

The Greatest Gift

Katie: (*enters singing in the tune of Santa Claus is Coming to Town*) I'm making a list and checking it twice - I want a lot of things and getting stuff's nice. My presents are coming to town... My presents are coming to town... My presents are coming to town!

Zeek: Whoa! Lets recalculate this! Your presents are coming to town? You act as if it's YOUR birthday.

Katie: It's better than a birthday; it's presents day!

Zeek: Unfortunately, that is what so many people think in the *present* day.

Katie: The present day! You got it, my main geek! The day of the gifts!

Zeek: Not present day as in gift day but present day as in the present – the here and now – speaking of today – the present and not the past.

Katie: Zeek the Geek, you act like getting presents is a bad thing.

Zeek: Not at all. I like getting gifts, but some people act like that's all Christmas is about.

Katie: Well isn't Christmas all about gifts?

Zeek: Well... Christmas is about the greatest gift of all.

Katie: The Super Transforming Diva Pet Shop Beauty Queen Poodle Pooch Parlor? That is the greatest gift of em all!

Zeek: No! The super transinkle diva do pretty pooch parlor whatsamahinkle is NOT the greatest gift of all!

Katie: It's The Super Diva Pet Shop Beauty Queen Poodle Pooch Parlor!

Zeek: Whatever... It is not the greatest gift.

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Katie: Do they already have version 323.0 out? Every time I think I got the latest version, they make a new one, and I have to buy another. I wonder if they do that on purpose.

Zeek: Ya think? The point is, the greatest gift of all is not a what, but a who?

Katie: A who?

Zeek: Yes, Jesus Christ is the greatest gift of all. We celebrate Christmas because it is Jesus' birthday, not ours.

Katie: Wow! That's right Zeek. It is Jesus' birthday. I get so excited about getting presents that I sometimes forget what Christmas is all about. After all, Christmas does begin with Christ. I know Christmas is all about Jesus, but why do we call Jesus the greatest gift of all?

Zeek: Jesus is the Son of God who left his home in heaven to be born as a regular person. He was fully God and fully man.

Katie: I know the story. A young couple named Mary and Joseph were engaged to be married when an angel came to Mary and told her that she would have God's son, and he would be the savior of the entire world! When Joseph found out that Mary was going to have a baby, he didn't know what to think because they were not even married yet! An angel came to Joseph and told him that the baby Mary was carrying was God's only son. Can you image?! So... Mary and Joseph were married, and they loved each other very much. They had the best baby shower in the world! The birth announcements were the grandest ever! Jesus had all the best gifts! After all, Jesus is the Son of God!

Zeek: What? I thought you said you knew the story.

Katie: Didn't I tell it right?

Zeek: Up until the part about Jesus having the best baby shower in the world, the grandest birth announcements ever, and all the best gifts! You must have not listened to the WHOLE story in Sunday school.

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Katie: I bet ya I did. I know a grand entrance when I see one. After all, Jesus is the King of Kings. You tell the story, and you'll see that I'm right.

Zeek: I'll tell this true story and you'll see that Jesus entered into the world without any of the things that you've said.

Katie: If I'm right, you'll have to drink my eggnog!

Zeek: Your recipe stinks to high heaven! Last time I drank it... well... let's just say you know what happened to my cookies.

Katie: I still think it was the cookies that made you toss my eggnog!

Zeek: It was the eggnog; trust me!

Katie: Okay, but you're going to be drinking it again, and you'll see that it tastes as good as the way I told the story is true.

Zeek: Not going to happen because Jesus was born in a barn – not exactly the best baby shower in the world. Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem to be counted. As dreadful as it seems, they didn't have computers back then, so everyone traveled back to the city of their birth. When they got there after their 70-mile journey, the hotels were all full.

Katie: No vacancy! One nice man let them stay in his barn because Mary was ready to give birth. Couldn't he at least offer her a couch or something? How rude!

Zeek: But Mary and Joseph didn't complain. They were thankful. They gave birth to Jesus and they wrapped him in swaddling clothes and lay him in the manger. It was a very humble entrance for the Great King, indeed.

Katie: Now for the fancy part! I just love the fancy part! You stop me if I get anything wrong. Get ready for my famous eggnog surprise!

Zeek: The fancy part? What fancy part? I have a feeling I will be stopping you soon.

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Katie: How can you forget the fancy part? When Jesus was born, off in a field in the same country, shepherds were watching their flock that night. An angel appeared before the shepherds and God's glory shined all around them. The shepherds were so afraid. It's not every day somebody comes before you glowing!

Zeek: I would really be afraid now days if somebody was glowing. Too much nuclear waste! Go green!

Katie: Zeek! You really are a geek! But I agree; Recycle!

Zeek: Thank you! I think...

Katie: Anywho... The angel told the shepherds...

Zeek: *"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger"*

Katie: *"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."* --- WOW! The grandest birth announcement ever! Who else has had all of heaven open up to announce their birth! You better get ready for eggnog, Zeek!

Zeek: Okay, I'll give you that one. The birth announcement was pretty spectacular, but what about the baby shower and the gifts? I don't recall any baby shower recorded in the Bible.

Katie: *(sighs)* Oh Zeek. What about the three wisemen? They saw the bright north star that God placed in the sky over the place where Jesus was born and they went to ask King Herod about the baby who had been born King of the Jews.

Zeek: The king didn't like what he heard because he thought he was the king of the Jews. The wicked and foolish king thought Jesus would grow up to kill him and take over the kingdom, and so he plotted to kill baby Jesus.

Katie: He told the three wisemen to find the baby and tell him where he was so he could come worship Jesus too.

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Zeek: But the wisemen were called wise for a reason; they knew the king was lying, and they left to go find Jesus with no intentions of ever returning and telling King Herod where he was.

