

The "Christmas Gift"



There is the possibility of a birthday gift for the Light of the World. If there are to be gifts for others, why not a gift for Him? We should think about something special to give Him!

Now is the time to explain to the children about the spirit of Christmas. Advent is this special time of preparation when we can perform little acts of self-denial and do good deeds in God's name.

These are the kinds of birthday gifts we can give to Jesus. Sometimes children will give up desserts during Advent, or give up social media, or skip television or video games. Some of these acts are very difficult, but if you teach your children that it is the most difficult tasks that are the most beautiful to God, and that Christ has a way of giving back much more than you have given Him, they will begin to understand how to love God.

Young children can see their love building when you let them place a piece of hay or soft yellow yarn in a tiny cradle for the Christ Child for each give of self-denial. (Match boxes or little jewelry boxes decorated with pretty paper make lovely cradles.) Then, on Christmas morning, they find Jesus contently lying on the soft bed they have so arduously made for Him.

Another idea is to let the children place a peanut or "M&M" in a little box for each good deed or act of self-denial. On Christmas Eve, the box is covered with a bright wrapping and ribbons. At the conclusion of the festive season, on the Feast of Three Kings; after the tree has been "taken down" and the story of the Magi has been told or acted out; the little boxes of candy are opened. If the memory of the small acts of self-denial are still fresh; there will be no need to remind the children to share the candy.

One last point on this matter is that when children give up such things as playing video games or watching television; they should be encouraged to join in on the family Christmas projects. In this way, they are exploring the spiritual meanings of the season with creative activities, and this is most certain to bear some good fruit, singing, play-acting, baking and artistic projects are great even for teen-agers, if you let them help plan and supervise the programs for the little ones.