

CHARLIE Mary who?

UNCLE Mary Christmas!

[Everyone groans]

HANNAH Dad, you're so embarrassing.

[The director's choice of jokes can be substituted!]

SAM I know a better one - listen. What's brown, and sneaks around the kitchen?

ALL I don't know. What's brown and sneaks around the kitchen?

SAM Mince pies. *(Pause)* Mince... *spies* ?

[Everyone groans]

UNCLE I say, I say, I say. Why is a lion in the desert like Christmas?

ALL I don't know. Why is a lion in the desert like Christmas?

UNCLE Because of its SANDY CLAWS....

[Everyone groans / laughs]

OPTION - At this point in the play the director's choice of Christmas carols can be included, either for all to sing, or as carol-singers arriving at the door.

[The adults and extended family - choir - can mime party small talk while the dialogue below is taking place. RICKY re-appears, still subdued.]

HANNAH *(to Tessa)* I think it's really amazing to remember someone's birthday after 2000 years.

TESSA What? What are you on about?

HANNAH You know – people have been remembering Jesus's birthday for 2000 years...

TESSA Yeah! I suppose so!

HANNAH ...and it's hard enough to remember my mum's birthday, and she's only 38! *(Children giggle, looking at Mum)*

RICKY I'm no good at remembering birthdays. I can only remember my own.

CHARLIE But you remember Christmas Day...

SAM That's different - that's not a birthday.

CHARLIE Of course it is, silly! (*Sam pouts*)

TESSA Just think - people have been telling the story of Jesus' birthday
for *two thousand years!*

SAM It's a very long time for a story to last.

HANNAH Well it's a special story. It's not about just any old birthday.

[During the next song, HANNAH sets up a symbolic nativity tableau, wrapping her doll in a shawl and giving it to MUM to hold (as Mary), seating her centre stage, and moving DAD into position behind her as Joseph.]

A MIRACLE CHILD (☉Track 4 / 15)

TIME GOES SO FAST, TIME GOES SO SLOW.
IS IT REALLY TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO
A BABY LAY IN A STABLE
WHO STILL CAN MOVE US SO?

A STORY BEGINS, A STORY GROWS,
FOR HUNDREDS OF LIFETIMES IT FLOWS:
ACROSS THE WORLD WE REMEMBER
THAT TIME SO LONG AGO WHEN THERE WERE

ANGELS SINGING, SHEPHERDS PRAYING,
KINGS ALL KNEELING DOWN TO HONOUR HIM,
ANGELS SINGING, SHEPHERDS PRAYING,
KINGS ALL KNEELING DOWN TO HONOUR A CHILD, - A MIRACLE CHILD.

TIME GOES SO SLOW, TIME GOES SO FAST.
CAN IT BE TWO THOUSAND YEARS HAVE PASSED?
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING SPECIAL
THAT MAKES THE STORY LAST.
A MEMORY FADES, A MEMORY RETURNS;
THE CANDLE CONTINUES TO BURN.
ACROSS THE WORLD WE REMEMBER
THAT TIME SO LONG AGO - AND THERE ARE

CHOIRS SINGING, CHURCH BELLS RINGING,
LIGHTS A-SHINING DOWN AT CHRISTMAS.
CHOIRS SINGING, CHURCH BELLS RINGING,
LIGHTS A-SHINING DOWN AT CHRISTMAS TIME
FOR A MIRACLE CHILD,
A MIRACLE CHILD.

MUM Aah – it's a long time since *you* were this size, Ricky.

RICKY (*embarrassed*) Oh, Mum!
DAD He was quite sweet in those days.

TESSA And now look at him!

[Everyone laughs, RICKY pulls a face at TESSA.]