



### Aid To The Needy

Members of the St. Stephens Baptist Church missionary groups, The Shaw, and The Deborah, pose with some of the gifts they gathered recently for the less fortunate. The groups joined forces on Saturday, Dec. 1, to sponsor a clothing bank and gift giveaway for needy families, street people and people in nursing and rest homes (photo by James Parker).

## Select Christmas toys for child's safety

By JOANNE FALLS  
Home Economics Extension Agent

With Christmas only a few weeks away, many people are getting ready to buy toys for the children on their Christmas lists.

Adult relatives and friends should be concerned about the safety and wearability of the toys, as well as the joy and satisfaction that they will bring to the children. The toys you buy should be fun, instructive, as well as safe and easy to clean.

Keeping toys clean is especially important for babies and young children who like to put things into their mouths. If buying for a child under five years, try to get a toy that can be washed in suds and water or wiped clean. Check the labels of stuffed toys to see if they are colorfast and machine washable. Once a sanitary toy is discovered,



Falls

make sure it is safe for the child for whom it is intended. Many accidents have been caused because a child played with a toy designed for someone older. Even in buying toys for older children, think about the babies in the family who might be able to swallow some detachable part of the older child's toy.

Always check toys for safety before buying. Examine soft toys to detect any harmful wires or pins hidden in the fabric, and check tags to be sure paint is non-toxic. Avoid toys that make loud noises which could harm a child's hearing.

When buying a toy for a child three years or younger, check for sharp edges or small pieces that can be easily detached and swallowed.

For example, buy stuffed animals or dolls with eyes embroidered on, rather than fastened. All toys should be sturdy enough to withstand the most vigorous play. Never purchase one that might shatter into sharp pieces.

Analyze the personality of the child who will receive your gift. If a youngster has a tendency to play rough, don't buy that youngster a heavy toy that could injure another person.

After checking a toy for cleanability and safety, look again to make sure the child it is meant for will enjoy it. Children usually get the most pleasure from toys they can learn from. Babies, for example, are fascinated by mobiles, play mirrors and toys that rattle and squeak.

Bright colors are particularly attractive to infants. They love to hug stuffed animals and soft dolls. Balls and roly-polys encourage them to reach and crawl, and provide visual stimulation as well. Stacking toys help develop babies' muscles.

Toddlers of one-and-a-half to three years are challenged by ride-on toys that promote agility

and strengthen muscles. Big building blocks and simple puzzles encourage patience and develop imagination. Toddlers appreciate simple books and a toy that lets them imitate adults is always a big hit.

Children of three to five years of age are even more interested than toddlers in the adult world. Buy them doctor kits, toy telephones, miniature farms and doll houses. Cars, trucks, planes and trains are always fun for active play. Any child this age loves to ride on a tricycle. They appreciate more complicated puzzles.

Whatever the age, parents should try to supervise a child's play as much as possible. Since accidents may occur when a person falls or trips over a toy left around the house, be sure to make routine checks to see if wear and tear have made any toys dangerous and unfit for play.

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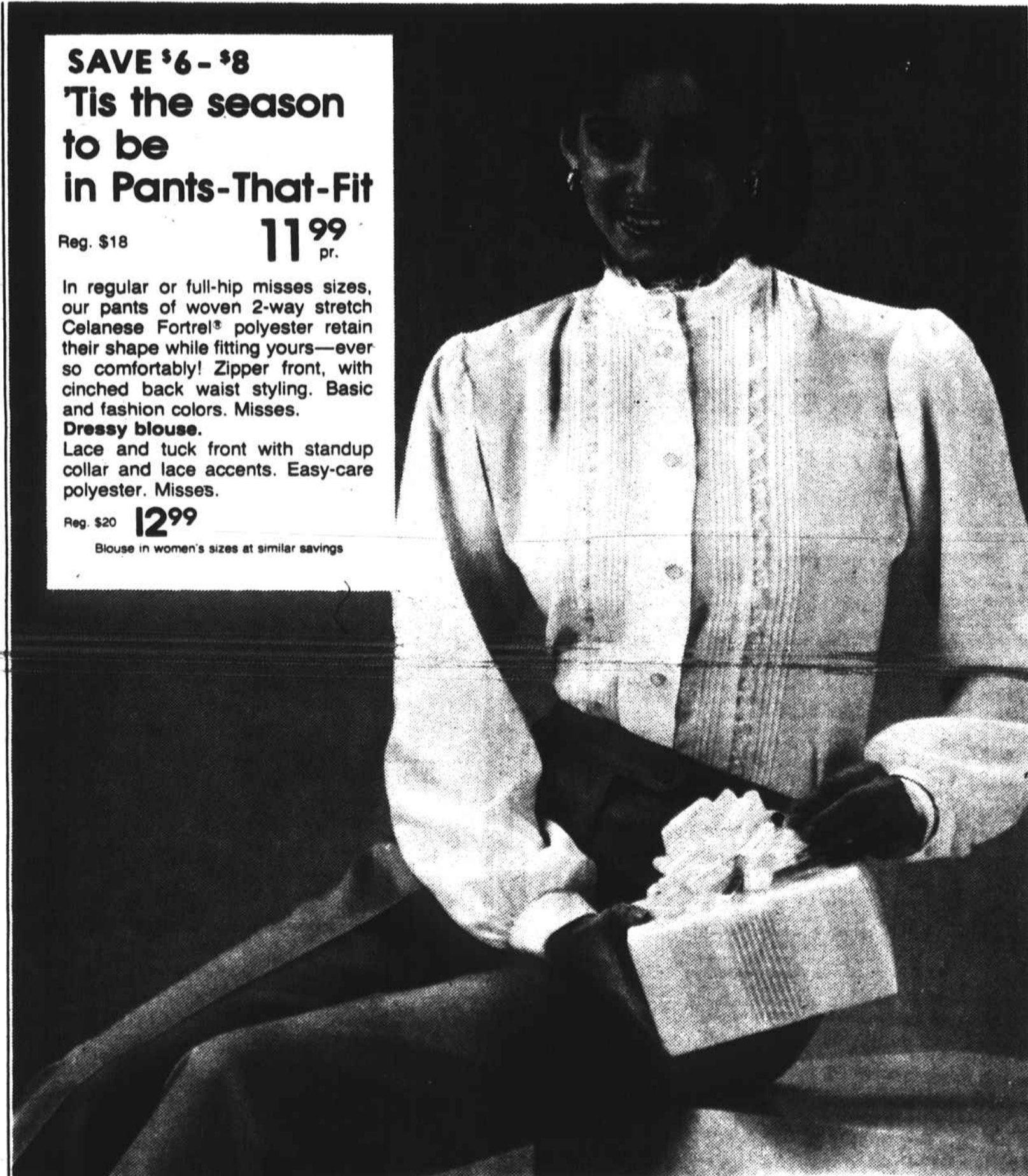
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