



## Catholic Church and School

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How many of you are hoping to get a Christmas present? How about if you didn't get any presents this year but, instead, just got letters from Santa or your mother or father or relatives saying that they loved you and will give you a present next year?

No, you really would like to see that someone loves you and a present allows you to see love. Love is invisible. Giving presents is our way of making invisible love visible for someone else to see. A present lets you see that someone loves you.

God wanted to give us a present that we could see so he gave us a little baby. God became human like us, arms, legs, bellybutton and all. God became visible and wore diapers. That was God's gift to the world on the first Christmas. Who was that baby? It is Jesus.

I once knew a family who would put up their manger each year. They would put everyone in it except the baby and they would wrap the baby as a present for their children. The tag would say "To: [The children's names,] From: God." Every Christmas morning they would unwrap that present first as a reminder of God's gift.

What do you do when someone gives you a present? First, you thank them. Second, you often give presents back to them. What are some presents that you can give back to God?

Praying and Worshipping is like a present back to God for giving us a present. The best present that you can give is to visit Jesus at Mass each week just like the people came to the manger at Christmas.

Sometimes we have reindeer and rabbits in church. The reindeer come at Christmas and the rabbits come at Easter. Reindeer and rabbits are good, we love them, but it is better to come every week.

How would you like to celebrate Christmas every day? You can by giving gifts all year long. Give to God all year long and give to other people all year long.

How many of you have ever visited Santa and sat on his lap? There was a Santa's helper giving coloring books one time. He said sometimes children would ask for an extra book for their brother or sister. One time a little girl asked for 10 more books. He asked her why she wanted more. She said in order to burn them so her family could stay warm that night. He gave her 50. This reminds us that Christmas is not a date but way of living, always sharing gifts with others. There are always people in need of our gifts.

Christmas is a combination of two words: "Christ" and "Mass", which means mission. Christmas means "Christ's mission". Each Mass is really a little Christmas as Christ comes again for all of us, not as a little baby but under the appearance of bread and wine. And that is why we come to Mass week after week to visit Jesus, just like the shepherds, the wise men and the angels that you see around the manger. That is your mission for the whole year.

*Fr. David Ruppert at St. Anthony de Padua Church, South Bend, Indiana  
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