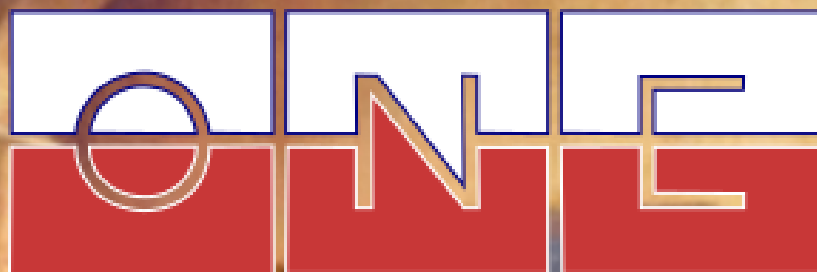


INSIDE:

+ We asked: "What gift would you give Jesus?"



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Editor’s Note:

Many churches observe Epiphany on Jan. 6. This commemorates the time when the Three Wise Men, or Magi, visited Jesus and brought Him gifts. This month we asked our writers, including children, what physical gifts they would give to the Baby Jesus. My thanks to Linda Mills for compiling the children's responses.

Children Respond to, ‘What Gift Would You Give Him?’

*Children’s responses compiled by:
Linda Mills*

Editor’s Note:

Many churches celebrate Epiphany on Jan. 6. This is the date when Christians remember the Wise Men visiting the Baby Jesus and bringing Him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

We asked parents, grandparents, and Sunday School teachers in Ellis County to pose the following question to the children in their charge: If you were with the Wise Men so long ago and went to visit the Baby Jesus, what gift would you give to Him?

We specified that the children needed to understand that this gift should be a physical object that they owned and that they wouldn’t be getting it back. Once they gave the gift to Jesus, it was His to keep. We asked those

submitting responses to give us the child’s name, age, and church, if applicable. We also specified that we wanted children’s unvarnished responses.

The children’s responses are below. To protect the children’s privacy, we are just listing the first initial of their last name. If no age is listed, it was because none was provided. Please enjoy!

* * *

“I would give Jesus my stuffed bunny because that was one of the last things my grandpa gave me when I was a kid, and he is in a better place now.” Emily P., First Baptist Church, Hays.

* * *

“I would give Jesus my bed, so He can get rest because He works very hard.” Karsen F., First Baptist Church, Hays.

* * *

“I would give Him my Polaroid camera, so He could take pictures of all the beautiful sites He comes across.” Hailie, First Baptist Church, Hays.

* * *



“I would give Jesus my stuffed bunny because that was one of the last things my grandpa gave me...”
(Photo illustration by Linn Ann Huntington)

'What Gift Would You Give Him?' (Continued)

"I would give him my nice sleeping bag. It would save Him from really cold situations or whenever He needs to save Himself from the rain." Gavin F., First Baptist Church, Hays.

* * *

"I would give Jesus my tennis shoes because He walks everywhere." Zachariah H., age 7, First Baptist Church, Hays.

**"What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a Shepherd
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man
I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him:
Give my heart."**

Written by Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-1894), Poem #246 "In the Bleak Midwinter," circa 1872. Later set to music by Gustav Holst. © Universal Classics & Jazz.

* * *

"I would give Baby Jesus my blanket so He could stay warm." Marcelene L., age 8, Liberty Foursquare Church, Hays.



Linda Mills is the Director of First Call for Help of Ellis County and a member of First Baptist Church in Hays.

A Simple Light Source to Bring a Small Baby Comfort

***Written by:
Kathy Dinkel***

Our challenging assignment this month for ONE Magazine was to pretend that we were with the Magi, visiting the baby Jesus and giving Him a gift. What would be a physical gift, or a talent that I would offer the baby Jesus, the King of Kings?

I admit I traveled through several thought possibilities before arriving at a feasible idea. First, I pictured myself standing before baby Jesus, born in modern times, birthed in a farm

stable without any modern conveniences. My first thought, therefore, was to provide comfort in some way. I would open my home to Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. I'm guessing that possibly was the first gift given by the shepherds, a warm home, food and clothing. My gift would have been hospitality.

Also, of course, those who know me well would know that if I were visiting a baby in modern times, I would have sewed a hooded baby towel and ordered a CD of Michael Card's "Sleep Sound in Jesus." That's my typical

baby gift. But I was completely missing the point and needed to look at this from another angle.

I read the assignment again. It was specific that I pick a current object, but go back into Jesus' time and give it to Him there. With that in mind, I went through a mental inventory of my house, and in an instant, all of the items seemed as worthless as sand. How could a physical object from the 21st Century ever be good enough to place before Jesus? There was nothing.

Finally, I thought of the symbolism of the Magi's

A Simple Light Source (Continued)

gifts, realizing the practicality of them, but also the fact that the gifts foretold that Jesus would be a gift to us. He would be our King (symbolized by the gold given by the Magi), our priest (the gift of frankincense), and Jesus was the sacrifice for our sin (the gift of myrrh for His burial).

That's when I changed my point of view on the items in my home. I looked again with the idea of choosing an object that would have a practical use for the baby and His family, but also symbolize the gift that Jesus is to me. Finally I was making progress, because the items in my home came to life with purpose and symbolism.

