

HOME DEMONSTRATION NEWS

Christmas Brings Change In Attitude Of Many People

As the Christmas season approaches, we can sense a changed attitude in people. The three most often expressed wishes—"Merry Christmas," "Happy Christmas," and "Joyous Christmas"—seem to fill the world with a sort of kindness and happiness, but we realize there are as many attitudes toward Christmas as there are people. If you answer automatically to any one of the three Christmas wishes, "Same to you," you don't have to stop and think very deeply about it. The way a person feels about Christmas tells a great deal about that person! How do you feel about Christmas?

Some people say "Christmas is really for children." The matchless story of the babe in a manger, the angels' song, the shepherds, the Wise Men—holds a natural appeal for a child. Often we who have gone further on life's journey turn to a child's faith and wonder to keep the Christmas spirit alive in our own hearts. But, Christmas isn't just for

children—it is for everyone. It is a special time to help us renew our faith.

Of course there are many people who would just as soon skip the whole season! They go through all the motions, but it is a chore to them. The mad rush exhausts many a seller and buyer. They complain so much that there is no joyous or happy spirit apparent. For others, the season brings to the surface old memories, and they wish they could get away from the happiness and joy that only make their personal grief and sadness more poignant. For some, this happiest of seasons emphasizes their despair, their failures, their weaknesses—and temptations to "take some other way out" overwhelm them. Alcoholism and suicide rates rise markedly during the holidays.

This season could be a time of renewing family ties. A family Christmas gives one a feeling of belonging, of being loved, of the worthwhileness of life.

How Can Christmas Traditions Strengthen Family Life?

Because Christmas is the birthday of the Christ Child, it holds a special meaning for the family. Christmas started with a baby in a manger—the Christ of History becomes for each person, the Christ of Experience. As families try to keep Christmas, they are reminding the world that Christ is a part of their lives today—not just a fact of history. As they offer their gifts of faith, hope and love, they are putting into practice this thought—"Not only at Christmas, but all the year through the joy you give to others is the joy that comes to you. The road to Bethlehem runs right through the homes of folks like me and you."

Christmas parents are becoming increasingly concerned over the need for making faith a family affair—of living day by day the religion they profess. Family traditions at Christmas time may include the tree, Santa Claus, gifts, cards, the big family dinner—but Christmas offers a rare opportunity to emphasize the spiritual more than the material values of the holiday season. Someone has said that Christmas can be a "hollowday" if it does not place emphasis on the true meaning of the season rather than on the festive holiday.

Terrariums Fun To Construct And Are Easy To Care For

Terrariums—gardens enclosed in glass—are fun to make and easy to care for.

Any glass container that transmits light may be used—a globe, fish tank or large snifter.

Also, almost any house plant is suitable, especially those that like a high humidity. Plants most commonly used are African violet, maranta, begonia, coleus, croton, dracaena, ivy, peperomia, philodendron, pothos, and wandering Jew. But you can let your imagination be your guide and select any variety that will help make an interesting display.

As for actual construction, the U. S. Department of Agriculture gives the following step-by-step instructions in its booklet on "Selecting and Growing House Plants."

Place a 1-inch layer of gravel, pebbles, broken flower pots, or charcoal in the bottom of the container. Dig moss from the woods and line the sides of the terrarium below the intended soil level, placing the mossy side against the glass.

Prepare a soil mixture of equal parts of garden soil, sand, and peat moss—enough for a layer 1-1/2 to 2 inches deep. Mound the soil to one side of the container to make

a slope. Use a long pair of tweezers or sticks tied to tweezers—to put the plants in place. Try to avoid getting soil on the leaves. After the plants are in, clean the leaves with a dry brush. Then spray the plants and soil lightly with water.

Cover the container with a sheet of glass or piece of plastic film. Place the terrarium in a location where it has bright light but never any direct sunlight. Turn terrarium occasionally so plants will be straight.

Trees Can End In A Blaze Of Glory

Christmas can come to an end in a blaze of glory—and a safe one, too. Custom sets a date for the disposal of the tree by burning. It's January 6, the Twelfth Night of Christmas, or Epiphany—traditionally the night when the Three Wise Men, or Magi, made their visit to the Christ Child in Bethlehem.

The modern world, reviving the Twelfth Night custom of bonfires for disposing of the tree and other greenery, combines the safety factor with community spirit and fun.

Twelfth Night celebrations are planned in many communities in public parks for neighborhood groups. It's a great night for the kids and their parents.

Children bring the trees to the park, or the town collects them. On Twelfth Night everyone gathers around the bonfire of trees and greenery to sing carols.

Yule Named Towns Get Mail Deluge

Among the busiest of Santa's helpers at the Yuletide season are postoffices in towns with Christmas names.

