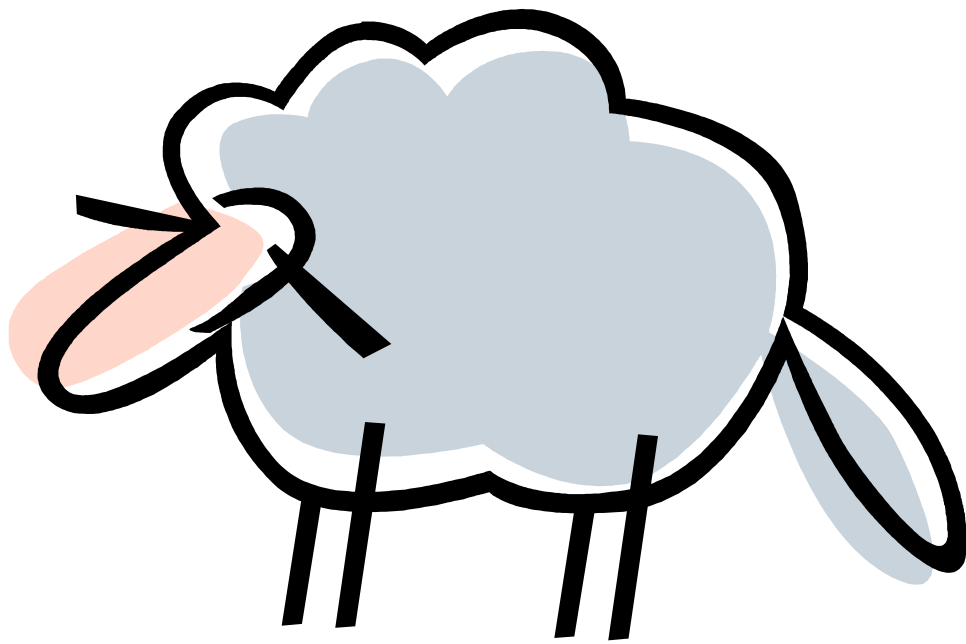


Family Advent Guide



~ Contains ~

Candle Lighting Prayers for Advent

The Whole Story

Tips for a Simpler Christmas

Feast of St. Nicholas ~ fun stuff

Prayers for Advent

When lighting the Advent wreath, the first prayer may be read by an adult and the second prayer may be said by children.

First Week

HOPE

**O Jesus Christ, Emmanuel,
come and dwell with us.
Desire of all nations,
Gift to every generation,
Come, make your home with us.**

All nations, everybody
is waiting for you.
Indians and Esquimos
are waiting for you.
People in New York
are waiting for you.
People in Haiti
are waiting for you.
Jesus, come to us.

Light 1 purple candle

Third Week

JOY

**O Jesus Christ, Son of David
come and set your people free.
Open the gates of heaven for us;
come, deliver us from evil.**

King David was a mighty king
who built a city long ago.
Son of David, Jesus Christ
open heaven's gates for us
that we may all be safe.

Light 2 purple candles and 1 pink

Christmas Day

O God, as light comes from this candle
may the blessing of Jesus Christ come to us,
warming our hearts and brightening our way.
May Christ our Savior bring life
into the darkness of this world and to us,
as we wait for his coming.

The white Christ Candle is lit with the purple and the pink

Second Week

LOVE

**O Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace
come and save your people.
Joy of every heart,
Strength of those who are poor,
come quickly to help us.**

Prince of Peace,
teach us to love each other.
Teach us to be kind.
Help those at war and those who fight
to live in peace as you design.

Light 2 purple candles

Fourth Week

PEACE

**O Jesus Christ, Holy Wisdom,
come and teach us your way;
Word of life, Word made flesh,
come, speak your truth.**

Jesus, come and teach me
how to sing and play.
Show me how to learn your Word hear me
when I pray.
Show me how to be your child
for you know the way.

Light 3 purple candles and 1 pink

The Whole Story!



Reading the Christmas Story
with our Children

Reading for the week of Sunday, November 30th

Luke 1: 5-25

5 Herod was king of Judea. During the time he was ruling, there was a priest named Zechariah. He belonged to a group of priests named after Abijah. His wife Elizabeth also came from the family line of Aaron. 6 Both of them did what was right in God's eyes. They obeyed all the Lord's commandments and rules faithfully. 7 But they had no children, because Elizabeth was not able to have any. And they were both very old.

