Charley Brown Convertible Christmas tree.

Christmas is almost here so let’s get this project moving. Because I’m involved in our local community church Christmas Play, I researched ideas. One site suggested watching Charley Brown, the Meaning of Christmas, to get some idea of using the KIS principle – Keep It Simple. It struck me that I could base a simple play around a Convertible Charley Brown Christmas tree. A Charley Brown Christmas Tree is centre stage, and is ridiculed by the kids when comparing it to a side stage commercial tree. As in the Charley Brown uTube clip, Lynas consoles Charley Brown by telling the real Christmas story after Charley Brown wonders what it is all about and rejects commercialism of this season. However, unlike the redecorating of the tree in the Charley Brown clip, the tree converts into a stable and it just happens that a baby Jesus and some Hay is located conveniently by.

This instructables is not about creating a detailed recipe but rather pictures that save a thousand words! Since it is meant to be a project that is low cost utilizing odd and sods, too much detail would be too prescriptive and force up the cost by specifying a set Bill of Materials. So here goes.....

The idea is to construct two cross pieces from 4X2 wood, in my case retrieved from discarded wooden bed ends. The dimensions are determined by the availability of material, however about 550mm overall would allow a Tree and a Stable feed box about 800mm high/long to be constructed. The two cross pieces are drilled with 25mm centre holes to take a 25mm shaft (aluminium tube salvaged from garden wiper snipper) which will be the stem of the tree and act as a spreader for the ends of the Manger animal feed box.

Eight pieces of 11X11 mm DAR (Dressed All Round) pine approximately 300mm long are nailed to two of the ‘upper legs’ of the cross pieces to make slots to take the side slats (80X12X800mm approximately) for the Manger.

**Assembly:** The two cross pieces are stacked on top of one another with the ‘slots’ arranged to make a stable base. The 25mm shaft is inserted and the side slats are arranged vertically around the shaft, held in place by a large ‘O’ ring (sewer pipe rubber seal) Small holes are drilled into the outer slats to take the leaves retrieved from a couple of bunches of artificial plastic flowers. A star taped to a spring is inserted into the centre shaft. Wire inserted into the spring will allow its drooping shape to be set. So much for the Charley Brown Christmas tree!

**Conversion to Stable:** The tree can be quickly dismantled into its component pieces. Reassemble into the Stable will only take a couple of minutes – easily achieved supervised by adults and assisted by children.

Firstly, set up the end pieces correctly orientated and insert shaft and a couple of the side slats. Next insert the threaded rod and secure the wing nuts to stabilise the structure. Insert the remaining slats and Bingo, we have a Manger! Some hay or a pillow and baby Jesus and the transformation is complete! Would there be a better way to decomercialise a Christmas tree and illustrate the true meaning of Christmas? And what’s more you have made a simple Nativity Play prop!