In Noel, Mo.; Christmas, Fla.; Santa Claus, Ind.; Bethlehem, Ind.; and Bethlehem,

Pa., many thousands of packages and cards are received around Christmas time, to be postmarked with the Yuletown's name and remailed to other states and countries. The towns also play host to many visitors during the Christmas season. In Beth-

lehem and Nazareth, Pa., there are permanent displays and festivals of light, emphasizing the religious meaning and beauty of Christmas.

According to story, the first Christmas in England was celebrated at the famous Round Table of King Arthur.



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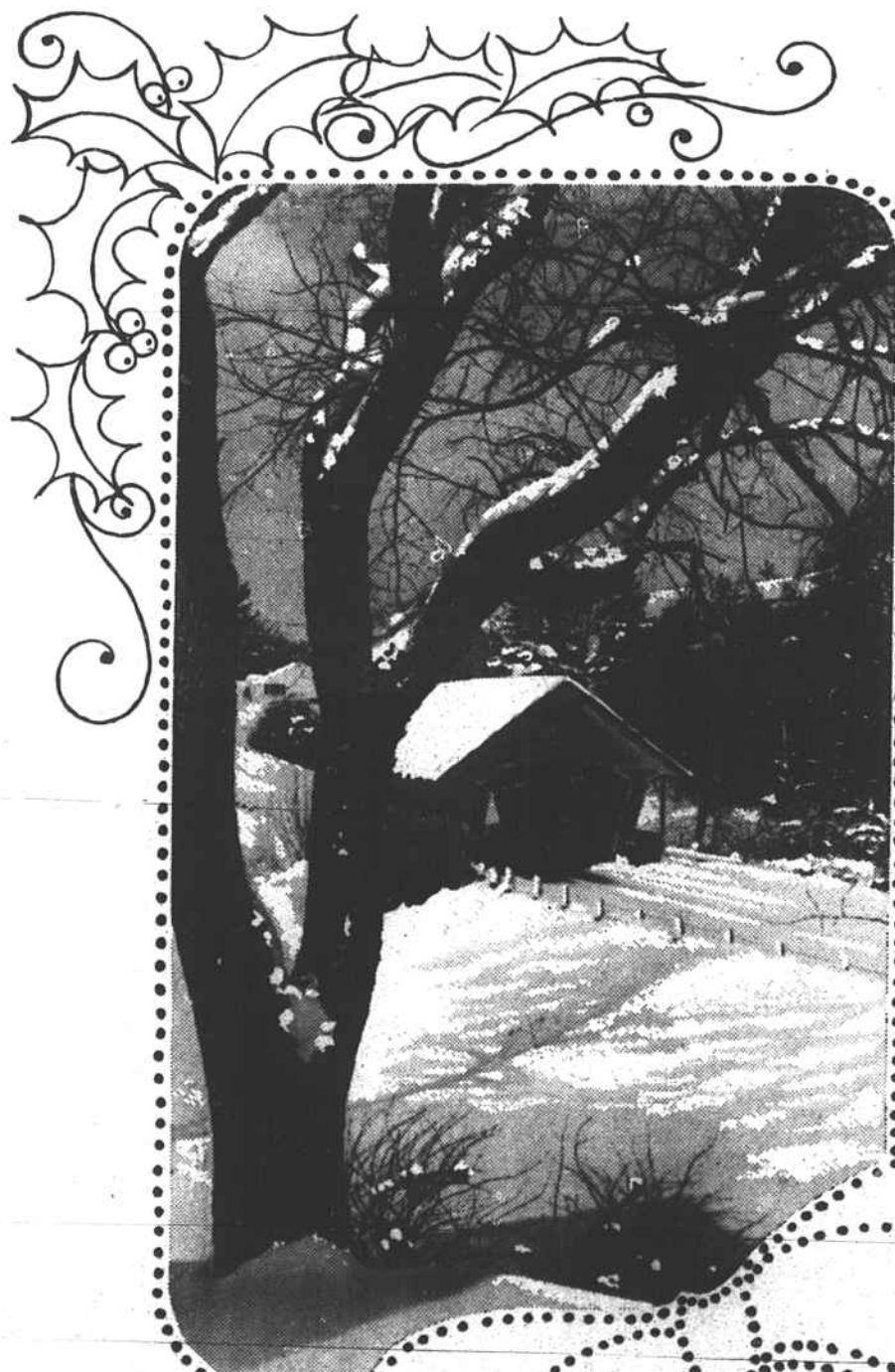


May the joy and peace of the first Christmas return to fill your heart with gladness at this holy season.

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Holiday Greetings

We gladly join in the spirit of the season, and heartily extend our very best wishes, our warmest greetings to all our many friends. May the holidays hold for you the riches of friendship...the treasures of happy hours with loved ones...the priceless joys of good health and contentment.

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