8 One day Zechariah's group was on duty. He was serving as a priest in God's temple. 9 He happened to be chosen, in the usual way, to go into the temple of the Lord. There he was supposed to burn incense. 10 The time came for this to be done. All who had gathered to worship were praying outside.

11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah. The angel was standing at the right side of the incense altar. 12 When Zechariah saw him, he was amazed and terrified.

13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will have a child. It will be a boy, and you must name him John. 14 He will be a joy and delight to you. His birth will make many people very glad. 15 He will be important in the Lord's eyes.

"He must never use wine or other such drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit from the time he is born. 16 He will bring many of Israel's people back to the Lord their God. 17 And he will prepare the way for the Lord. He will have the same spirit and power that Elijah had. He will teach parents how to love their children. He will also teach people who don't obey to be wise and do what is right. In this way, he will prepare a people who are ready for the Lord."

18 Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife is old too."

19 The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I serve God. I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. 20 And now you will have to be silent. You will not be able to speak until after John is born. That's because you did not believe my words. They will come true when the time is right."

21 During that time, the people were waiting for Zechariah to come out. They wondered why he stayed in the temple so long. 22 When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple. They knew this because he kept motioning to them. He still could not speak.

23 When his time of service was over, he returned home. 24 After that, his wife Elizabeth became pregnant. She stayed at home for five months. 25 "The Lord has done this for me," she said. "In these days, he has been kind to me. He has taken away my shame among the people."

Luke 1:26-56

26 In the sixth month after Elizabeth had become pregnant, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee. 27 He was sent to a virgin. The girl was engaged to a man named Joseph. He came from the family line of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel greeted her and said, "The Lord has given you special favor. He is with you."

29 Mary was very upset because of his words. She wondered what kind of greeting this could be. 30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary. God is very pleased with you. 31 You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. You must name him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king like his father David of long ago. 33 He will rule forever over his people, who came from Jacob's family. His kingdom will never end."

34 "How can this happen?" Mary asked the angel. "I am a virgin."

35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come to you. The power of the Most High God will cover you. So the holy one that is born will be called the Son of God. 36 Your relative Elizabeth is old. And even she is going to have a child. People thought she could not have children. But she has been pregnant for six months now. 37 Nothing is impossible with God."

38 "I serve the Lord," Mary answered. "May it happen to me just as you said it would." Then the angel left her.

39 At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in Judea's hill country. 40 There she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby inside her jumped. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 In a loud voice she called out, "God has blessed you more than other women. And blessed is the child you will have! 43 But why is God so kind to me? Why has the mother of my Lord come to me? 44 As soon as I heard the sound of your voice, the baby inside me jumped for joy. 45 You are a woman God has blessed. You have believed that what the Lord has said to you will be done!"

46 Mary said,

"My soul gives glory to the Lord.

47 My spirit delights in God my Savior.

48 He has taken note of me

even though I am not important.

From now on all people will call me blessed.

49 The Mighty One has done great things for me.

His name is holy.

50 He shows his mercy to those who have respect for him,
from parent to child down through the years.

51 He has done mighty things with his arm.

He has scattered those who are proud in their deepest thoughts.

52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones.

But he has lifted up people who are not important.

53 He has filled those who are hungry with good things.

But he has sent those who are rich away empty.

54 He has helped the people of Israel, who serve him.

He has always remembered to be kind

55 to Abraham and his children down through the years.

He has done it just as he said to our people of long ago."

56 Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months. Then she returned home.

Reading for the week of Sunday, December 7th

Luke 1:57-80

57 The time came for Elizabeth to have her baby. She gave birth to a son. 58 Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had been very kind to her. They shared her joy.

59 On the eighth day, they came to have the child circumcised. They were going to name him Zechariah, like his father. 60 But his mother spoke up. "No!" she said. "He must be called John."

61 They said to her, "No one among your relatives has that name."

62 Then they motioned to his father. They wanted to find out what he would like to name the child. 63 He asked for something to write on. Then he wrote, "His name is John." Everyone was amazed.

