



FIRST CHRISTMAS

by: Ann Moore



A little child's first Christmas! His parents are so anxious to have everything perfect. The tree, green and shimmering with the sparkle of lights and silver balls and bells, is perfection. The beautifully wrapped packages peek gaily from beneath the lower branches. Over the hearth, where a fire is crackling cherrily, hangs baby's stocking. Mommie and Daddy have hung their stockings too. The entire room is full of Christmas cheer, but is it full of Christmas spirit? Nowhere in the room is there a nativity scene. There is no mention of Jesus's birthday, only Santa Claus. Is this child's first Christmas going to be truly perfect?

Will this child, small as he is, receive the impression that Christmas is all getting and no giving? Will Santa Claus be for him a greater symbol of Christmas than Jesus Christ? Will he never learn that the reason we celebrate December 25 is that it is the anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ--the world's greatest gift? These parents, so earnestly trying to give all to their child, are forgetting the most important gift.

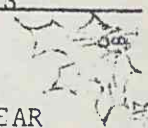
Every year we hear talk of Christmas becoming more and more commercialized. The merchants reap the harvest of a holiday season. More and more people try to find the most elaborate gifts to give their friends. In return, they expect expensive presents to be given to them. We seem to be drifting upon a sea of expensive expectations and the desire to give gifts of high monetary value.

Why is Christmas this way? Why can we not realize that the most prized gifts are those made or bought with great care and a sincere desire to please the receiver. The best gift a mother can receive is a card or potholder made by the hands, those precious hands, of her child. A father's most prized gift is a birdhouse or any object made by the awkward, clumsy, but loving hands of his son. The best gift a child can receive is the look of proud joy on his parent's face as that child gives



CHRISTMAS IS THE TIME OF YEAR

by: Betty Sue Bruton



Christmas is the season for the peal of silver bells, the laughter of small children, the smell of chestnuts, the clear, crisp beauty of the snow spreading its great white blanket over all. This is the time for all to be happy and thankful for the abundant life we have, in a free nation.

However, there is a sad side to this also. Many people will not feel the joy, but will only experience cold, hunger, and loneliness. For these people have nothing. Their children will receive no bright toys or striped candy-canes or stuffed stockings. They will feel left out, and think of Christmas only as another day to try to live through.

We are so wrapped up in what we are going to receive, what we are going to do Christmas day, whether our tree is big enough. Never, well, almost never, do we think of what someone else might like or what they would get any pleasure out of doing. We should review the meaning of Christmas, again and again, until the real value unfolds before us.

Try doing something extra nice for someone this Christmas. See if you don't feel a pleasant sensation go through your body when their face glows with a brightness that you feel too.

As you purchase gifts this Christmas, have this thought in mind, "This gift is something I would like to have, so I'll give it to this person. He would like it, too!" Then, you will have derived the full meaning of Christmas.

him the gift which he has lovingly fashioned with his own hands. This is Christmas spirit!

This year thousands of small children will be experiencing their first Christmases. Are they going to become aware of the true spirit or will they learn only the "getting" of this special holiday season? The answer is up to their parents. Let us, as future parents, remember the true spirit of Christmas so that we may help our children learn the deep meaning of this holy season.