

Mama's Happy Christmas

5th Grade Fiction

Source: Public Domain, adapted by Center for Urban Education, may be used with citation.

It had seemed to the Johnson children that they would have a very sad Christmas. Mama had been very ill, and their father had been so anxious about Mama that he could not think of anything else. Everyone had been quiet for days. They did not want to wake Mama when she was napping. They did not even put up a Christmas tree because they didn't want to have one. Everyone felt very sad.

When Christmas Day arrived, they received great news. Mama said, "I'm feeling much better today, so I am coming downstairs!"

Mama looked so much better. Though she was still tired, she came downstairs and lay down on the couch. The family brought their presents out and opened them all together that morning.

"I am sorry I did not get a chance to buy presents for you," said Mama.

"This is the best present we could have received," said father. "You are feeling better."

"I am glad everyone feels well. I can tell you do because you are all smiling."

"Why, I NEVER had such a happy Christmas before," said Marie. "And it's just because you are well again."

"But what about dinner?" asked Mama.

"Mrs. Jones from next door is bringing it," said Marie. "She said she remembered how you had been so helpful when she had her new baby, and she was glad to be able to help you."

Mama said, "OK, then I will go upstairs and take a nap and come back down at dinner time."

Marie said to everyone else, "We should do something to make it a special night."

"Let's put on a play," Father said.

"Oh, yes!" they all cried, "It would be fun; we can make one up ourselves." So all day long, they were busy working on the play. First they planned the play—it would be a play about their own family. It would tell about how they moved to Chicago.

Then after dinner, when Mama was saying what a wonderful day she had, the children said, "We have a surprise for you. We wrote a play, and we would like to perform it now."

Then they put on the play. Each of them played themselves, except for Felicia, who played Marie, and Marie, who played Mama. Felicia was only one year old when they moved in, so they used one of her dolls to be the baby.

Mama laughed and laughed. The play was funny because everyone was so happy. They remembered how excited everyone had been to move to Chicago. They even had Mrs. Jones come in and play her part. She was their neighbor now and had been the first person they met when they moved in.

"I know this," said Mama, "I feel so much better. A loving family is definitely the best medicine, and a good neighbor helps everyone feel better."

Analyze and Infer Author's Point of View and Purpose - Fiction

Questions developed by Center for Urban Education for use by Chicago Public Schools 2008-2009.

Choose the best answer for each question.

1. What is the idea the writer wants you to understand?

- a. that when a mother is sick everyone worries
- b. that a family is important
- c. that Christmas without presents is sad
- d. that families move a lot

3. Why do you think the writer wrote this story?

- a. to tell about a family
- b. to tell about a problem
- c. to tell how people solved a problem
- d. to tell what is important

2. How do you think the writer feels about Mrs. Jones?

- a. She is a nosy neighbor.
- b. She is a good neighbor.
- c. She is a difficult person.
- d. She is a lonely person.

4. Why do you think the writer told how the neighbor helped the family?

- a. to show what people should do
- b. to show how the family needed help
- c. to show what happens in cities
- d. to show why they liked her

5. *Write your own answer to this question. Why would someone write a story like this?*

TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

Answers: *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	b	b	d	a

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.
They would write a story to help people understand what is important.