



## A Lesson on Mama's Happy Christmas by Natalie Lebron

**Grade Level:** Grade 4

**Subject Area:** English Language Arts

**Lesson Length:** 1 hour 30 minutes

**Lesson Keywords:** Reading, writing, Mama's Happy Christmas

**Lesson Description:** The goal of this lesson is to give students the opportunity to use reading and writing habits they've been practicing on a regular basis to understand and summarize the main ideas of the storyline. By reading and rereading the passage closely, and focusing their reading through a series of questions and discussion about the text, students will define key vocabulary, analyze the order of events, name the the problems and solutions, and lastly identify how and why the Johnson family had a happy Christmas. I will also give them an opportunity to reflect and write freely on their own personal experiences.

### Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.3: Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.7: Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2: Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.5: Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.8: Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.4.4a: Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1c: Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., for instance, in order to, in addition).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3e: Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 4 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.4a: Use context (e.g., definitions, examples, or restatements in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.6: Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal precise actions, emotions, or states of being (e.g., quizzed, whined, stammered) and that are basic to a particular topic (e.g., wildlife, conservation, and endangered when discussing animal preservation).

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## Lesson Content: Book/Story/Reading Passage

**Instructions:** Please read the following reading passage as many times as needed (aloud and silent) before starting to go through other lesson pages. Understanding the content of this passage is very important since the lesson activities will be all about this content. Feel free to print the passage if needed.

### Mama's Happy Christmas by

**Content:** 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 put up a Christmas tree because they didn't want to have one. Everyone felt sad.

When Christmas Day came, they got good news. Mama said, I'm much better today. I am coming downstairs.

Mama looked much better. She still was tired. But she came downstairs. She lay down on the couch. The family brought their presents out and opened them that morning.

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

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

I am glad everyone feels good. 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, 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. So all day long, they were busy. 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 good day she had, the children said, We have a surprise for you. We wrote a play. Here it is.

Then they put on the play. Each of them played themselves. But Felicia played Marie, and Marie 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 much better. A loving family is the best medicine. And a good neighbor helps everyone feel better.

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## Task 1: Vocabulary

**Instructions:** Please complete the following vocabulary activity by choosing the correct meaning of each word selected from the passage and use of each word correctly in a sentence.

**Q: 1 WordPhrase:** ill **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** The author in our story says, "Mama had been very ill..." What does the word ill mean?

- A: Healthy
- B: Rude
- C: Friendly
- D: Sick

**Question:** Which one of the sentences below uses the word "ill" correctly?

- A: Abigail loves when she is ill because she can run, sing and dance.
- B: Abigail was so happy at how ill her family treated her on her birthday.
- C: Abigail made friends that were kind and ill to her on her first day of school.
- D: Abigail had to go to the doctor because she felt ill.

**Q: 2 WordPhrase:** anxious **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** The author in our story says, "Mama had been very ill, and their Father had been so anxious about mama that he could not think of anything else..." What does anxious mean?

- A: worried
- B: carefree
- C: excited
- D: playful

**Question:** Which one of the sentences below uses the word "anxious" correctly?

- A: Bill was anxious to eat his pizza because its his favorite food.
- B: Bill was very anxious to see his grade because he did not do well on the test.
- C: Bill always feels anxious around his father because of how safe he feels.
- D: Bill felt anxious to be meet his favorite baseball player since he knew he would get an autograph.

**Q: 3 WordPhrase:** play **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** The author in our story says, "Let's put on a play"... What does play mean?

- A: Challenge
- B: Performance
- C: Dance
- D: Skip

**Question:** Which one of the sentences below uses the word "play" correctly?

- A: The children were playing outside.
- B: I play softball and basketball
- C: We went to the theatre to watch the play Romeo and Juliet.
- D: We heard someone playing a guitar.

**Q: 4 WordPhrase:** Planned **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** The author in our story says, "First they planned the play"... What does planned mean?

- A: To prepare
- B: To see
- C: To hear
- D: To finish

**Question:** Which one of the sentences below uses the word "planned" correctly?

- A: Elizabeth planned the guitar very well because she has played for 20 years.
- B: Elizabeth planned to go to the zoo but because it was raining she went to the movies.
- C: Elizabeth planned the dishes away.
- D: Elizabeth planned the party well and ran out of food.

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## Task 2: Forum Discussion

**Instructions:** This discussion forum will have questions for students to respond. Read the posted questions, and respond to each. Students are responsible for posting one initial and two peer responses for each topic.

### 1 - A sad Christmas for the Johnson family

Why did it seem that the Johnson children would have a very sad Christmas? Which sentences support your answer?

### 2 - A surprise for Mama

What did the Johnson family plan with their neighbor to surprise the Mama? How did this make her feel?

### 3 - The Johnson's Christmas Ending

In the final paragraph the Mama makes a statement, explain some of the events that happened throughout the day that would make her feel that way. Did the family end up getting a happy Christmas? If so, why?

### 4 - Mama's play

The Johnson's created a surprise for the Mama, who played who in the surprise? Why was the neighbor at the Johnson's home?

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Task 3: Writing Activity

**Instructions:** For your writing assignment, explain why the Johnson family had a Happy Christmas. Please list some of the examples written by the author which support your answer. Then write about your favorite Christmas and why. Submit your assignment below in no less than 200 words.

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