

Help Your Child To See

Christ came to earth that we might *see* the goodness of God. That's the way it has always been with us humans—we don't believe until we *see* it with our own eyes. This is especially true of Christmas and of children—what they *see* is what they remember.

The three activities presented here are some of the best ideas I have come across in twenty years of working with inner city children. The whole idea is—don't waste Christmas. Make Christmas something that will last your child(ren) through eternity.

Be Creative

First consider a nativity or crèche. Get a large roll of white paper and cover one whole wall or a part of a wall in your home or apartment and get out the crayons. (If this is a bit much for your home then settle for a piece of posterboard for each child. You can even tape the posterboards together to make something sort of like a tree or manger. (If you need something to draw from ask your pastor if he has an old Christmas issue of *The War Cry* or some old greeting cards.

The baby Jesus ... The Christ ... Immanuel (God with us). After drawing the baby read a little of the Christmas story from the Bible (begin with Matthew chapters 1 and 2) and ask the children to listen close and choose what

C
H
R
I
S
T
M
A
S



they want to draw. In the end you should have something a lot nicer than a tree. The kids will be a lot more likely to get involved if you do one of your own. At least a small one for the fridge. The idea is that for children Christmas should be something they can *see*. Your church or Sunday School might do something similar for the church alcove or in individual classrooms. Covering a whole wall with white paper might seem like a lot of trouble but it could also be a lot of fun.

The Gifts Of Christmas

Second, give the same kind of gifts Christ gave. A good starting place for children is to cut out some paper shapes (circles are just fine) and write the name of one of the gifts Christ brought with Him when He came to earth. My own list would read something like this: Peace, Hope, Love, Forgiveness, Comfort, Salvation, etc. Make the ornaments big and put them on your walls or make the ornaments small and put them on your tree. Most of all, help

your children make a set of ornaments for your family and friends. *It is not easy for some children to find something they can give.* This little set of ornaments could be the best gift anyone on their list ever received. It could also set their feet on the path to true giving. Most important of all, it could shape their lifetime idea of what Christmas is all about. Other sets of ornaments you might make for friends would be focused on the names of the Birthday Boy (Jesus, Christ, Immanuel, Good Shepherd, Mighty Counselor, Savior, Redeemer, Friend, Brother, Prince of Peace, Son of God, Son of Man, Anointed One) or one of the greatest gifts God ever gave: His Word. Try pasting these in some of your Christmas cards or

on your handmade ornaments.

Third, most important thing your children need to *see* at Christmas is *you* giving yourself to Christ as He gave Himself to

The most important thing your children need to see at Christmas is you giving yourself to Christ . . .

all of us. This could mean an hour a week ringing a bell for the Army, it could mean caroling the older people in your church, it could mean sponsoring a child in the third world and putting his or her picture on your tree. It could mean any of a hundred things. The point is that *love* is not always invisible. There are ways to let our children *see* it. Perhaps most important of all is to help each

child find a way that they can give of him or herself—something that makes at least one other person feel loved.

Important as these first three visible activities are, there is one more thing children should see during the Christmas season . . . the stars at night. They should be seen for the same reason the ornaments and posters, the Bible verses and our renewed hearts should be seen—because they declare the glory of God. If Christmas is to be a holiday, let it be God's Holiday. Don't let us try and take it over ourselves. Don't let us waste Christmas.

In earlier years Mr. White was a regular volunteer and worker at The Salvation Army Citadel in Topeka, Kansas. He is national facilitator of Project Homeword (Getting God's Word ON DISPLAY in the home). He also serves as editor of their website www.homeword.ws.