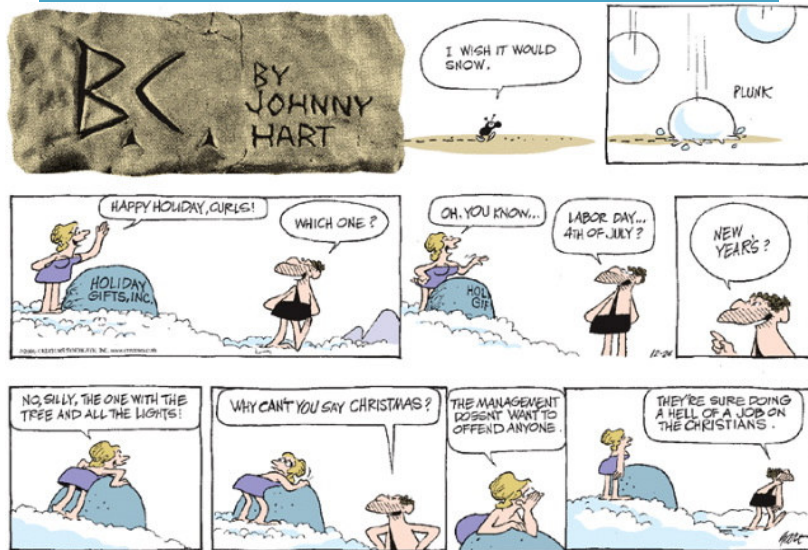


The Fun House



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Joy Rides

Friends for Eternity

A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice. -ISAIAH 42:3

St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, was born in Britain in the fourth century, the son of a local town councilman. He was raised in a religious home, but there is no historical indication that he had a relationship with Christ until he went through an unbelievable trial that transformed him.

When Patrick was sixteen years old he was kidnapped by Irish pirates and held captive for eight years. He escaped when he was twenty-four and returned to his family a changed man. He came back with a passion for God, with a deep commitment to Christ and a sense of divine calling on the rest of his life. He trained for ministry and spent himself in the cause of Christ. When he died at about seventy years of age, he left behind a moving account of his personal journey with God.

History bears witness to the countless ways in which even the harshest trials seem to carve God's initials on our souls and draw us close to his heart. I have talked to many people who acknowledge that they would never have chosen the path they found themselves on, but having walked that way they would never change it now.

God's love seeks out those whose hearts are breaking and whose faces are tear-streaked, and God our maker and his fragile human creations become friends for eternity.

Dear Father, thank you that even in the most painful moments of my life your love pursues us. Thank you that you know how fragile and bruised I am, and that you love me so tenderly. Amen.

~ Sheila Walsh (find more devotionals at www.sheilawalsh.com)



Here's The Scoop

December 2008

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10 Holiday Tips for the Working Woman ~ By Gail Hayes



Christmas can be a time of joy and relaxation if you make wise choices about your time, energy, and focus. Here are ten tips to help you "handle your business" and the holidays..

1. Let go of unrealistic expectations. There is no such thing as the perfect holiday. There will always be things like parties, late arrivals, missed deadlines, and bad hair days. Even during the holidays, things happen. Just take a deep breath, relax, and enjoy the ride.?
2. Do not over obligate yourself. You are not Wonder Woman. She did not have to meet deadlines, pay bills, take care of a family, or entertain a host of friends. Realize that you cannot be everything to everyone, especially during the holidays.
3. Set a deadline for when you will stop working. Avoid overtime during the holidays, if possible. As much as you can, decide when you will stop working and then stop! Prioritize your work, and when the list is completed, put on your coat, grab your purse and briefcase, and get out of the office. ?
4. Put your own name on your gift buying list. It's okay to buy yourself a gift. You work hard every day, and this is the time of year when you can give yourself a gift, too. Make sure it is something that fits your budget so it won't cause added stress.
5. It's okay to ask for help. Believe it or not, others do want to help. Being a super woman is lonely and often leads to mores stress. This is a time when even the most unpleasant coworkers will usually pitch in and help finish tasks at work. There's just something about the holidays that makes others want to be a part of a family.?

Continued on insert >>>

Imagination Station

Christmas Traditions That You Can Adopt

- Participate in the annual singing of Handel's Messiah or attend a performance of the Messiah. If your community does not perform the Messiah, purchase the tape or CD and spend an evening listening to the beauty of the music.
- Read aloud the Christmas Story from the Bible. Allow the children to act out the story with nativity pieces as it is read.
- Decorate a Jesse tree. A Jesse Tree is decorated with ornaments associated with Old Testament events, from creation to the birth of Jesus.
- On Christmas morning put baby Jesus into his manger. The nativity set has been set up previously, but since Jesus wasn't born until Christmas morning, the manger is empty until then. Light a candle & sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus before you open gifts.
- Pick community service workers who have to work on Christmas, i.e., police, firemen, doctors. Make them homemade gifts and lots of goodies and take it to them on Christmas.
- Hang an extra stocking for Jesus and place "love notes" in it to signify your gift (material or personal) to the Savior. You could give gifts to charities like Angel Tree, Operation Christmas Child, World Vision, or you could give locally to a Veteran, nursing home resident or other family in need. On Christmas morning, empty Christ's stocking first and reflect on His gift to us, then enjoy the santa-stuffed stockings.
- Only give each family member 3 gifts representing the three gifts given to Jesus. It will cut down on the commercial part of Christmas and the kids get 3 things they really want instead of a bunch of little stuff that they lose or break in a few days.