The gift on which I settled to bring to Jesus was a lantern that I received from my

husband's Aunt Rosemary when my husband passed away two years ago. It is one of those simple items in my home that would mean absolutely nothing to a visitor, but it's actually quite dear to me. It has a battery-operated candle in the inside, a sweet saying on one of the glass panels, and a small silk sunflower arrangement with burlap ribbon attached to the handle. Every time I glance at it, it gives me comfort and pleasure.

As a gift for Jesus, I picture the light within the lantern symbolizing the light that Jesus is within my life, and the fact that He gives me comfort and pleasure every day. The sunflower is a symbol of me being a Kansas girl, planted out on this rough prairie, but thriving nonetheless. I think baby Jesus would have been

pleased and comforted by this gentle light in His life. It would have been small enough for the family to take with them on their early travels, plus I think there is always need for a gentle light source next to a child's bed each night.

So, in conclusion, yes, this was a challenging assignment, but it was a helpful exercise in my life. I started out thinking that the physical items that we possess in this 21st Century could not possibly be useful for a person like Jesus on this earth, but I changed my mind. In reality, all creation declares the attributes of God, even a simple lantern from a Kansas girl.



Kathy Dinkel is a member of Liberty Foursquare Church in Hays.

“And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” - Matthew 2:11 (NKJV)

What Better Gift than One that Offers Divine Communication?

Written by:

Rev. Jonathan E. McCottry Sr.

In the age of gift giving, one would think that a proper baby gift, especially for a newborn, would be diapers or a diaper pail. One would think that maybe booties or some other type of fragile little gift would signify to a mother that someone appreciates the fact that she has brought a new life into the world. When I consciously think about the gifts given to the Baby Jesus, I see many challenges, because one would not think that a bar of gold, or even a gift of myrrh, or frankincense would be a proper gift for a newborn.

Even if a child were born on Wall Street, I don't think that the Securities and Exchange Commission would look at gold as the proper currency for a gift to a newborn baby. Remember, newborn babies have no teeth. They have no ability to walk. Many have their eyes shut for several days until their eyes become acclimated to the light in the outside world. So, giving gold

would be like giving eyeglasses to a baby.

Frankincense and myrrh are sap, drawn from the *Boswellia sacra* and *Commiphora* trees, respectively. Frankincense was often burned as incense, while myrrh made its way into medicine and perfume. Thus, it seems illogical to give a baby these most impractical gifts.

So, Jesus was given literally currency, incense, and medicine as gifts from individuals whom we call Wise Men. Now some might think me nonsensical to give my suggestion of a modern-day gift to Jesus. However, in comparison to the gifts that were given by Wise Men, my thought doesn't seem so impractical at all.

My suggestion is a cell phone. In practical terms, a cell phone would be just as applicable as the three aforementioned gifts. What better gift can be given that will help the King of the Universe to communicate with His out of this world "Father"?

Put it in practical terms

today: Almost no one moves without a cell phone. The gift of a phone makes much practical sense. When people need to communicate, they use a cell phone. When one needs an alarm clock, a cell phone. When one needs a calendar, a cell phone. When, on many occasions, one needs to check vital signs, a cell phone. When one needs a bank balance, a cell phone. When one needs to find out current news and facts, a cell phone.

One of the most practical gifts and one of the most popular needs today for social media, or even for church, the cell phone has everything-- books of every variety, Bibles, reference materials, any encyclopedia, a dictionary. For all of these needs, people refer to their cell phones.

With apps of various varieties, cell phones can satisfy many needs, with access to anyone everywhere. One cannot move or function without a good cell phone.

When traveling on a

What Better Gift (Continued)

trip, if a business executive leaves his or her documents at home, the person doesn't turn around and go home—not if the person has a cell phone that contains the backup documents. The person will immediately continue on his or her journey knowing that at the business center of the hotel where the traveler is staying, the executive can access anything that is needed.

However, if those same business travelers, occupied with their business documents, discovered they had left their cell phones at home—even though 50 miles away—they would immediately turn around and go back and retrieve them.

Now let me be clear: the King of the universe needed absolutely nothing because “the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein.” But the idea of gift giving means that one will bestow upon another an acceptable exchange from one’s heart to the recipient, with the understanding that what is

given is practical and functional.

“[T]he King of the universe needed absolutely nothing because ‘the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein.’”

You would think that the King of Kings would want to have open communication with his father, so a cell phone would be the ideal choice. That way, Jesus could talk to God, His Father, at any time. But practically speaking, even though we could give a gift of such importance, none of the cell phone carriers has the ability to communicate outside of this world. And the communication line had already been established through the Father in a vehicle called prayer. Each of us today has that same access line. Each of us today can call

on the hand of Omnipotence to address our needs.

Jesus was the baby who came into this world with nothing. Yet, he already possessed everything that this universe has, and, clearly, He did not need the three gifts of the Wise Men. But the gifts were accepted by parents who acted on behalf of a baby who was unable to accept or refuse.

While it is true that this child did not need a cell phone to communicate with His Heavenly Father, we who have nothing have an opportunity to give our all to the King of the Universe. Jesus gave everything for us, including His life. May we today accept the line of communication offered to us, which is called prayer, by the One who owns the right to the cell phone that offers life eternal.



Rev. Jonathan E. McCottry, Sr., of Hays is Pastor Emeritus of the Southwest Region Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists.