

The Getting Tree

By Hannah Holt
(Based on a true story)

"We a gift before thee lay" (*Children's Songbook*, 39).

Tyler held the church door open, and Mom hurried inside. They were late for the ward Christmas party, so Tyler could only glance at the new Christmas tree in the foyer. But there was something different about the tree. It didn't have any lights. Or lots of ornaments. Instead there were little papers hanging from the branches.

If the tree in the foyer had gifts, Tyler wanted first pick.

"Welcome," said the bishop from the front of the room. "Before we start our program, I have a special announcement . . ."

Tyler's little sister, Rose, started fussing, so Tyler leaned down to help her. Over the noise, Tyler thought he heard the bishop say something like "the Getting Tree" and "take a tag." If the tree in the foyer had gifts, Tyler wanted first pick. While everyone else watched the program, Tyler slipped away before the end.

Carefully Tyler lifted a paper off a branch. The first tag read, *Girl: Winter coat—Size 5*. He put it back. The next read, *Grocery Gift Card*. Tyler worried they might all be boring gifts. But then he found just the right one. *Boy: Big Whirl Helicopter*. He stuffed the tag in his pocket and raced to find Mom.

"There you are," Mom said. "It's almost time to leave."

"OK," said Tyler. "But first, I picked this from the Getting Tree. How do I get my helicopter?"

"Oh, honey," said Mom. "It's not the Getting Tree. It's the *Giving* Tree. The tags are gifts for families in need."

Tyler's cheeks burned. He wanted to put the tag back, but other people had gathered around the tree. After church tomorrow, when no one was looking, he would put it back.

The next day Tyler's Primary teacher told about the Wise Men who brought gifts to Jesus. "What could you give Jesus for Christmas?" she asked.

Tyler closed his fingers around the gift tag in his pocket. He didn't feel embarrassed anymore. He felt like he wanted to give. The only problem was he didn't have gold, frankincense, or myrrh. But maybe he could earn some money for a Big Whirl Helicopter.

As soon as Tyler got home, he dumped the money from his piggy bank on the bed. He had \$2.47—not enough. He asked Mom if he could do chores for money, but she said, "Not on Sunday." The gift had to



be turned in by next week. Could he earn the money in time?

While he thought, Rose brought him the *Friend* magazine. As Tyler read to her, he saw the answer to his problem. The *Friend* had a story about kids running a hot-chocolate stand to earn money to donate.

"Mom?" Tyler asked. "Could I set up a cocoa stand tomorrow?"

"Maybe. Why?" Mom asked.

"To earn money for the Giving Tree present."

Mom gave him a hug. "Sure. I'll help you."

The next day Tyler put a table and chairs outside. Mom boiled water, and Tyler mixed in the cocoa. Rose even helped by holding a sign. By the end of the afternoon, Tyler's nose was cold and his fingers felt stiff, but he had enough money for the Big Whirl Helicopter.

Tyler felt happy all the way to the store. He smiled as he wrapped the gift and dropped it off to the bishop. He knew now it was called the Giving Tree, but the feeling he had inside was like a special gift too. At least in that way, it really was the Getting Tree. ♦

The author lives in Oregon, USA.



My friends and I got together for an art camp. We had lots of fun creating art together! Then we had an art sale to raise money for a children's charity we picked. Everyone loved seeing what we made.

Tess H., age 7, Virginia, USA