Tomorrow Land

Mark Your Calendars!

Don't forget to make room in your schedule for our special events!

- Tuesday, January 27th - MOPS meeting "Tunnel of Love". Country Fair Cuties will be the hosts.
- Tuesday, February 24th - MOPS meeting "The Roller Coaster" - Discipline in the Adventure. Disneyland Diva's will be providing the meal.
- Friday, February 27th - MOPS Parent's Night Out @ 7:00 pm at Zion Ministry Center. Get a babysitter and join us for a great night of silly & sweet. We will have a desert bar (yummy) and comedy (fun)!
- Friday & Saturday, March 6th & 7th - Cabbage Burger Fundraiser



Our Favorite Thrills

Check out the MOPS SHOP for kids gift ideas like these:

The Very First Christmas - The Beginners Bible

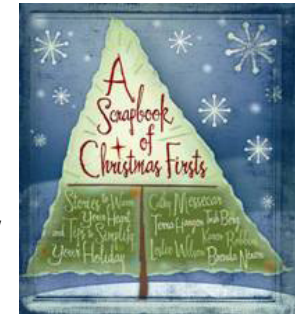
The Very First Christmas introduces children to one of the most wonderful stories of all time, the birth of Jesus! 32 pages. Softcover.



BOZ and You and Christmas Too - Provides children a wonderful way to celebrate Christmas. Children will love helping BOZ, Drew and Gracie get ready for Jesus' birthday.



In A Scrapbook of Christmas Firsts, discover how to bring harmony to this busy month. Tips for family traditions, connecting generations, children, gift giving, how to grow myrrh and much more.



Whip It Good

Turkey Panini

- 4 to 6 slices whole wheat bread
- Cranberry sauce for spreading
- Mayonnaise for spreading
- 1/2 pound grilled turkey, thinly sliced
- 1/4 pound Swiss cheese, thinly sliced
- 3 to 4 ounces fresh baby spinach
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- Butter or olive oil for spreading



Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Place a sauté pan over medium-low heat. Spread cranberry sauce on one slice of bread and mayonnaise on the other slice. Place about 3 ounces of grilled turkey on the bread slices with cranberry sauce. Lay Swiss cheese and baby spinach on top of the turkey, and grind some black pepper over the top. Place the mayonnaise-coated bread slices on top to make sandwiches. Spread butter or drizzle olive oil onto the outsides of the bread. Place the sandwich in the pan and brown for about 1 minute per side, then place each sandwich on a baking sheet and bake in the oven for 3 to 4 minutes, or until the cheese melts. Remove from the oven. Slice and serve. Makes 2 to 3 sandwiches.

ACTIVITY

WHICH NATIVITY CHARACTER ARE YOU?

Whichever letter you scored the most determines with Nativity character you are! Share your results with each of your family members and talk about how many different kinds of people it takes to complete just one part of a beautiful story the birth of Christ.

If you answered mostly A's then you're a *MAGI*.

That's right! You're most like the wise Magi. You love to learn new things and are curious about the world around you. Traveling to new places, trying new kinds of food, and reading plenty of good books are some of your favorite activities. Someday you'll help lots of people understand all that you've discovered, and maybe even have time for a little star gazing. But you're so clever, you probably already figured that out!

If you answered mostly B's then you're a *SHEPHERD*.

Congratulations! You're about as loyal as a person can get. You love animals and being out in nature where life is nice and simple. Taking care of your family and your small group of close friends is very important to you. In the future you'll be the person everyone goes to when they're feeling a bit down because you make everyone feel special and safe. Take care of that flock!

If you answered mostly C's then you're an *ANGEL*.

You are quite the social butterfly! You light up a room with all your stories. You spend lots of time talking to your friends whether online, on the phone, or in person. Chances are you have a great smile and people like being around you. Someday you could have an excellent career in communications, acting as a heavenly herald every day of the year! Spread those wings and fly.

If you answered mostly D's then you're an *INNKEEPER*.

Now, you're probably thinking this doesn't sound like you, but wait! This is one of the most important roles in the Nativity story and in life itself. People like you make the world go round because you've got a head for business. You understand how to organize people to work together. In essence, you're a good leader and an independent thinker. But you also help people out by providing security and protection to anyone who comes knocking on your door. One day you'll probably be in charge of a lot of people, but they'll know your good heart and will always trust you.

If you have any announcements, please email them to support@scottsbluffmops.com and I will add it to next month's newsletter!

Announcements

Continued from front page:

6. Take a half-day off and watch a good movie. Although others think you are super woman, the earth will not stop rotating if you take a break. Watch your stress diminish when you indulge yourself with the gift of relaxation during the holidays.

