
Quiet Time

God Has Come To Us

"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" – which means , "God with us." – Matthew 1:23

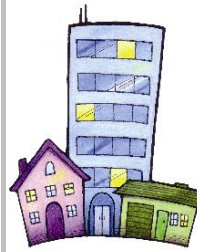
One night in December
One light from a silver star
One child to remember
God has come to us
God has come to us
How tiny the baby
How perfect in every way
How can we deny that,
God has come to us
God has come to us
Come now and be near him
Come. Rest a while.
Kneel down and receive him
God has come to us.

He was a perfect gift in such an imperfect place. The Son of God in a straw bassinet. The Lamb of God with the lambs of this world.

How could such a tiny, fragile child change human history? What if there had been problems with the delivery? What if the night had been too cold to sustain a newborn child?

All the what-ifs in the world could not stop the heart of God from reaching out in love to you and to me. So, draw near to that little One. Come rest your head on the straw. The world may be troubled tonight, but the peace that allows our hearts and minds to rest is incarnated in this truth: God has come to us!

Father, there are no words to begin to thank you for this perfect gift. I receive him with a grateful heart, singing, Hallelujah! And amen.



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News

from the Nest

December 2007

The 12 Days of Christmas

"The 12 Days of Christmas" is an allegory. Each of the items in the song represents something significant in the Bible.

The "true love" mentioned in the song refers to God Himself. The "me" who receives the presents refers to the Church.

1st Day: The "partridge in a pear tree" is Christ Jesus upon the Cross. In the song, Christ is symbolically presented as a mother partridge and the tree is the symbol of the Cross.

2nd Day: The "two turtle doves" refers to the Old and New Testaments.

3rd Day: The "three French hens" stand for faith, hope and love—the three gifts of the Spirit that abide (1 Corinthians 13).

4th Day: The "four calling birds" refers to the four evangelists who wrote the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—which sing the song of salvation through Jesus Christ.

5th Day: The "five golden rings" represents the first five books of the Bible, also called the Jewish Torah: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

6th Day: The "six geese a-laying" is the six days of creation.

7th Day: The "seven swans a-swimming" refers to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord.

8th Day: The "eight maids a milking" reminded children of the eight beatitudes listed in the Sermon on the Mount.

9th Day: The "nine ladies dancing" were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.

10th Day: The "ten lords a-leaping" represents the Ten Commandments

11th Day: The "eleven pipers piping" refers to the eleven faithful apostles.

12th Day: The "twelve drummers drumming" were the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed: belief in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, that Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, made man, crucified, died and arose on the third day, that he sits at the right hand of the father and will come again, the resurrection of the dead and life everlasting.

Kids Room

A common Christmas tradition is that of the Advent wreath. The wreath is made of evergreen branches with four candleholders and candles, often hung from the ceiling. Since in Advent we're waiting for the Christ child, there needs to be a ceremonial way to mark the time and make us aware of the wait. Lighting a candle reminds us of Christ as light of the world. As the candle is lit, it's customary to sing two verses of "O Come O Come Emmanuel". One candle is lit for each Sunday in Advent : one on the first Sunday, two on the second, and so on. The kids can have lots of fun making the wreath. For fire safety, it's best to put the wreath in a secure place.



Your pre-schooler can create a paper version of the advent wreath. As the candles are lit, they can paste their flame on their wreath. This helps younger children in the family feel a part of the celebration. You can find a template at <http://www.first-school.ws/activities/bible/advent1.htm>

The Mantle

The christmas stocking is a common tradition. Finding the perfect stuffers is always fun and so exciting to see the treasures inside on Christmas morning. Jesus was our gift from God 2040 years ago, but do we ever think about what we can give back to him?



We have an extra stocking designated for our birthday present to Jesus. It is old and tattered, reminding us

that there are those who are less fortunate in the world. Adorning it is a simple cross reminding us of the gift Christ gave us on the cross. Every year on Christmas Eve, we stuff Christ's stocking first. We choose a ministry or someone specific in need and help make their Christmas special. Some years we have given a gift to a child with a parent in jail, others we have chosen to send a Christmas box with Operation Christmas Child. One year we gave a donation to a local ministry to help with their food pantry. Usually a note, sometimes an item, is placed inside representing our gift back to the Savior.

We have accumulated several 'love notes' and we can look back on what gift we have given each year. It has become a touching tradition that keeps our hearts where they need to be, pointed to the Savior!

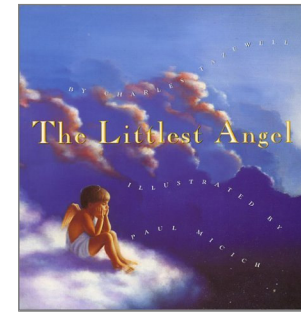
In the Library

Here are some of our family favorites that are great gifts.

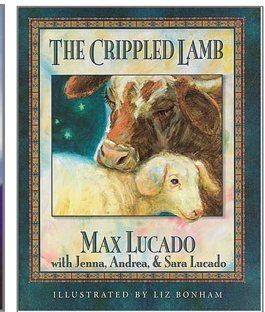
There Was No Snow On Christmas Eve - This beautiful introduction to the Nativity recreates the very first Christmas, which took place in a humble stable on a desert night, showing little ones the true spirit of the holiday.



The Littlest Angel - The story is simple and inspiring. A little boy, who has become the littlest angel in heaven, is unhappy and homesick.



The Crippled Lamb - This touching tale helps kids see that even if they're different, God has a unique plan for their lives.



Mom's Kitchen

We will post favorite recipes here. If you have one you would like to share, let Andrea Hale know.

CHEESE SOUP

- 1 c. chopped celery
- 1/2 c. chopped onion
- 1/2 c. sliced carrot
- 2 c. cubed potatoes
- 4 cubes chicken bouillon
- 2 1/2 c. water
- 1 lb. Velveeta
- 2 1/2 c. milk
- 2 T. margarine



In large pot, boil first 6 ingredients until veggies are tender. Add cubed Velveeta, milk and margarine and heat until cheese melted. Serve with crusty bread or in bread bowl.