

## The Special Christmas Tree

written by Donna Mann

A lot of good stories start “Once upon a time” and since we want this to be a good story, that’s the way we want to begin.

A lot of good stories tell about people, animals, campfires and many other things and since we want this to be a good story that’s what we want to talk about.

A lot of good stories give clues to a mystery, or hints to a search or finding something important and since we want this to be a good story, that’s what we want to talk about.

A lot of good Christmas stories talk about trees, snow, bells, giving and receiving gifts, showing love to others, and since we want this to be a good Christmas story, that’s what we’re going to talk about.

A lot of good children’s stories have a message to help us understand ourselves, other people or nature around us. I like stories that help us value loyalty and promises; how to share with and help others. Since we want this to be a good children’s story, that’s what we’re going to talk about.

Once upon a time on a starry night, several children dress warmly to begin their search for a special Christmas tree. This is no ordinary night . . . and this is no ordinary forest into which they walk. It is December 12<sup>th</sup> and they have the task of finding

a special Christmas tree for their concert at the Agricultural Community Hall.

The children walk deeper into the forest. And they look carefully at each tree. They cannot find a tree they *all* like. They walk down back lanes and around ponds, but they cannot find a tree they *all* like.

They look at beautiful tall trees and attractive small trees. Some of the children cheer and others frown and put their fingers to their chin and think. They walk further and see wide full trees that look broad enough to hide in their branches. Some of the children cheer, others frown and put their fingers to their chin and think.

They ask all the friendly animals on their way, but the children cannot get any leads as to where they can find a special tree. They warm themselves by a camper's fire and think and think, but nothing comes to them about where to find a special tree.

Then the children stop and put their heads together. After talking for a while, they make a decision. **Together** they decide that it is not so important for everyone to like the same tree. As long as one of the children is not totally against choosing a particular tree, then they could decide to take that tree.

They know they must find a tree or there will be a lot of disappointed children at the concert. Even the adults will feel badly because a tree is important at this party—especially at this party, because they've promised there would be a tree. If they do not have a special tree, they will not have a story. Why? Because

this story is called, “The Children’s Special Christmas Tree”. If they do not have a special tree, they will not have the song because the song is all about putting up and decorating a tree. So, they have to find the right one.

They trudge through the deep snow. They breathe in the cold air. They walk along in the shadows of huge trees and pull their toques down over their ears to keep warm.

Then they see it. It stands alone; separate from the other trees. Behind it, the starry sky looks like a brilliant canopy. Some of the children think it’s too small. Some think it’s not full enough. Others think it’s not straight and it might not look like a special tree.

The children walk around it, look up at it, touch its branches and think. What should they decide? How can they make a choice? As they talk and listen to each other, one by one, they agree that this tree is different and maybe that’s what makes it special for them. And then they decide it is perfect for their party. One hour later, the children arrive at the hall, happy that they have found a tree. As they drag it into the big room, all the people begin to sing:

“Put it up, Put it up.  
What fun that will be  
Put up this special Christmas tree  
We’ll hang a star for everyone to see  
Put it up – Put it up – Let’s put it up.”

The children look at each other and giggle. They are happy. They look at the tree. It is beautiful. It's tall enough. It's full enough. It's straight enough. It is indeed a special Christmas tree.

The beautiful star sparkles like a million little lights from the top of the tree. They not only find a tree, but they find a special one. Everybody likes it. And then the children tell the story of how they looked for the tree and agreed together that THIS was the one to bring to the party. The people thank the children and they all begin to sing:

“Decorate, Decorate. What fun that will be  
To decorate this Christmas tree  
How happy we are – we can hang a star.  
Decorate, Decorate, and Decorate!”



After the concert is over and the children and their parents clean up the hall, they turn out all the lights. The tree branches curve up from the trunk forming a smile, and the star proudly hangs on the top of the tree and winks goodbye.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: I'm so glad you listened to this story. It's not always easy to make choices is it, especially if there are others considering if something is right or wrong. Most people have different ideas about what's important or even acceptable. The children in this story all agree they want a special Christmas tree, so they have a good beginning to make their choice. Do you think they made it a little easier to get their special tree by listening to one another? I'm just relieved that nobody disliked

the final choice, because then they would have had to start all over again. Because they had made an agreement....and it is so important to honour agreements.

Donna and I both agree that Christmas is a very special time of year and we hope you will have lots of fun with your family and friends. Email us if you like and let us know if something special happens to YOU over the holidays!

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