

## THE CHRISTMAS GUEST

A legend adapted by Karen Taylor, Phoenix, Arizona

Narrator: It was the day before Christmas in this small village. A chill blew through the air as the villagers went about. Martin the Cobbler could always find work to do in his small shoemaker shop, but he stopped and laid aside his hammer to listen better as some children stopped to carol at his door.

Song by Children's Choir—"Ring Ye Bells of Christmas" or "Christmas Bells" from Primary Children's Songbook.

Narrator: The music gladdened Martin's heart. Two of the carolers stayed behind to visit with their friend the cobbler.

Home Teacher #1: "Martin, we know that you are a hard-working cobbler, but we have a gift to give you."

Home Teacher #2: "Have a Happy Christmas!" (They hand him a basket of food.)

Martin: "Oh, thank you, my friends. I have felt the Christmas spirit so strongly this year. This morning at dawn, when the rooster crowed, the Lord whispered to me that He would come and visit me today. So you can see I have done my best to shine up my small home for Him. And now I have some wonderful food to spread on my table for Him! Thank you!"

Narrator: And so the two friends went on their way and left Martin to joyously await his visit that day from the Lord.

Song (Solo by Martin): "Would I Know My Savior?" (music free for reproduction by Sally Deford.) or "When He Comes Again" (2nd verse)

Narrator: This was the happiest day Martin had known. Long since, his wife had passed away, his children living in other villages, and Martin had spent many lonely Christmas days. But he knew that this Christmas would be wonderful because the Savior himself would be the Christmas Guest.

(KNOCK at the door)

Narrator: It was Martin's neighbor, a seamstress, who was trying to raise her children all alone on a very small salary.

Neighbor: "Martin, I'm sorry to bother you. I seem to have run out of eggs and flour. I wanted to bake the children some cookies for tomorrow. Do you have some to spare?"

(Martin turns half away and looks at the full basket as the Narrator speaks.) Narrator: Martin knew without his neighbor telling him that the rest of her cupboards were also bare. He hadn't seen many customers in her door lately.

Martin: "Come in, come in! I think cookies are a wonderful idea! Here's some eggs and flour. And look what else! Someone left all this food here. What would one man need with all of this? You take it, as my gift to the children!"

Narrator: Martin walked his neighbor back to her home and children. He could hear the happy cries of laughter as she showed them her full basket.

(Martin escorts the neighbor to the stairs and she shows the basket to the choir kids, who ooh, aah, and laugh.)

Narrator: However, as Martin returned to his shop to wait for the Lord's visit, he saw the bare table. What could he offer the Savior when He came?

Song by Children's Choir: The Jesus Gift or "I'm Trying to Be Like Jesus"

Narrator: The afternoon passed quickly. At every sound, Martin looked up, expecting to see the Lord at his door. The scripture came to his mind as a prayer: "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen."

(KNOCK at the door. It's a very dirty, skinny, barefoot man, holding a pair of worn out shoes in his hand.)

Man: "Hey, I'm just passin' through, and I heard your hammer. Can you fix these old shoes? I don't have any money...(man turns away)...Oh, forget it, I won't bother you."

Martin: "No, come in, you've come to the right place! Your feet must be almost frozen. I have some shoes in my shop that I think will fit you just right. You don't want these any more. And...(Martin takes off his coat)...take this. It will keep you warm as you get to where you're going."

Narrator: With a surprised and grateful heart, one that hadn't softened for many a day, the traveler left Martin's shop. Martin returned to his bench and saw with dismay that the hours of the day had passed quickly. It was evening, and the Lord had not come as he had promised! Had Martin misunderstood? He bowed his head and wept for a few moments. Had he missed the precious visit? ...As he wept, sleep overcame him, and with it, a dream. He saw a hillside in Bethlehem.

Song by Soloist: Silent Night (1st verse only)

As the second verse is hummed by the children's choir, the dialog continues:

Lord: "Martin. Martin!"

Martin: "Lord, You have come!"

Lord: "Martin, I visited you many times today. How comfortable you made me feel when my feet were frozen. How happy you made me when my children were fed. Martin, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me...To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world."

Martin: "Lord!"

Children's Choir and Soloist sing "Christ the Savior is Born! Christ the Savior is Born!"

THE END