

MERCYME THE CHRISTMAS SESSIONS

Fully embracing the Christmas spirit, MercyMe members decided to share their favorite Christmas song from *The Christmas Sessions* and favorite Christmas memories with you.


Bart Millard (lead vocals): *my favorite song is "Joseph's Lullabye." **Favorite Christmas memory...** Shannon and I married on November 8, 1997. I was making a whopping \$11,000 a year. Needless to say our first Christmas was a little small, but it was one of the best times of my life. Waking up on Christmas morning, turning on Bing Crosby, sitting in our home pants (pajamas for those who don't speak Bart and Shannonese,) brewing up the finest swiss-miss hot chocolate around and taking turns opening our few gifts. And of course after every gift, you have to take a picture of the goofiest face possible to express your excitement. Now that we have Sam and Gracie, Christmas has changed quite a bit, but I will never forget those first few years with just Shannon and me. Thank God for the little things that keep us smiling.*

Mike Scheuchzer (guitar): *my favorite song from the record is "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" The story behind the writing of that song is amazing...the war, and hardships that Longfellow had endured and to still be able to find hope...that's what Christmas is all about...hope. **Favorite Christmas memory...** there are too many to pick out just one... I do remember when I was probably 5 years old I wanted this rocking horse like a friend of mine had...not just a little wooden one...this thing was spring loaded. Well it wasn't under the Christmas tree that morning, but when I went back to my room after opening all of my loot...there it was...I don't remember my reaction, but my parents both told me I was awestruck...that I wouldn't even touch it because I couldn't believe my eyes....over a rocking horse.....my how times have changed.*

Barry Graul (guitar): *my favorite song on the record is also "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day." **Favorite Christmas memory...** As I think about Christmas as a child, several memories come to mind. Christmas has always been about family spending as much time together as possible wherever possible. Usually that means some last minute shopping and staying up late wrapping gifts with my mom. And, now after watching home videos, I realize that while I was dreaming of the next day's events, my parents never slept because they were busy assembling gifts for their three children. I now share that experience with them and look forward to it, but feel the need to drink large amounts of coffee when the thoughts arise. If there had to be one special Christmas morning memory, it would be brand new pajamas and slippers awaiting my brother and I as we braced ourselves for the brilliant, beaming, blinding lights on my Dad's Super 8 movie camera that I think I still see spots from to this day. Second only to that is the Christmas I received my first guitar, giving me musical bliss ever since.*

Robby Shaffer (drums): *my favorite song on the album is "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day." **Favorite Christmas memory...** are the things we seem to do each year. I wouldn't call them traditions, but things that we tried to do as a family at least once during the holidays. One of those things were we loved to drive around town and look at Christmas lights together. We got to where we knew exactly where the best lights and displays were. We would pile in our mini van, throw a Christmas tape in the deck and cruise around for hours. I remember my mom then staying up well past when we went to bed to finish wrapping presents Then we would get up, take some pictures, open presents and my grandparents would make the rounds and see what all the grand children had received for Christmas. Then we would pile in the car and go to my Grandparents for family Christmas and dinner.*

Nathan Cochran (bass): *I would have to say that my favorite song off the album is "I Heard The Bells on Christmas Day. I had honestly not heard of this song until we found it looking for songs for the album. It's not your typical happy-go-lucky Christmas song, but it does have great*



meaning. The story behind it not only gives great substance to the holiday season but points all of the attention back where it should be, to our Lord of humble birth. **Favorite Christmas memory...** are usually events and people and not the gifts. But the one that sticks in my mind the most, is about a gift. It was the first time I remember asking for a specific gift. I asked for a gray, leather bound bible. King James version; guess I thought I would learn more if the words sounded cool. Oh yes, and it must have the thumb tabs. Thumb tabs ROCK! Especially when you are racing your friends in Sunday school to see who can find the scripture first! Well, I got vinyl covered cardboard and not leather. But oh well, the words were the same. If I went back to my parents house I could probably find that bible tucked away in a closet. Probably still has the residue of the stickers that I so thoughtfully stuck all over it. And all the marks from the stickers that didn't make it through the summer heat as I tended to leave my favorite bible in the back window of my parents red Grand Am. Maybe I should go find it? See what scriptures I marked as a young man. I am sure they will still speak to me today.

Jim Bryson (keys): my favorite song on the album is probably "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen." **Favorite Christmas memory...** is really hard to decide upon. Both my parents have passed away in the last 4 years so any memory that I have of them during the holidays is really cherished. One of my favorites is the year that my dad gave me his 22 rifle that he had for many years. Another would be of the many Church staff Christmas dinners that we had at our house. Since my Dad was the pastor our family hosted the dinners. Every year it was 30 or more people with the great smells of spiced tea, fresh brewed coffee, hot fresh rolls, and a huge roast fresh out of the oven. It was just a great time of fellowship and great food. Christmas is different now. My parents are gone but I have a two year old son that is just learning what Christmas is. My wife and I are expecting another child in February so this year we might not get to travel to be with family in other states but I'm sure we'll be enjoying the family time at our house. Everytime I think of Christmas I think of family, my faith, and just enjoying the holidays. Just the way it should be.