64 Right away Zechariah could speak again. His first words gave praise to God. 65 The neighbors were all filled with fear and wonder. All through Judea's hill country, people were talking about all these things. 66 Everyone who heard this wondered about it. And because the Lord was with John, they asked, "What is this child going to be?"

67 His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit. He prophesied,

68 "Give praise to the Lord, the God of Israel!

He has come and set his people free.

69 He has acted with great power and has saved us.

He did it for those who are from the family line of his servant David.

70 Long ago holy prophets said he would do it.

71 He has saved us from our enemies.

We are rescued from all who hate us.

72 He has been kind to our people.

He has remembered his holy covenant.

73 He made an oath to our father Abraham.

74 He promised to save us from our enemies,
so that we could serve him without fear.

75 He wants us to be holy and godly as long as we live.

76 "And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High God.

You will go ahead of the Lord to prepare the way for him.

77 You will tell his people how they can be saved.

You will tell them that their sins can be forgiven.

78 All of that will happen because our God is tender and caring.

His kindness will bring the rising sun to us from heaven.

79 It will shine on those living in darkness
and in the shadow of death.

It will guide our feet on the path of peace."

80 The child grew up, and his spirit became strong. He lived in the desert until he appeared openly to Israel.

Luke 2:1-20

1 In those days, Caesar Augustus made a law. It required that a list be made of everyone in the whole Roman world. 2 It was the first time a list was made of the

people while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 All went to their own towns to be listed.

4 So Joseph went also. He went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea. That is where Bethlehem, the town of David, was. Joseph went there because he belonged to the family line of David. 5 He went there with Mary to be listed. Mary was engaged to him. She was expecting a baby.

6 While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born. 7 She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger. There was no room for them in the inn.

8 There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they were looking after their sheep. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified.

10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy. It is for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. 12 Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."

13 Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven also appeared. They were praising God. They said,

14 "May glory be given to God in the highest heaven!

And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!"

15 The angels left and went into heaven. Then the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem. Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby. The baby was lying in the manger. 17 After the shepherds had seen him, they told everyone. They reported what the angel had said about this child. 18 All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

19 But Mary kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. She thought about them over and over.

20 The shepherds returned. They gave glory and praise to God. Everything they had seen and heard was just as they had been told.

Reading for the week of Sunday, December 14th

Luke 2:21-38

21 When the child was eight days old, he was circumcised. At the same time he was named Jesus. This was the name the angel had given him before his mother became pregnant.

22 The time for making them pure came as it is written in the Law of Moses. So Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Jerusalem. There they presented him to the Lord. 23 In the Law of the Lord it says, "The first boy born in every family must be set apart for the Lord."(Exodus 13:2,12) 24 They also offered a sacrifice. They did it in keeping with the Law, which says, "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."(Leviticus 12:8)

25 In Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was a good and godly man. He was waiting for God's promise to Israel to happen. The Holy Spirit was with him. 26 The Spirit had told Simeon that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 The Spirit led him into the temple courtyard.

Then Jesus' parents brought the child in. They came to do for him what the Law required.

28 Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God. He said,

29 "Lord, you are the King over all.

Now let me, your servant, go in peace.

That is what you promised.

30 My eyes have seen your salvation.

31 You have prepared it in the sight of all people.

32 It is a light to be given to those who aren't Jews.

It will bring glory to your people Israel."

33 The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them. He said to Mary, Jesus' mother, "This child is going to cause many people in Israel to fall and to rise. God has sent him. But many will speak against him. 35 The thoughts of many hearts will be known. A sword will wound your own soul too."

36 There was also a prophet named Anna. She was the daughter of Penuel from the tribe of Asher. Anna was very old. After getting married, she lived with her husband seven years. 37 Then she was a widow until she was 84. She never left the temple. She worshiped night and day, praying and going without eating.

38 Anna came up to Jesus' family at that very moment. She gave thanks to God. And she spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the time when Jerusalem would be set free.

Reading for the week of Sunday, December 21st

Matthew 2

1 Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea. This happened while Herod was king of Judea.

After Jesus' birth, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem. 2 They asked, "Where is the child who has been born to be king of the Jews? When we were in the east, we saw his star. Now we have come to worship him."

