

## WORK AND PLAY SECTION

### WRITING A CHRISTMAS SONG

OUR TEACHER can sing very well, and play the piano, too. So we have nice music in our room at school.

Shortly before Christmas she told us we could write a Christmas song. And we did. It was a real nice song. This is how we did it.

Of course we all knew the Christmas story about the birth of Jesus, and the shepherds, and the star. We talked about it, and then our teacher said, "Who can think of a good beginning for our song?"

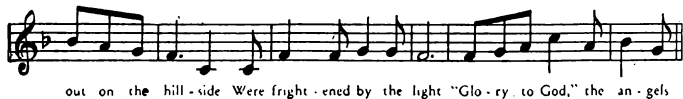
Soon Francisca sang to her own tune, "A star was shining so brightly." The class liked this so well that they sang it several times. We talked about the star, since that was the theme of the song Francisca had started. Our teacher asked such questions as these: "Where did the

star shine?" and "When did it shine?" and "Why did it shine?" The words "In Bethlehem one night" were sung at once by Juanito to his own tune.

When we had this much of our song prepared (our teacher called it the first *phrase*), it was suggested that we repeat that melody. So we hummed the tune a number of times in order to keep it in mind.

Finally Crispina began singing to the second phrase—as our teacher called it—the words "The shepherds", but no one could complete the line. Then our teacher asked us where the shepherds were and what they were doing. Elena thought of the remainder of the line, so it was like this: "The shepherds out on

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### WRITING A SONG

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the hillside."

Our teacher said, "How did the shepherds feel when they saw the star?" Some one said they were frightened by the light of the bright star, so we used a part of that answer to complete the line. Now we had this much of our song:

*A star was shining  
brightly  
In Bethlehem one  
night.*

*The shepherds out on  
the hillside  
Were frightened by  
the light.*

We sang it several times and decided to change the last tone, so it would have a better ending. This satisfied everyone. We copied the words on the blackboard, and our teacher wrote the music above the words.

The next day we decided to write more words. Francisca surprised us by singing "Glory to God" to a different tune, which sounded so much like a Christmas carol that everybody wanted it to be a part of our song. Many of the pupils in our room tried to finish the phrase. Elena's words, "The angels sang," seemed most fitting, and Alberto sang a tune that suited her words.

We could not get back to

our original melody until we had made one more phrase for the part. "Peace on earth, good will to men" was what Jose suggested, but the class insisted on having the end word rhyme with the word "sang." We thought hard, and Juan finally suggested "rang." David then quickly completed the line by saying "their voices rang." Then we repeated our new tune for this line. Our teacher said it was a suitable tune, because it had the same rhythm as our first melody.

Our song had still not told the shepherd story. David said it should tell of the angels' message. That sounded like a good title, so we named our song *The Angels' Message*.

Then our teacher repeated to us the Christmas story. After she had finished, she wrote on the blackboard expressions which we remembered, such as "wonderful tidings," "Saviour," "joyful," and "unto you is born."

We all wanted to say something about "wonderful tidings" next, and finally Ciriaco suggested this line: "We bring you wonderful tidings." We decided to sing that to the first part of our original tune.

We thought of the words for the rest of our song without any difficulty.

The words of the middle part of our song were these: "Glory to God," the angels sang;

*"Peace on earth," their  
voices rang.*

And the last part of our song had these words:

*We bring you wonderful  
tidings,*

*For unto you is born  
Christ, the Lord, our  
Saviour*

*This joyful Christmas  
morn.*

Our teacher told us that the music of our song was arranged by what is called the A-B-A arrangement of a song; that is, we composed a complete melody—that one is called Melody A. Then we thought of a new melody—the new one is called Melody B. And then we repeated our Melody A. In that way we had A-B-A.

After our completed song had been written on the blackboard—words and music—we sang it again and again. Some of the pupils in our room wanted to copy it.

"What shall we do with our song, now that it is completed?" our teacher asked.

"Let us sing it at our Christmas program," some one suggested. So we used it at our program, and everyone liked it.

We hope that you will like it also and will sing it.—ADAPTED.