7. Don't forget exercise, self-care, and rest. Exercise is one of the best remedies for managing stress. Set aside some time to take a relaxing bubble bath accompanied by your favorite bath gel and sweet-smelling candles. Layer the fragrance with the body lotion and powder. Now, put on your favorite sleep shirt or nightgown and go to bed early.?

8. Look outside yourself. Take some time to meet the needs of others. Hurting people are all around you. Take some time out to show love to those who are less fortunate than you. It may brighten your holiday and give that extra boost of energy you've been searching for all year long.

9. Make contact. Send cards to those who have touched your life this year. This is the time to reach out and let them know how much you appreciated their counsel or business. This will help build or maintain business bridges you may need to cross after the New Year.?

10. Read that book. Take time to nourish yourself with that book you've been meaning to read. It may be a book to help you secure that financial deal or just a romance novel that's been sitting by your bed. Take some time and get lost in pages that satisfy your quiet time.

Remember that your job is not your life. You create your life by what you do for and with others, who in turn fill your atmosphere with wonderful experiences. This is the time when looking outside yourself is the best medicine for stress.



World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. We serve close to 100 million people in nearly 100 countries around the world. World Vision serves all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender. Motivated by our faith in Jesus Christ, we serve alongside the poor and oppressed as a demonstration of God's unconditional love for all people.



DOVES Program is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation dedicated to ending and preventing violence against women located in the Nebraska Panhandle. Our care packages we will be assembling tonight will be going to displaced women and children trying to escape a violent situation.

Rules for the Holidays



1. Avoid carrot sticks. Anyone who puts carrots on a holiday buffet table knows nothing of the Christmas spirit. In fact, if you see carrots, leave immediately. Go next door, where they're serving rum balls.

2. Drink as much eggnog as you can. And quickly. Like fine single-malt scotch, it's rare. In fact, it's even rarer than single-malt scotch. You can't find it any other time of year but now. So drink up! Who cares that it has 10,000 calories in every sip? It's not as if you're going to turn into an eggnogaholic or something. It's a treat. Enjoy it. Have one for me. Have two. It's later than you think. It's Christmas!

3. If something comes with gravy, use it. That's the whole point of gravy. Gravy does not stand alone. Pour it on. Make a volcano out of your mashed potatoes. Fill it with gravy. Eat the volcano. Repeat.

4. As for mashed potatoes, always ask if they're made with skim milk or whole milk. If it's skim, pass. Why bother? It's like buying a sports car with an automatic transmission.

5. Do not have a snack before going to a party in an effort to control your eating. The whole point of going to a Christmas party is to eat other people's food for free.

6. Under no circumstances should you exercise between now and New Year's. You can do that in January when you have nothing else to do. This is the time for long naps, which you'll need after circling the buffet table while carrying a 10-pound plate of food and that vat of eggnog.

7. If you come across something really good at a buffet table, like frosted Christmas cookies in the shape and size of Santa, position yourself near them and don't budge. Have as many as you can before becoming the center of attention. They're like a beautiful pair of shoes. If you leave them behind, you're never going to see them again.

8. Same for pies. Apple. Pumpkin. Mincemeat. Have a slice of each. Or if you don't like mincemeat, have two apples and one pumpkin. Always have three. When else do you get to have more than one dessert? Labor Day?

9. Did someone mention fruitcake? Granted, it's loaded with the mandatory celebratory calories, but avoid it at all cost. I mean, have some standards.

10. One final tip: If you don't feel terrible when you leave the party or get up from the table, you haven't been paying attention. Re-read tips; start over, but hurry, January is just around the corner.



Have a Merry Christmas!

ACTIVITY

WHICH NATIVITY CHARACTER ARE YOU?

This is all about getting ready for Christmas Day and, as it approaches, we thought it might be fun to see what nativity character you have most in common with. After you answer the questions, you can check your results on the back.

How are you most likely to spend your summer?

- Traveling
- At home with your family
- Hanging out at your friends houses
- Earning money with babysitting, mowing lawns, etc.

Whats your favorite part of the school day?

- English or Science
- Gym
- Recess or Lunch
- Math

Which is most like you?

- An owl
- A dog
- A butterfly
- A cat

What is your favorite light in the dark?

- The stars
- A campfire
- A room full of candles
- A black light

One day youre ideal job will involve:

- Learning more than your brain can hold
- Helping a lot of people
- Meeting all kinds of different people
- Being really busy and doing well

Which of these is most important to you?

- Books
- Pets
- Phone
- Money

Where would you rather live?

- In a foreign country
- The house you grew up in
- A brand new neighborhood w/lots of families
- A big city

Your biggest weakness is that sometimes you can be:

- A know-it-all
- Shy
- Loud
- Bossy

If you saw something unbelievable, what would you do first?

- Find out how it happened
- Try to get closer
- Tell someone about it
- Sell tickets

Which of the following is your favorite holiday?

- The Fourth of July: a little history and an amazing parade
- Thanksgiving: a big meal around the dining room table
- Halloween: costumes and candy galore
- New Years Eve: the biggest party of the year

Check your answers on the back >>>