3 When King Herod heard about it, he was very upset. Everyone in Jerusalem was troubled too. 4 So Herod called together all the chief priests of the people. He also called the teachers of the law. He asked them where the Christ was going to be born.

5 "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied. "This is what the prophet has written. He said,

6 " 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are certainly not the least important among the towns of Judah.
A ruler will come out of you.

He will be the shepherd of my people Israel.' " (Micah 5:2)

7 Then Herod called for the Wise Men secretly. He found out from them exactly when the star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem. He said, "Go! Make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, bring me a report. Then I can go and worship him too."

9 After the Wise Men had listened to the king, they went on their way. The star they had seen when they were in the east went ahead of them. It finally stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were filled with joy.

11 The Wise Men went to the house. There they saw the child with his mother Mary. They bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures. They gave him gold, incense and myrrh.

12 But God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they returned to their country on a different road.

13 When the Wise Men had left, Joseph had a dream. In the dream an angel of the Lord appeared to him. "Get up!" the angel said. "Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you to come back. Herod is going to search for the child. He wants to kill him."

14 Joseph got up. During the night, he left for Egypt with the child and his mother Mary. 15 They stayed there until King Herod died. So the words the Lord had spoken through the prophet came true. He had said, "I chose to bring my son out of Egypt."—(Hosea 11:1)

16 Herod realized that the Wise Men had tricked him. So he became very angry. He gave orders concerning Bethlehem and the area around it. All the boys two years old and under were to be killed. This agreed with the time when the Wise Men had seen the star.

17 In this way, the words the prophet Jeremiah spoke came true. He had said,

18 "A voice is heard in Ramah.

It's the sound of crying and deep sadness.
Rachel is crying over her children.
She refuses to be comforted,
because they are gone." —(Jeremiah 31:15)

19 After Herod died, Joseph had a dream while he was still in Egypt. In the dream an angel of the Lord appeared to him. 20 The angel said, "Get up! Take the child and his mother. Go to the land of Israel. Those who were trying to kill the child are dead."

21 So Joseph got up. He took the child and his mother Mary back to the land of Israel. 22 But then he heard that Archelaus was king of Judea. Archelaus was ruling in place of his father Herod. This made Joseph afraid to go there.

Warned in a dream, Joseph went back to the land of Galilee instead. 23 There he lived in a town called Nazareth. So what the prophets had said about Jesus came true. They had said, "He will be called a Nazarene."

39 Joseph and Mary did everything the Law of the Lord required. Then they returned to Galilee. They went to their own town of Nazareth. 40 And the child grew and became strong. He was very wise. He was blessed by God's grace.

41 Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. 42 When he was 12 years old, they went up to the Feast as usual.

43 After the Feast was over, his parents left to go back home. The boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But they were not aware of it. 44 They thought he was somewhere in their group. So they traveled on for a day.

Then they began to look for him among their relatives and friends. 45 They did not find him. So they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple courtyard. He was sitting with the teachers. He was listening to them and asking them questions. 47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at how much he understood. They also were amazed at his answers.

48 When his parents saw him, they were amazed. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been worried about you. We have been looking for you everywhere."

49 "Why were you looking for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" 50 But they did not understand what he meant by that.

51 Then he went back to Nazareth with them, and he obeyed them. But his mother kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. 52 Jesus became wiser and stronger. He also became more and more pleasing to God and to people.



Top 10 Tips for a Simpler, More Meaningful Christmas

1. Plan ahead. Instead of going on auto-pilot the day after Thanksgiving, hold a family meeting to decide what the family really wants to do and who's going to do what.
2. If you need a symbol for giving (in addition to Jesus and the Three Wise Ones), learn about St. Nicholas. Santa Claus has been completely taken over by commerce. www.stnicholascenter.org
3. Avoid debt. Refuse to be pressured by advertising to overspend.
4. Avoid stress. Give to yourself. Don't assume that things have to be the same way they've always been.
5. Draw names rather than everyone giving something to everyone else in your giving circle. Set a ceiling for each recipient. Give children ONE thing they really want, rather than so many gifts. If need be, pool funds.
6. Give appropriate gifts. Get to know the recipient. Give what they want to receive, not what you want to buy.
7. Give alternative gifts. Give 10-25% of what you spent last year to the needy. Choose individuals or groups locally, nationally, or internationally.
Buy crafts and clothing from developing countries at alternative gift markets, not from commercial importers, so that the artisans receive a fair price for their work.
Give of yourself, not just "stuff" - a coupon book for future services (such as baby-sitting or an "enchanted evening"); something baked, sewn, handmade, composed, etc.; or a family service project, such as working together at a soup kitchen.
8. Celebrate Advent for four weeks before Christmas.
9. Put the gifts under the tree shortly before opening them. Then take turns opening them around the tree, not all at once, so that each gift can be admired and each giver thanked.
10. Make changes slowly but persistently. Don't try to change everything and everybody all at once. Too much resistance can make you feel defeated and lonely.

