the prettiest paper she could find and put a big red bow on top.

On Christmas Eve, the family loaded all of the presents into the van. Dad drove slowly past Kathy’s house and stopped the van behind a big bush.

Melissa and her older brother, Trent, loaded their arms with presents





and followed Dad up the walk. Melissa heard the snow crunching loudly under her boots.

“Please don’t hear us,” she thought.

When they reached the front step, Dad set down the tree in its stand and a big box filled with food. Melissa and Trent hurried to set down their armloads too.

Dad rang the bell and whispered, “Run!”

Everyone ran to hide behind the bush. Melissa tried to quiet her loud breathing as she watched to see what would happen.

When Kathy’s little brother opened the door, he looked around, his eyes huge. Then he yelled, “Mom, Kathy, look! It’s Christmas! It’s Christmas!”

Then Kathy came to the door, looking astonished and happy. Melissa had never seen her smile like that before.

On the way home, Melissa felt like she was going to explode with joy.

“This is the best Christmas ever!” she said. ♦



**“There are those throughout the world who are hungry; there are those who are destitute. Working together, we can alleviate suffering and provide for those in need.”<sup>11</sup>**

President Thomas S. Monson

