# A Different Christmas

By Jane McBride Choate
Based on a true story

*It would be hard not seeing Mom, but Christmas could still be good.*

*"Remember him, as you picture Christmas this year" (*Children's Songbook, *50).*

It was almost Christmas, but Diego wasn't feeling very excited. This was the first Christmas since his parents got divorced. And nothing felt the same. He and his brother, Samuel, wouldn't even get to see Mom this Christmas.

"Everything's different," Diego said to Dad.

"I know." Dad's eyes were sad. "Sometimes things change before they get better." He was quiet for a bit, then smiled. "Christmas *will* be different this year, but that doesn't mean we won't have some good times. We'll still be celebrating the birth of the Savior."

Diego nodded. It would be hard not seeing Mom, but maybe Christmas *could* still be good, just as Dad said. Diego wanted to help make this Christmas a happy one.

He went to his room to think. Sometimes for Christmas they did a family service project. What could they do this year?

Diego looked around his room. He saw a toy car he didn't play with anymore. He picked it up and spun the wheels. It was still really good. Maybe he and Dad and Samuel could give some toys to kids who didn't have any! He found a few other toys and put them in a bag with the car.

When Diego finished, he took the bag to Samuel's room. "Can I help you clean your room?" he asked. "It's a surprise for Dad."

Samuel looked up from the picture he was drawing. "Sure."

The boys worked together to clean Samuel's room. Diego told him about the plan. They found a few toys that Samuel didn't play with and added them to the bag.

When they were done, they carried the bag downstairs. "Dad," Diego said, "we found some toys we don't play with anymore. Can we give them to kids who don't have any toys?"

Dad looked surprised and happy. "That's a great idea! Let's take them to the homeless shelter this afternoon."

Visiting the shelter was fun. Diego and Samuel got to play with some of the kids while Dad talked to the grown-ups.

On the way home, Dad asked what else they could do to make this Christmas special.

"Last Christmas we made treats for our neighbors," Diego said.

"We could do that," said Dad. "Let's go buy stuff to make cookies."

Samuel thought cookies were a *great* idea.

The boys helped Dad shop for the ingredients at the store. At home they made the dough and cut out star and tree shapes. Diego and Samuel frosted the cookies yellow and green. Then they took little bags of cookies to their neighbors.

At the end of the day, Diego was tired but happy. He and Samuel and Dad had done things together as a family and had helped others. Dad was right. Christmas was different, but it was still good. ■

*The author lives in Colorado, USA.*

**BEING AN EXAMPLE**

My dad doesn't go to church, but I try to keep the commandments when I am at his house by my example of how I live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Dashel P., age 6, Colorado, USA**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KRISTIN KWAN