Who is St. Nicholas?

Many people know that the myth of Santa Claus has its roots in the story of Saint Nicholas. Legend has it Saint Nicholas lived sometime during the first half of the fourth century (ca. A.D. 300-350). He was bishop of a town called Myra, located in what is now southern Turkey.

Myra was an important seaport in the ancient world. Sailors and merchants frequently stopped there to drop off cargo or to change ships. According to Acts 27:5-8, it was in Myra that Saint Paul and his guards, on their journey to Rome, boarded an Alexandrian ship bound for Italy.

Very little is known about the real Saint Nicholas. His name is Greek and means "people's victor," (Nikos + Laos). The earliest record we have of Nicholas comes from when the emperor Justinian (A.D. 527-565) ordered the restoration of a church in Myra named for this saint. Our lack of information about Nicholas is due, in part, to the iconoclastic upheavals of the eighth century when thousands of church documents about saints were destroyed.

A Few Nicholas Stories

One of the oldest surviving stories about Nicholas illustrates his reputation as a "people's victor." It relates the tale of three men who were sentenced to death for crimes they did not commit. The whole city of Myra was in an uproar and the people asked the bishop to save them. At first Nicholas could not find the prisoners. It took him so long that by the time he finally did locate the three men, the executioner was moments away from carrying out the sentences. Nicholas literally had to run through the streets and through the crowd of people who had gathered to watch the executions. The bishop grabbed the executioner's sword and threw it on the ground. He untied the three men, removed their hoods and set them free.

Through the centuries, many stories about the life of Nicholas have been told. One in particular seems to have forever connected him with the tradition of giving gifts anonymously. It tells the story of a poor family with three daughters and no money for dowries. According to local custom, without dowries the young women could not have married and ran the risk of being sold into slavery. Nicholas dropped bags of gold down the chimney of the family's home so the daughters could escape a life of servitude.

Creating Santa

How did we get Santa Claus out of a bishop known as People's Victor? Santa Claus is an anglicized form of the Dutch, Sinterklaas (a form of Sint Nikolaas). It came into usage after the English took over New Amsterdam and changed the city's name to New York. Santa himself is actually an amalgamation of several older traditions.

In the Dutch tradition, on the eve of his feast day (December 6th), Saint Nicholas would visit the homes of children. Treats of apples and sweets would be left as rewards for studying the catechism. With German-speaking settlers came the tradition of Kriss Kringle, a mysterious child who visited homes with presents on

Christmas Eve. Kriss Kringle was, in reality, a mispronunciation of Christkindl (Christ Child). Some date this tradition back to Martin Luther, who created the story of Christkindlein, a mythical messenger of Christ. Among the other traditions that contributed to the creation of Santa Claus are the British Father Christmas, the French Père Noël, the Danish Jules-Missen and the Romanian Moș Crăciun.

Santa Today

The Santa we know today is uniquely North American. His visual appearance comes primarily from Clement Moore's poem, *A Visit From Saint Nicholas* (known by its first line, "Twas the night before Christmas..."), and from Thomas Nast's drawings which appeared in *Harper's Weekly* during the 1880's. In the place of a bishop's robe have come a red fur-lined coat and a sack full of gifts. Through the years advertisers have refined his image and now he appears as an English speaking, white-haired, secular Caucasian resident of the North Pole. This North American creation now bears little resemblance to the traditions from which it came.

