

Merry Christmas



Nazarene Educators Worldwide



To embrace, encourage, and empower through a network of Christian educators.

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CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE



Christmas Memories

Submitted by Melodee Simmons, Childcare/Pre-school Representative

In my Sunday School class a couple of weeks ago, I asked the children to tell a memory of Christmas. They were having trouble thinking of anything. To get them started, I told them a story about me. After telling one story, other stories started coming to mind.

There was the year we had a rare freeze in Houston. Our pipes froze so we had no water. I had planned a ham dinner with a sticky glaze; and, since I don't like to change my holiday plans, I went ahead and prepared the full dinner. What a sticky kitchen I had! It was a memorable Christmas. If I could to do again, I would probably wait until we had water to make the dinner.

Last year we went to see our son and his family in Oklahoma. We want the grandkids to remember that Texas is where they really belong. So when I saw an armadillo puppet at the store, I had to buy it. The grandkids need to know the Texas animals that they don't get to see living up north. I put the puppet in a shoe box with tissue paper around it, then wrapped the box and put a bow on it. The twins who were 2 ½ years old liked to play with puppets. I decided to give it to Nicholas (of course I know that Nolan would play with it, too). Nicholas pulled off the bow, and he tore off the paper with a big smile on his face. He lifted the lid and folded back the tissue paper. His eyes became big, and his smile disappeared. He folded the paper back over the puppet, and then he pushed the box away. The look on his face was priceless! He wanted nothing to do with that armadillo! I wish we had a video of that scene.

In 1980, we started a tradition when our first son was 3 months old. That tradition has continued throughout the years. On Christmas Eve, my husband, Mark, reads the "Night Before Christmas" and the story of Jesus' birth from the book of Luke. Every year, just before bedtime, we would sit and listen while he read both stories. Then the boys would hang their stockings, leave Santa a snack, and go to bed. That tradition continued as long as the boys lived at home. Now that they have children of their own, there have been years when they have asked their Dad to read to the grandkids. It's been done on the phone and over the internet.

It is fun to think back over the years and all the memories of Christmas past. The more I think, the more I remember.

After telling the children in my class some of my memories, they started to think of their own memories. It's good to reminisce and remember the blessings we have and the things God has seen us through. Tell your children your family's stories and help them to create new memories this year.

I wish for each of you a blessed and memorable Christmas.

Never Too Old for Dolls

By Beula Postlewait, NEW Council Member

At some point in my life, I realized that not all little girls played with dolls. Some girls would rather play with computer-type toys or play outdoors instead.

I learned so much by playing with my dolls. I learned how to bathe them, wash and set their hair, wash dishes, pots, and pans after our tea parties and meals, and how to wash and dry doll clothes. I even learned how to sew at the age of nine, so I could make clothes for my dolls. I learned that I could buy a doll pattern (10 cents), spool of coordinating thread (4 cents), and ¼ of a yard of fabric (10 cents) from my 35 cents of allowance. (Of course I saved some of the rest of the money for my tithe and offering at church.) I had my own miniature sewing machine that worked very well.

My favorite doll was Faith Ann. One of my most memorable Christmases was the one in which my mother gave me outfits she had made for Faith Ann. It included a wedding dress and veil, pajamas, skirt and blouse outfits, a coat and hat, and other items. Mom had made several pairs of shoes and a purse for Faith Ann. Oh, I had such fun dressing that doll. I learned to sew, so I could make clothes for Faith Ann. She was 17 inches tall, blond hair, and blue eyes.

My mother stayed up late sewing these outfits. She waited until all of the kids were asleep before working on this project, so it would be a surprise. She sacrificed sleep to make something special for me.

Faith Ann's only downfall was that she had a rubberized material for the torso of her body. The many baths that she received led to her demise. The rubberized material eventually separated from her neck and the beads that were her stuffing scattered over the floor. There was no way to reattach adequately the body to the neck. I will never forget the day I took Faith Ann out to the trash container. However, I still have the doll clothes. I never had another doll to take her place until----

