



BE A STAR!

THIS CHRISTMAS TIME



HOPE IS HERE!

SCRIPT

Joyful Josh

Props: party blower, string of fairy lights and a paper receipt.

(Josh runs round the gathered group tooting his party blower to make people laugh)

Happy Christmas, everyone! Are you having a lovely time? I wondered if you'd seen a couple of friends of mine? One is called Jack and the other Joe. Oh, you have? So, tell me, was Jack still a little grumpy? Bless him! I heard he was waiting for the bus for 27 minutes before he realised the buses weren't running today. And my other friend, Joe - I often call him Holy Joe because he's never without his Bible - not a criticism, just an observation. And to be honest, I wish I was more like him as he just seems to have the right thing to say at the right time. Anyway, if you see them, let me know, as I've got some fantastic news to share with them. *(Looks out of the side of his eye and raises his eyebrow before blowing his party blower one more time.)* Ah, would you like to know my news? Oh, go on then - it's too good not to share!

Drum roll, please ... I've got some new Christmas lights! *(Looks round surprised that people aren't more enamoured with this news.)* Come on, friends, this is big - huge, in fact. I've been saving up for them and I'm going to be able to decorate the whole of the outside of my house in lights. I'm so excited! OK, I can see that you're not understanding why this is so important. You see, my little boy is coming to stay for Christmas. He loves lights and I promised him we would have the best lit house in the street. The only way I can do that is to use these new lights. But thinking about it now, *(short pause)* I don't think I actually do have enough to light the whole house up. I may have got a bit over-excited about what 250 twinkling stringed lights can actually achieve.

Do you know what? I think I may have missed the point. I'm Joyful Josh, so I know what brings joy at Christmas - and it isn't lights on the house or even the most presents under the tree. It's actually knowing the real 'Light of the World'. Jesus is the Light of the World. He came as a baby to bring light into a dark world - and bring light he did. He changed the hearts of the



shepherds, he mesmerised the kings, and he brought so much light that the angels even sang a whole song about him! I think I need to have a rethink about those 250 twinkling lights after all. Perhaps the old Nativity set in the loft with a candle next to it might remind me and my boy about the true light of Christmas - Jesus.

You know what, I'm taking those lights back. I've still got the receipt (*pulls receipt from his pocket and waves it joyfully*) and instead I'm going to buy a little outside Nativity scene that I saw. It might not be huge, and you definitely won't see it from space, but every time me and my boy walk into the house this Christmas, we will remember what it's all about. I hope that it brings hope to my neighbours too. A little light in the darkness, a little lit Nativity - I think my son's going to like that a lot. I'll keep the party blower, though - that just helps get people's attention! (*blows the party blower*)

Happy Christmas!

SHORT THOUGHT

We have been reminded that we are here (look around and give each other a wave!), and God is here. We welcome you, Jesus! And now, just for a moment, we are going to think about how hope is here.

A question for you to think about. What gives you hope? Is it when someone encourages you, or maybe steps in the gap for you when you're struggling? Do you feel more hopeful when you've got people supporting you? Perhaps even the arrival of a new day gives you hope. Perhaps if we think about hope as being light, it might make more sense. You see, when people support us, encourage us and step in the gap for us, it does seem to make our day lighter, doesn't it?

'The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.'
(John 1:9-12 NIV)

Those verses give us visions of real hope. Jesus came as a baby to be the light of the world, and when he grew to be a man, he called himself the Light of the World. There were some who didn't realise that this baby Jesus was the Light of the World; they didn't recognise that he was the Saviour of the world. But the truth is that he was and he still is! What gives us hope is the fact that when we believe in Jesus, we then become children of God. That means that we do have a supportive friend in Jesus, we do have someone who steps in the gap. It's Jesus, and we do have someone to encourage us throughout all the days of our life!

We may not be able to physically see him, but the baby Jesus grew to be our Saviour, died on the cross and came back to life. So that's why hope is here, because Jesus is with us right now!

This Christmas we pray that you will know hope, that you will know Jesus, and that you will know that you have a home here at The Salvation Army.

PRAYER

Loving God,

Thank you for the gift of Christmas and for sending Jesus, the Light of the World and the source of our hope. At Christmas we remember and celebrate that you always keep your promises.

Through the birth of Jesus, you brought hope into the world, a hope that still shines today. When we are unsure about what lies ahead, help us remember that Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us, guiding us and holding us in your love.

Thank you that, because of Jesus, we can face tomorrow with confidence, trust in your goodness, and hold on to the hope you give us.

Amen.