

The Real Meaning of Christmas (author unknown)

One week before Christmas, a well-known visitor made a surprise appearance...

I had just finished the household chores and was preparing for bed when a noise startled me. I cautiously opened the door to the front room. To my amazement, Santa Claus stepped from behind the Christmas tree! He placed one finger over his mouth so I would not cry out.

"What are you doing here?" I exclaimed. Then I realized that Santa had tears in his eyes. His usual jolly manner was gone. The eager, boisterous soul we all know was quite sad. Santa offered these simple words, "TEACH THE CHILDREN!" I was puzzled—what did he mean? Anticipating my question, with one quick movement he brought forth a great bag from behind the tree. I stood there, bewildered.

Santa explained, "Teach the children! Teach them the old meaning of Christmas. So many people today have forgotten what Christmas is really about!"

Santa then reached into his bag, pulled out a tiny **FIR TREE**, and placed it on the mantle. "Teach the children that the stately fir tree remains green all year round, showing the everlasting hope of mankind. The needles point heavenward, making it a symbol of our prayers that always reach God."

Santa again reached into his sack and pulled out a brilliant **STAR**. "Teach the children that the Bethlehem star was the sign of promises long ago. God promised to send a Savior to deliver the world. The bright star pointed to the fulfillment of that promise—God's only Son had been born!"

Next, Santa pulled a **CANDLE** from his bag. "Teach the children that the candle symbolizes that Jesus, God's Son, is the light of the world. When we see this light, we remember the One who overcomes the darkness."

Once again Santa reached into his sack. This time he removed a **WREATH** and placed it on the tree. "Teach the children that the wreath reveals the endless nature of God's love. Real love never ceases. Nothing can stop God's amazing love."

Santa then pulled from his bag an ornament of **HIMSELF**. "Teach the children that Santa Claus symbolizes the generosity and good will we show to others because God has given us His very special Son. Don't forget to tell the children that Saint Nicolas was not part of the first Christmas in Bethlehem."

Santa then reached into his sack and carefully placed a **CANDY CANE** on the tree. "Teach the children that the candy cane represents the shepherd's staff. The crook on the staff rescues sheep who have strayed from the flock. God never gives up on people who wander from Him."

Next, He removed a delicate **ANGEL** and lifted it to the very top of the tree. "Teach the children that angels shouted the glorious news of the Savior's birth. These heavenly messengers sang 'Glory to God in the highest! Peace and good will to everyone on earth!'"

Finally, Santa pulled out a beautifully wrapped **GIFT**. He said, "Teach the children that God deeply loves people, so He gave them His most precious gift—Jesus, His only Son. When the wise men arrived in Bethlehem, they bowed before the Child and presented gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. This is why we give gifts to others each Christmas."

Then Santa paused. He stared at the tree and seemed to be pleased. I saw that the twinkle had returned to his eyes. He slowly turned, looked at me, and smiled. Santa offered these final words, "Remember to teach the children the true meaning of Christmas. Please don't put me in the center, for I am but a humble servant. Jesus Christ is the real reason for the Christmas season. I am glad to join all others who bow down and worship Him, our Lord and God."