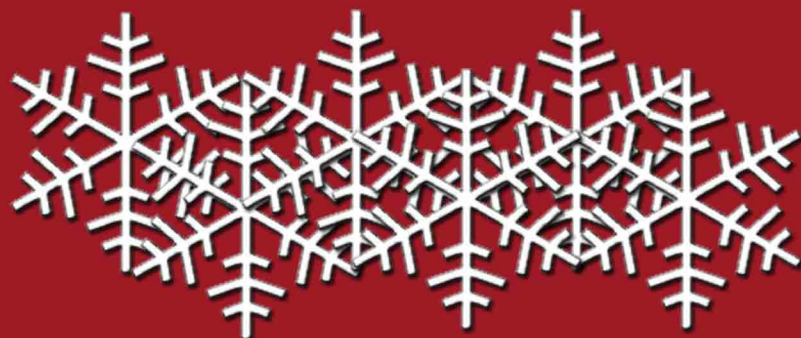
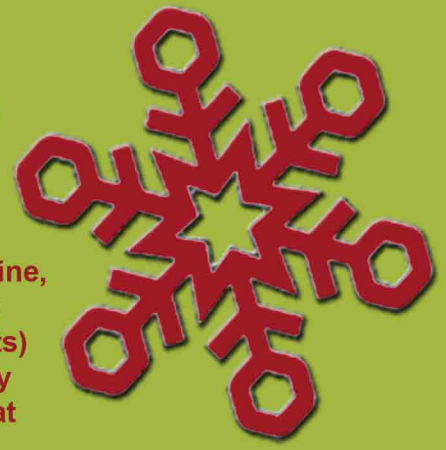
As an adult, I loved the Anne of Green Gable series of books by L. M. Montgomery. Anne and her friend, Diana, were "bosom buddies." One Christmas, my sister, Martha, gave me a 12-inch collector doll of Anne. I loved the doll and placed it on my bedroom dresser. At the same store there was a companion doll of Diana. My husband encouraged me to purchase the Diana doll. I felt guilty about paying so much money for a doll, but I got over that quickly when I had the doll in my hands.

Today, Anne and Diana are together on my bedroom dresser. (I dust them, but I don't give them baths. I do wash their outfits.) They remind me to be grateful for all of the many girl friends who have impacted my life. God has given me "bosom buddies" to help me meet the challenges at each stage of my life. So, just remember this. You never outgrow your need for a doll, because they teach us so many things.

I am grateful for all my gifts, especially the gift of God's Son, Jesus.

Whatever your heart desires this Christmas, I hope you receive it.

Merry Christmas!



and
suddenly
there was with
the angel
a multitude of
the heavenly host
praising God
and saying
Glory to God
in the highest, and on earth,
peace, goodwill towards

men
Luke 2
13-14



My Gift to Him

by Becky Ramsey, Christian Schools Representative

As far back as I can remember, my favorite Christmas memory is of getting our Christmas gift for Jesus each year. My parents always made that part of Christmas very special. It was something we did together to celebrate Jesus' birthday. The tradition certainly taught us that Christmas was all about giving more than receiving. Sometimes the gift might be doing something for a needy family or a missionary family that we knew. However, we knew that Jesus understood it was His very special gift just from us.

As we grew up and each of us girls had children of our own, it was special that we each continued this very distinctive tradition with our own families. I remember the year that my mother asked each of the families of our now grown children and grandchildren to bring money instead of gifts to buy a well in Haiti for Jesus' birthday. We were ecstatic that as an extended family we were able to collect enough money to build our well. We pray continually that God will continue to protect our precious well through the earthquakes and hurricanes that have hit Haiti. We also pray that many have found not just clean water but the Living Water through this source of clean and accessible water.

As a parent and grandparent, my greatest joy has been to see my children and grandchildren choose a very special way to give to Christ His gift at Christmas. My oldest son and his wife have accepted the call to be volunteer missionaries with Border Initiative, a Nazarene ministry that works along the border of the United States and Mexico. Each Christmas, they join Southern Nazarene University's Commission Unto Mexico and serve on a mission trip during the Christmas holiday. Eight years ago, God told Scott to purchase an RV and design it so that he could take an entire team with him into Mexico for this trip. Our church has been joining him on this mission, and it has grown abundantly! From one RV.... to two RVs.... to this year.... we now have a 45-passenger bus---PRAISE THE LORD!

On Christmas night when most families are sitting around a table or a tree, my family will be climbing on a bus, getting ready to travel for twenty-eight hours. They will be traveling with others from our church family, going to meet up with the rest of the Southern Nazarene Commission Unto Mexico mission group at the border of Mexico, ready to head to Monterey, Mexico this year.

For the next week, around two hundred people will congregate in the city of Monterey and work in nine different locations on work projects, VBS teams, medical teams, dental teams, soccer teams-- all working with the local people to accomplish the needs that the local churches have. We will work together, fellowship together, worship together, and seek to accomplish all that God has for us to do. This is our family's gift to Jesus. And to have the privilege to share the blessing of this experience with my children and grandchildren is hard to top!

I believe 3 John, verse 4 (NIV) comes close to describing how I feel. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." I just get to see, as well as hear, that my children and grandchildren are walking in His truth. So, I guess my joy is more than doubled!

**If you would like to follow a picture journal of this year's trip, check out "Dig Missions" on Facebook starting Christmas night through January 3rd.



Merry

Christmas