Katie: When they found Jesus, they showered him in gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. What a baby shower! Those were some pretty awesome gifts. You have to admit it, Zeek.

Zeek: UGH! My stomach is turning already! You tricked me! Eggnog surprise, bluck!

Katie: I didn't mean to trick you, but you really did make me think about Jesus having all the best gifts.

Zeek: Gold, frankincense, and myrrh? I am sure you like the part about getting expensive gifts.

Katie: When I say Jesus has the best gifts, I mean Jesus brings the best gifts into the world. He has all the best gifts and gives them to us. He gives us joy, peace, and love.

Zeek: Through God's love and Jesus Christ, everyone can receive the best gift of all.

Katie: And you're right Zeek, it's not the new poodle pooch parlor I've been wanting that is the best gift. It's the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Zeek: Jesus is our gift from God who saves us from our sins.

Katie: By believing in him, that he was born of a virgin and that he took the punishment for our sins by dying on the cross for us, we can be made new and receive the gift of salvation.

Zeek: The best gift we can give to Jesus and others this Christmas is to simply tell others about God's free gift of salvation.

Katie: You can't unwrap a gift if you don't even know you have it.

Zeek: *(to the audience)* What kind of gift are you going to give this Christmas?

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Katie: I'm going to GIVE the best gift of all. I am going to tell somebody about Jesus, so they can receive eternal life through Jesus, God's one and only Son! WOW, Zeek! You were right! Giving is better than receiving!

Zeek: So, I don't have to drink the stinknog, uh, I mean the eggnog?

Katie: Zeek Geek! Just for that you have to drink double! (*exit*)

Zeek: Wait! Come back here! I didn't mean it! (*exit*)

Object Lesson

What ya need: A box (the bigger the better), Christmas wrap, ribbons, and bows to decorate the box. Something to place inside the box to represent salvation such as a cross, a poster with the word *forgiven* or *saved*, a manger, or nativity set.

Wrap the box with a lot of extra wrapping paper, ribbons, and bows. Call a child up one at a time and ask them how they could show somebody the love or Jesus, or tell them about Jesus. It is okay if answers are repeated. Allow each child to unwrap the gift a little bit – remove a bow, a ribbon, or a portion of the paper. Explain that this is how it is when we tell others about Jesus.

Some people need to hear about Jesus and be shown God's love many times before they accept Jesus and fully believe and unwrap God's free gift of salvation. Salvation is always there for them, but we have to help them unwrap it by the way we act, speak, and through the things we do. We have to set an example of love; we never know when an unsaved person will be watching. We need to tell others about Jesus and do our best to live like Jesus. We don't have to be discouraged if they do not accept Jesus right away because sometimes it takes longer for others to unwrap the gift. It is our responsibility to help them. One of the biggest ways to help somebody unwrap God's gift of salvation is by praying for them. God listens to our prayers. God will send other people in their lives if we ask him too – other people who will help them unwrap their gift. We must tell everybody we know about Jesus, show them God's love by being kind and living like Jesus, and never forget to pray for the unsaved people in our lives. When we do this, and work together as Christians, the unsaved become saved, and they can receive the best gift of all – eternal life with Jesus in heaven!

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Bible Verse:

James 1:17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Every good gift comes from God!

Review Questions:

Who is the greatest gift of all? Jesus!

Why is Jesus considered a gift to the world? Jesus brings the world salvation – peace – joy – love.

Whose birthday is it on Christmas?

What is the best gift we can give Jesus and others on Christmas? Tell about Jesus.

What did Katie mean when she said, “You can’t unwrap a gift if you don’t even know that you have it?” In order for somebody to receive the gift of salvation, somebody else has to tell them about it.

How do we help others unwrap their gift of salvation? Tell them about Jesus - show them God’s love - pray.

Why do you think it is better to give than to receive?

What are some things you can do to spread the love of Jesus this season?

Review Time Review

Review time is a great way to not only fill time at the end of a service if needed, but it is also a time to personally interact with the children and build relationships. Review time gives us an opportunity to reiterate the most important truths about the message. Review time should also be used as a time to build up a child's faith and confidence. To help create bold confident Christian leaders, there are a few simple aspects of the time we spend reviewing with children that we should pay special attention to.

- **Allow the children to express themselves.** If their answer is not what you are looking for, commend them for participating. Do not penalize them for thinking and trying by saying things such as *no* or *that's wrong*. Instead, simply say *okay* and acknowledge their participation.
- **Never belittle a child.** Allow them to think and respond. Think of review questions as a time for brainstorming and an opportunity for you to get to know the children. Elaborate on correct statements and Biblically supported thoughts, but do not make an example of an incorrect response.
- **Allow them to come to the conclusion on their own.** If you feel the child could benefit by extra guidance, do not simply give them the answer, but allow them to *discover* the truth for themselves. For example, if you ask *who is the greatest gift of all?* – and the child responds by saying, *Spiderman* – do not say, *No, that is not correct*. Instead, ask them questions to allow them to think and conclude for themselves. You can give them hints, but do so in the form of a question in order to allow them to think and learn for themselves instead of feeling as if they are being corrected. - *Okay, Spiderman is pretty cool, but who died for your sins?*
- **Give praise.** When a child responds, give them praise for being able to conclude on their own – *Wow! Great job! Spidey is a great gift but Jesus is the greatest gift! God really made you smart! Good job!*

These are simple rules that most of us follow, but it is natural as teachers and leaders to want to correct *wrong answers*. This is why we have to remember that review time is not a time for right or wrong answers; it is a time to allow children to think, learn, and discover. With this in mind, we can teach children how to teach, and lead them into leadership by building up their confidence and faith.