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Scene 1

(As **Intro Music** plays (CD track 8) the cast members enter and take their places for the opening song – see staging suggestions.)

Song 1 – What Does Christmas Mean To You? (CD track9, lyrics p16) (Whole Cast)

(As **Intro Music** plays again (CD track 10) the cast members sit. A smaller stage to one side is set up to represent a Christmas classroom – see staging suggestions/scenery. Six children sit at tables, while a teacher stands.)

Teacher ~ Children, as you know, we’ve only a few days left until school finishes for the Christmas holidays.

Children ~ Yessssssss!

Teacher ~ Now, I know you’re excited, but we do still have work to do.

Children ~ Noooooooooo!

Teacher ~ I’m afraid so. Today we’ll be doing some writing, but first I’d like us discuss ideas that will help us produce a piece of work with this title – ‘What Christmas Means To Me’. So, who’d like to start things off?

Child 1 ~ Well, what’s there to discuss? It’s easy – Christmas means presents! Loads and loads of presents!

Child 2 ~ And loads and loads of food!

Child 3 ~ And loads and loads of cool stuff to watch on the telly!

Child 4 ~ And loads and loads of kisses under the mistletoe!

Other children ~ Eurgh!

Child 5 ~ It means getting all excited on Christmas Eve, watching the clock and wishing it would go faster!

Child 6 ~ Well, I’ll tell you what it means to me – getting dragged round town doing last minute Christmas shopping! I said to Mum, “Don’t worry, I’m sure Santa’s got it covered.” Does she listen? No. Christmas Eve will be a mad race round the shops watching her get more and more worked up! I can’t wait…….

(The action moves to the main stage. Three shoppers, holding baskets of shopping, stand in a queue at a checkout – see staging suggestions/scenery. A checkout assistant sits at a till, struggling to scan one of the items of Shopper 1, who has a child with her.)

Assistant ~ (calling for help and holding up a large bag of Haribo sweets) Can I get a price check on an item? (to Shopper 1) Sorry for the delay, Madam.

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Shopper 1 ~ *(surprised)* Hang on a minute, I don't remember.....*(to child)* Ooh, you little....How many times have I told you about taking things off shelves and putting them in mummy's basket when she's not looking?! Well OK, seeing as it's Christmas you can have them.

Shopper 2 ~ *(impatiently to Shopper 3)* I've got a shopping list as long as my arm to get through before the end of today. I've still no turkey for Christmas dinner tomorrow. They're all sold out here, so I need to get to ASDA before it closes, but it looks like I'll be stuck in this queue 'til New Year!

Shopper 3 ~ I've still got Christmas presents to buy! Oh, why do I never learn? It's the same every year. I always leave it until the last minute! I should be more like my sister – she does all her Christmas shopping in the January sales!

(A man, Shopper 4, enters carrying a basket. He speaks into a mobile phone.)

Shopper 4 ~ Hello...it's me...Yes I know this is the sixth time in ten minutes, but I can't find it...Yes I've looked everywhere...I don't want to ask, everyone seems so busy....Yes, I know it's for your mother, but couldn't we just give her a box of chocolates? They've got a wide selection here...But I've told you, I can't find it...Yes, near the deli counter, I've looked there...What?...Which shop?! Well why didn't you say? Right! I'll pay for this stuff then I'll go there...No, I won't forget the sprouts. Where are they again? *(holding the phone away from his ear and wincing in pain)*...No need to shout...What was that? Sorry, dear, *(pretending)* it's a bad signal...I'll have to go. Bye! *(closing his phone and joining the queue)* Phew!

(Shopper 5 enters, looking quite relaxed, and joins the end of the queue.)

Assistant ~ *(still holding up the sweets and calling out)* Still waiting for a price check!

Shopper 1 ~ *(to Shopper 5)* I hope you're not in a hurry? This is taking forever!

Shopper 5 ~ No, not at all. I've just finished off some last minute present-buying. Everything on the list ticked off – a stress-free Christmas shopping trip!

Shopper 2 ~ How do you manage that? You can't have many people to buy for.

Shopper 5 ~ Actually, I've a very large family and a wide circle of friends.

Shopper 3 ~ So what's your secret?

Shopper 5 ~ Socks! *(taking a handful of different pairs of socks from her/his basket)*

Shoppers 1, 2, 3 & 4 ~ Socks?

Shopper 5 ~ The best present in the world! I buy socks for everyone. Thermal socks for my parents, football socks for my nephew, Barbie socks for my god-daughter, woollen booties for the baby, ski socks for my brother and his wife, a 3-pack of black socks for my cousin who works in the bank....it's easy. I'm in and out of the shop in no time.

Shopper 3 ~ Well, I'd never have thought of that. What a great idea.

Shopper 4 ~ *(speaking into phone)* Hello, it’s me again. Listen, how about we get your mother some socks? They’ve got lots here to choose from and....*(holding the phone away from his ear and wincing in pain)*...OK, OK, no socks! *(closing his phone)*

Assistant ~ *(still holding up the sweets and calling out)* Still waiting for a price check!

Shoppers 1, 2, 3 & 4 ~ Tut!

*(We hear a **Store Announcement** (CD track 11))*

Announcement ~ Ladies and gentlemen, the store will close in ten minutes. Please would you proceed to the checkout. Thank you, and merry Christmas!

(Suddenly a large crowd of shoppers rush on and jostle for position in the queue. Shoppers 1, 2, 3, & 4 look annoyed.)

Shopper 2 ~ This is ridiculous! Nobody can move! Do you know what they should do...and I can’t believe nobody’s thought of this...to stop all this chaos why can’t they just move Christmas to a time when the shops aren’t so busy!

Song 2 – I’d Rather Stay At Home *(CD track12, lyrics p17)*
(Shoppers supported by whole cast)

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