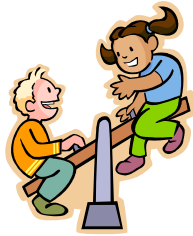


Kid's Korner



What Do You Know About Angels?

by Gordon Botting

When Jesus our Savior was born in the manger in Bethlehem, we are told that a "heavenly host" or "angel army" came upon shepherds singing and praising God. Kids, since there are over 300 references to angels in the Bible, we are going to see this month what you know about these special beings.

1. When are angels first mentioned in the Bible? _____
2. What do you think are the responsibilities of angels? Give three examples:

3. Give some other names angels are called? _____
4. There are only two angels with personal names mentioned in the Scripture. Can you give their names? _____
5. Are angels a different type of person? _____
6. Who do you think Michael the archangel is? See Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1; Rev. 12:7) _____
7. Is Satan an angel? _____
8. Do you think you have a Guardian angel? How many guardian angels do Christians believe are with them at all times? _____

Answers:
1. Angel (Gen. 16:7); Angels (Gen. 19:1)
2. Attend God's throne; watch over and protect individuals; serve as messengers
3. Cherub; cherubim; messenger
4. Michael (Dan. 10:13; Rev. 12:7) and Gabriel (Dan. 8:16; Luke 1:19)
5. They are "ministering spirits" (Heb. 1:14)
6. Jesus Christ
7. Yes (2 Cor. 11:14)
8. Yes — two

Distributed by: Upper Columbia Conference Stewardship Ministries. **Director:** Bill Skidmore.
Produced by: Pacific Union Conference Stewardship Department. **Director:** Gordon Botting. **Design/Assistant Editor:** Carol Lowe.

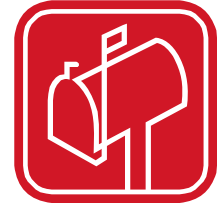
The Stewpot

A potpourri of practical ideas to help you become a better steward

December 2006
Volume 11, Issue #12

SANTA SANITY

by Gordon Botting



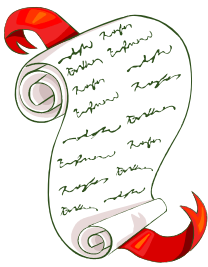
Each year it is estimated that Santa Claus receives over one million letters leading up to the festive Christmas season. At his mail box at the North Pole post office, close to half a million letters are received annually. Other letters to Santa end up at various places, including the opposite end of our planet, the South Pole. Much of Santa's mail ends up as part of a volunteer project at local post offices entitled, *Operation Santa Claus*. This project began over 80 years ago in a New York Post Office and has since then spread across the country, with branch postal clerks answering children's mail and often digging into their own pockets to send gifts to needy youngsters.

Some correspondence is part of a research project, conducted by the University of Lapland, to study the letters written to Father Christmas. Many of these are saved for posterity, such as the letter written on birch bark by two Polish school boys and currently on display at Santa Claus' Main Post Office, located on the Arctic Circle in Lapland.

As you would expect, the majority of the letters written to Santa involve wish lists from children all over the world. Many of

them are serious, some are heart breaking, and some are touched with humor. These include comments such as "Santa, don't eat too many cookies as you will get cavities," or "I know you have been eating lots of cookies all year so be careful not to get stuck in our small chimney (a hint to lose weight, big fellow)." Others are apologetic, such as the child who wrote that "my dog is sorry he barked at your reindeer last year," while others ask Santa not to forget a gift for Grandma or Grandpa if there is room on his sleigh.

Stewardship is a total life-style. It involves our health, time, talents, environment, relationships, spirituality and finances.

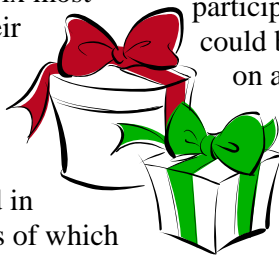


The ones that bring tears to your eyes are those such as the homeless 7-year-old who asked for nothing for himself, just diapers for his baby sister. And you have to smile at the kid from Chile who wrote that even though his English was terrible, his hope was great.¹

Even if your children have not written to Santa Claus, I'm sure you have received a list a mile long from them. Now the question is, what are you going to do to avoid letting the greed and the consumer spirit of Christmas get the better of your youngsters? Here are a few suggestions that can assist you as you prepare for this year's gift giving.

Set Priorities

Don't fall into the trap of giving your child everything on their Christmas list. You may have to let them know that some items on their list just will not be available this year, or ever. It could be a teachable moment on setting priorities if they have to pick the six most important choices on their list. Take a good look at the Christmas list of each child as it may say something about what they are really interested in and could give you ideas of which



direction to help your child develop throughout the next year.

P.S. You will know that you have purchased too many presents for your children when you can't remember where you hid all those extra goodies, or if your kids fail to open all of their presents that are under the tree.

Teamwork

Sometimes you have to tell your youngsters that certain toys or other items will not be permitted because they are dangerous, too expensive, or morally objectionable. But even when you give your best reason as to why they will not find a particular item under the Christmas tree, they will sometimes resort to saying they will ask Santa or pray to Jesus for it. At that moment you need to remind them that both Jesus and/or Santa are part of your parental team and they support your objections.

Develop the Spirit

One of the best ways to help your children or teenagers understand the true meaning of the Christmas season is to have them participate in a local charity. This could be by their assisting to put on a Christmas meal to those who are less fortunate, or the entire family pooling their moneys to purchase a bicycle for a local TV station's annual Christmas

Those Inappropriate Gifts



Many gifts bring joy to the recipient as well as blessing to the giver. However, here are a few gift ideas that you might be well advised to cross off your Christmas shopping list.³

Assembly required

Unless you know that the intended recipient is mechanically minded or loves the challenge of assembling things, you should pass on gifts that say "assembly required". An exception would be if you plan to help the individual with assembling the gift.

Intended for you

Don't disguise something that you want as your gift to another family member, such as a large plasma TV to your spouse when you will watch it more than she does — she will be on to you the moment the wrapping paper is off. Similarly, avoid giving gift items that hint of daily housework, such as a new washing machine or vacuum cleaner.

Incentive to improve

Gifts that hint at a need for improvement are seldom appreciated. An example would be an alarm clock to an always-late employee or a stationary bicycle for the couch potato. Not only will they resent the gift, but also the well-intended giver.

drive. These gifts will be more meaningful if they work for the money that they will be giving.

Sometimes choosing to give to a particular charity on an ongoing basis throughout the year can be even more significant, such as adopting an orphan child overseas that the whole family sends money to each month. Another way is to have them sort through their toys, DVD's, clothes, etc., making sure

the items are still in good condition, and then taking them to a goodwill organization.²



References/Sources of Information:

1. Santa letters & history from the Internet
2. *A Holiday Sanity Clause*, Kiplinger's, December 2003
3. *Bottom Line/Personal Holiday Guide*