

A Childlike Christmas



I love Christmas! The fragrance of the Christmas tree, twinkle of holiday lights, singing favorite carols, and the smell of freshly baked Christmas cookies all evoke wonderful memories. My earliest childhood memories are associated with Christmas: waking my parents (very early) on Christmas morning, opening special presents, and the warmth of family gatherings. I also remember distinctly the first time that I began to comprehend the meaning of Christmas. With apologies to my parents and the priests at St. Mary's Catholic Church, I first learned the significance of Christmas from Linus. Yes, that Linus. Linus van Pelt, Charlie Brown's best friend and Lucy's younger brother. The year was 1965 and my lesson occurred during the premier of *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. In the story,

Charlie Brown is depressed by the secularization and commercialization of Christmas and he directs the school play to learn its true meaning. During a rehearsal, the [spotlight shines on Linus](#) as he takes center stage to explain the significance of Christmas to Charlie Brown and this six-year old boy.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 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, good will toward men. Luke 2:8-14

With time and maturation of faith, the Christmas story has become richer and more meaningful to me. Nonetheless, each year I am struck by the elegant simplicity of this story and the ease with which children understand its meaning. As adults, we make the simple complicated. Yet, God provides us the story of our Savior's birth and its significance in a way that is understood easily by a child. Our King came as a child because God calls us to be His children. He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them.

And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:2-3.

"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." Luke 18:16-17

In these teachings, Jesus exhorts us to rid ourselves of the complexities and challenges we layer upon our lives and to become childlike in our faith. Our Savior came into the physical world as a baby to show us that the path to God's kingdom is paved with innocence and purity. Each Christmas we have the opportunity to unwrap ourselves from the complications of our creation and celebrate Jesus' birth with the innocence of a child, a child of God.

I pray that your holiday will be filled with moments of childlike wonder and excitement and that the Christmas season brings forth the child within each of us. And, may we all celebrate with childlike fascination and joy the greatest gift of all, Christ the Lord.

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