



Christmas: What's the Main Idea?

Christmas! The word itself stirs feelings of extraordinary excitement. And rightly so. During the holiday season there are reminders of the season everywhere. But let's be sure our children know what the excitement is really about.

How can we help a young child realize that Christmas is a celebration of gratitude to God for His wonderful gift of love? There are several ways you can make the biblical and spiritual aspects of Christmas meaningful and attractive to a young child.

Help children know the simple facts of Jesus' birth as they are recorded in Scripture.

- Tell or read the story of the first Christmas to children from Bible storybooks or from an easy-to-understand version of the Bible.
- Allow children to participate in assembling a manger scene. Retell the story of Jesus' birth as they move the figures, or invite children to tell the story as you move the figures.

Help children feel that Jesus is God's best gift of love.

- Remember that much of a child's response is a reflection of the attitudes he or she sees from you. Nurture feelings of joy, love and thankfulness in your child.
- In the presence of your child, give thanks to God for Jesus.
- Include children in your church's plans

for expressing love to Jesus by caring and loving others (collect canned foods or personal care items for a rescue mission, fill a shoebox with age-appropriate gifts to be given to needy children, etc.). With your child, talk about the gifts the wise men gave to Jesus to show their love for Him.

Explain that we give gifts to others at Christmas to show our love for them.

Help your child express joy, excitement and feelings of love.

- Show gladness as you sing about Jesus' birth.
 - Be sensitive to moments when it is natural to talk about Jesus' birth and encourage your child to thank God in prayer for sending Jesus to be born.
- ## Keep Santa in the proper perspective.
- Avoid referring to Santa as a real person. If a child talks about Santa, say "Talking about Santa is fun. But it's even better to talk about Jesus who loves us all year long."

• Avoid the "What do you want Santa to bring you for Christmas?" and "Be good for Santa" emphases.

• Keep the meaning of Christmas clear by frequently commenting on it. "Christmas is a happy time because it is Jesus' birthday. People give presents to show their love. God showed His love by giving us Jesus."

