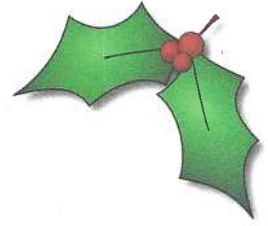


Merry Christmas!



Joy to the world! He's here! He's here! He's here!

Today is a special day – the day that Jesus is born.

Christmas is so important that we actually celebrate it for more than this one day. The Twelve Days of Christmas are the days beginning on Christmas Day, December 25th, the birth of Jesus, and ending on January 5th. Epiphany, January 6th, is the day Christians celebrate the arrival of the Magi, also known as the Wise Men who brought gifts to Jesus, and the revelation of Christ as the light of the world.

Christmas is so sacred and important that we hold it and celebrate it for 12 days! 12 WHOLE DAYS! Did you know that the song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas," is actually a song about 12 gifts that our "true love" gives us? Our "true love" is God, the One who loves you most. Get someone in your family to play "The Twelve Days of Christmas" for you. Here is what this Christmas song means.

1 st day	A Partridge in a Pear Tree	Jesus
2 nd day	2 Turtle Doves	Old and New Testaments
3 rd day	3 French Hens	Faith, Hope and Charity
4 th day	4 Calling Birds	Four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)
5 th day	5 Golden Rings	First Five Books of the Old Testament, the Pentateuch
6 th day	6 Geese A-laying	Six days of creation
7 th day	7 Swans A-swimming	Seven gifts of the Holy Spirit
8 th day	8 Maids A-milking	Eight Beatitudes
9 th day	9 Ladies Dancing	Nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit
10 th day	10 Lords A-leaping	Ten Commandments
11 th day	11 Pipers Piping	Eleven faithful disciples
12 th day	12 Drummers Drumming	Twelve points in the Apostle's Creed

I hope that you will celebrate Christmas for all twelve days. We are going to celebrate Epiphany on January 7th during the 9:45 Sunday school class time with an Epiphany party. One of the things that we are going to do is to celebrate with gifts to Jesus as we remember that the Wise Men came to visit Him. You will get to bring gifts that you are giving to Jesus to the manger during our Epiphany Party. You can make something, write a song, or write a letter or a poem. The possibilities are endless. You choose what you will give to Jesus and bring it with you on January 7th.

I pray that you know how truly special you are and that you are a precious child of God. Jesus is an amazing gift given to the world, and given to YOU! During the twelve days of Christmas, cherish this time with family and friends and prepare for the gift that you will bring to Jesus in January.

I give thanks to God for you and I pray that you have a Merry Christmas today and in the days to come.

You are blessed to be a blessing!

Cheryl Bishop, Director of Children's Ministries
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