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Ring Those Bells!

By Lois Walker
One Version

A Choral Reading/Readers
Theater Script for
Intermediate
Readers

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CH-30/I-87

Ring Those Christmas Bells!

A Readers Theater/Choral Reading Script About Who Brings the Christmas Gifts in America/Canada, England, Holland, Sweden, Italy, and Iceland

By Lois Walker

POETRY AND PROSE

This script has been written with both poetry and prose sections. The poetry sections need to be read to a beat. The prose sections do not.

RHYTHM IN THE POETRY SECTIONS

To find the proper rhythm in the poetry sections, first read-aloud and clap through the sections as you go. Each *underlined word or word part* falls directly on a beat. As you read, clap on each underlined word, keeping the rhythm steady. Be careful not to read too fast! This is a rehearsal technique and readers will not clap throughout these sections during performance. **NOTE:** During the chorus of this script the readers are actually asked to clap in a certain place during performance. This is indicated by (*clap*) in the text.

POETRY SECTIONS are read by all readers.

PROSE READERS

For the prose sections, you can use as many readers as you want. The reader parts are formatted and numbered up to 12, but the reader parts are not assigned after the second verse. You may use from 6 (the same 6 readers read all 6 verses) to 36 readers (a different set of 6 readers read each of the 6

verses), or any combination in between. Your choice will depend upon the size and needs of your classroom. You might divide the lines up between 6, 12, 18, 24, 30, or 36 different reader parts. Simply change and/or add readers numbers below.

EASY TO SHORTEN OR LENGTHEN

If you find 6 verses too long for your purposes, you can easily skip a county or two. Students will read the ALL CHORUS, then skip to the whatever verse is appropriate. If you want to add a county, ask your students to create their own 4 line introductory poem for the new county, then research and create 6 new prose lines for the new country. The ALL CHORUS remains the same throughout. Make sure you use the last ALL CHORUS (page 10) to end the reading.

(The object below is to read-aloud and read so that you sound like the bell sounds you are reading):

CHORUS

ALL: Tinkle, tinkle, ring bells
 Jingle, jingle, sing bells
 Gong! (clap) Chime!
 It's almost Christmas time.

VERSE 1

ALL: Ring those bells

The American Way
(or Canadian Way)
Those Christmas bells,
Here's what they say...

Santa Claus
Soon will appear
With a "Ho-Ho" and "Oh,
Have you been good this year?"

READER 1: The American (*Canadian*) version of the Santa Claus came from the Dutch legend of Sinter Klaas.

READER 2: That story was brought to North America by Dutch settlers many years ago.

READER 3: This Dutch-American Santa became truly American when he was described in a 1823 poem.

READER 4: That poem was named "The Night Before Christmas" and was written by Clement Clarke Moore.

READER 5: Moore not only named all of Santa's reindeer, but described Santa as a jolly old elf.

READER 6: He's still a jolly old elf today and known all over the world!

CHORUS

ALL: Tinkle, tinkle, ring bells

Jingle, jingle, sing bells
Gong! (clap) Chime!
It's almost Christmas time.

VERSE 2

Ring those bells
The English Way
Those Christmas bells,
Here's what they say...

Father Christmas
Dressed in white and red
Used to dress in green
Yes, that's what is said.

READER 7: A long time ago, Father Christmas dressed in green and was part of an old English midwinter festival. He dressed in green to remind people that spring was coming!

READER 8: Today, Father Christmas brings gifts to the children in England.

READER 9: He is based on a real person, St. Nicholas. St. Nicholas was a very shy man and wanted to give money to poor people without them knowing about it.

READER 10: So, one day, he climbed the roof of a house and dropped a purse of money down the chimney.

READER 11: The money landed in the stocking a girl had put by the fire to dry!

READER 12: This may be the reason Father Christmas comes down the chimney and places gifts in children's stockings.

CHORUS

ALL: Tinkle, tinkle, ring bells
Jingle, jingle, sing bells
Gong! (clap) Chime!
It's almost Christmas time.

VERSE 3

Ring those bells
The Danish Way
Those Christmas bells,
Here's what they say...

Sintirklass arrives by boat,
Then rides a white horse.
And every child fears
Black Peter, of course!

READER Sintirklass arrives in Holland on December 6th.

READER Children leave a wooden shoe filled with hay and carrots for the donkey he brings with him.

READER The donkey carries Sintirklass's gifts. Once the donkey eats the food, Sintirklass leaves gifts for the children in the empty wooden shoes.

READER Good children are given gifts, but bad children are turned over to Sintirklass's helper, Black Peter.

READER Black Peter has a big book that tells which children have been bad and which have been good.

READER And the bad children are chased by Black Peter with a stick!

CHORUS

ALL: Tinkle, tinkle, ring bells
 Jingle, jingle, sing bells
 Gong! (clap) Chime!
 It's almost Christmas time.

VERSE 4

Ring those bells
The Swedish Way
Those Christmas bells,
Here's what they say...

Long ago, a Christmas elf
Or a Christmas gnome
Made all the children happy