Santa Claus has become a significant part of our cultural mythology. To some he represents the true spirit of Christmas in that he gives without expecting anything in return. To many he represents the best in all of us: joy, generosity and good cheer. The reindeer, the sleigh, the stockings stuffed with gifts and the secret trips down millions of chimneys are images that add to the lore and excitement of many childhood Christmases.

The Other Side of Santa

To others, however, Santa has a dark side. To critics, the consumer society has deposited in Santa the values it holds most dear, namely, wealth, greed and consumption.

Recently, a New York marketing executive said, "In the advertising, industry Santa Claus is not a religious figure, though we still connect him to Christianity. He's a symbol people can readily identify. As a visual image he communicates a message quickly. You immediately know what he's about. To us he represents fun."

In recent decades, Santa Claus has made the trek across the Atlantic too. He now appears in Christmas celebrations all over Western Europe. You can also find him in Central and South America. He even appears in shopping malls in Japan where he is used to promote end-of-the-year retail sales.

In her book, *To Dance With God*, Gertrud Mueller Nelson wrote:

The Santa that we meet in the department stores... teaches us to beg for what we want, and he will be the provider. He teaches us nothing about how to give. How can we reconsider his image in the light of the whole truth? Some people, uncomfortable with the distortions and unwilling to allow Santa to upstage the celebration of Christ's birth, have relegated him to the position of a jolly postman who delivers packages at Christmas. Another viable solution is to return to Santa Claus his original role. (pp. 80-81).

Questions to Consider...

Am I happy with the role Santa plays in my holiday celebrations?

In what ways could the St. Nicholas tradition work to enhance my Advent observances?

Think of your own home. Would you prefer to discard the Santa tradition, keep it the way it is, or as Gertrud Mueller Nelson suggested, "return to Santa Claus his original role." Why?

How can you remedy the things you don't like about the Santa tradition without losing the things you do like?

What reaction might you expect from family members if you were to suggest making changes in the role Santa plays in your celebration?

Advent: Ideas for a more Christ-filled Holiday Season.

- Shift the focus away from Santa in the weeks before Christmas with Advent activities. Focus your preparations on getting ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus, not the arrival of Santa. Consider having Advent services in your home using an Advent wreath and candles.
- Go back to the original source of the Santa Claus myth. Tell children (and adults) the story of St. Nicholas, the 4th century bishop from Asia Minor who gave gifts anonymously to those in need. There are many wonderful tales surrounding this saint. You can emphasize the importance of imitating St. Nicholas instead of simply waiting for gifts from Santa.
- Resist connecting gifts "from Santa" with good behavior. This means abandoning attempts to manipulate children's behavior by saying "if-you-are-not-good-Santa-will-not-bring-you-anything." It also means talking to children frankly about how the Santa Claus tradition affects children who are poor and how it conflicts with Jesus' concern for those in need. Do not underestimate children's senses of justice and fair play. Cut back on the quantity of gifts children receive so that "getting gifts" is not the focus of the season.
- Collaborate with others who want to make changes in the role Santa plays in their celebrations. If you are a parent with young children you will need the support of other adults as you take these steps. Also, your children will be helped by knowing that there are other families making these changes. If you are single, or no longer have small children in your household, you can provide important support for those who are trying to make changes.

How to Have a St. Nicholas Day Celebration

A simple St. Nicholas Day celebration adds a bit of welcome festivity in the early days of Advent. It provides an opportunity to tell the story of St. Nicholas, a man of faith whose goodness and generosity grew out of his love for God. It enriches our understanding of Santa Claus by showing the real historical person who inspired the familiar legend and traditions.

So tell a story of St. Nicholas' generous example of giving in secret to those in need. Then encourage children to identify a kindly "Nicholas deed" to do for someone else. Have children fill their shoes with pieces of carrot or bits of hay for his white horse or donkey. Place shoes outside bedroom doors or on the hearth. See that a candy treat (a candy cane represents Bishop Nicholas' crozier) and simple gift appears by morning on December 6th.

Have a party. The Dutch give simple gifts accompanied with elaborate riddles and/or wrapped in fantastically deceiving ways, such as a pen inside a hollowed out carrot or something small nested inside multiple boxes and wrappings.

Find more family celebration ideas: www.stnicholascenter.org

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Merry Christmas



O Come let us adore
Him!