

BEND DOWN THE TALLEST TREE

It's not Christmas yet, but not too early to start learning a carol or two. This song has the rare distinction of being both a Child ballad https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_Ballads and a Christmas carol. It dates back to at least the 15th century, where it is known to have been sung at the Feast of Corpus Christi [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corpus_Christi_\(feast\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corpus_Christi_(feast)). This is the version I learned from a 1961 Joan Baez record (Yes, a vinyl record. I still have it). The chords are slightly different from some other versions, but I love her treatment of it, which you can hear at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uc2-LR0Albc>.

THE CHERRY TREE CAROL

C					G
When Joseph was an old man, an old man was he					
F		C			E
He married Virgin Mary, the queen of Galilee					
F		C		G	C
He married Virgin Mary, the queen of Galilee.					

Joseph and Mary walked through an orchard green
There were berries and cherries, as thick as might be seen
There were berries and cherries as thick as might be seen.

Mary spoke to Joseph, so meek and so mild
Joseph, gather me some cherries, for I am with child
Joseph, gather me some cherries, for I am with child.

Joseph flew in anger, in anger flew he
Let the father of the baby gather cherries for thee!
Let the father of the baby gather cherries for thee.

Then up spoke baby Jesus, within Mary's womb
"Bend down the tallest tree, so my mother might have some"
"Bend down the tallest tree so my mother might have some."

Then bent down the tallest branch, it touched Mary's hand
Cried she, oh look thou Joseph, I have cherries by command
Cried she, oh look thou Joseph, I have cherries by command.