

# A Christmas Storybook



*For the Young and Young at Heart*



*Cascia Books*

*Enrich Your Life & Live the Faith*

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# *Introduction*



# A Child's Preparation for Christmas

To little boys and girls and to all good Christian people, the feast of Christmas means more than a time to give and receive gifts. To them it is a reminder of the greatest of all gifts that the world has ever received, Jesus Himself. Jesus gave Himself to us on the day He came into the world. He comes into your hearts each time you earnestly wish Him to come to you. You see that you ought to prepare your hearts well so that when Jesus comes to you on Christmas Day, he will find your hearts a beautiful place, pure and clean and ready for Him.

Just watch how carefully your dear mother cleans the house for Christmas. She wants everything to be spotless and shining. So, too, your heart ought to be pure and clean, that is, free from sin. Jesus will love to come into the hearts of those children who try to be obedient, kind, pure and simple. Now is the time for you to begin preparing your heart for Jesus. When Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, they could find no other shelter than a poor stable. I hope that when Jesus comes to you on Christmas morning, He will find your heart ready for Him and then you will not turn Him away from you.

All people who truly love God prepare their hearts for the coming of Jesus on Christmas Day. Many people do not think of Jesus and what He did for us when they make ready for Christmas. They are thinking only what pleasure they can get out of the feast, what gifts they will

receive and what they will eat on that day. Jesus loved us so much that He came from His beautiful home in heaven to live and suffer and die upon earth for the love of us. He became a little child to teach us that we must always have hearts pure and innocent like those of little children.

Let us think now about what you can do to make your heart ready for the Infant Jesus. If you had been living when our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph were looking for a place of shelter on that cold winter's night and they had come to your house, would you have refused to let them in? How proud you would have been to give them your own room, your own bed! I am sure you would gladly have given your warm clothes to the Blessed Mother for the Infant Jesus. I am sure when you heard the story of the Birth of Jesus for the first time, you felt sorry that you were not living in Bethlehem for you would gladly have given Jesus a warm and comfortable shelter. You can do this even now, though Jesus is no longer a little child. How can you give Jesus shelter? By giving Him your heart as a resting place. Jesus is God. He can come into your heart if you ask Him to do so. You must earnestly wish for Jesus to come to you and He will come into your heart.

~ *Practical Aids for Catholic Teachers*





*Knitting a  
Sweater for Little  
Jesus*



It was during Advent: the four weeks of solemn preparation for the most beautiful feast of the year: Christmas. All over the world, Holy Church was longing for the coming of the Saviour, and giving expression to that longing in Her Sublime liturgy. But I am going to speak today of only two devout children of Mother Church. I know, of course, that many others were doing good during that Sacred Season of expectation, but I do not know just what form their goodness was taking. I only know about Harry and Rosie. Harry was Rosie's brother, and she wouldn't have exchanged him for anything in the world.

Advent was just beginning, and I noticed that Harry and Rosie were a little different from what they used to be. Their morning prayers were a little longer, and so were their evening prayers. They did not talk as much as they used to. Instead of shouting and laughing and playing during all their free time, they would often slip away into some quiet cozy corner. And once when I peeked into two such cozy corners, I saw Harry reading a fine book of Bible Stories, and Rosie all engrossed in a Catholic magazine. I was puzzled. So one day when I went over to the school, I told Sister about it, and asked her what these two were up to.

"Why, Father, I really do not know," she replied, "they are so mysterious about it. They are just perfect

children at school now, and every day, morning, noon and night, and sometimes at recess, they make private visits to the church, and pray most devoutly before the Blessed Sacrament. Once when I entered the Church very quietly, I heard Rosie say the Our Father aloud, very piously. She thought she was all alone with Jesus. It seems to me, Father, that these two have some little plan or something.”

“Leave it to me, Sister. I will find out,” I said. So that very day I got a chance to be alone with Harry and Rosie. I had a little visit with them, during which they were bright and talkative, but delightfully respectful and reserved at the same time. When I arose to go, I said, “Sister and I have both noticed that you are doing something special for somebody during Advent. Tell me, what is it, darlings?”

You should have seen them blush. Finally Rosie said, “Well, Father, I’ll tell you. We’re knitting a sweater for little Jesus.”

“Oh, I see,” I replied, so surprised I didn’t know what else to say. But honestly, I did not see at all. I told Sister about it. She simply said, “I wonder.” Neither of us had ever seen them knitting a single stitch.

It was Christmas Eve. Harry and Rosie rang the bell at the Sisters’ house, and asked to see their dear teacher. In a moment, she came, tired from the day’s work of preparation for the great feast that was to begin with Midnight Mass, but happy and already full of Christmas peace and

joy. Harry did the speaking. “Sister,” he said, “we just finished knitting our sweater for Little Jesus. Please, Sister, put it right near the cradle of straw in the crib, so that Mother Mary can find it easily, and put it on Him to keep Him warm.”

Then with a polite ‘good-bye’ they skipped away, leaving an envelope in Sister’s hand. She opened it. Neatly written on a sheet of paper were the words,

“Dearest Christ Child, here is something that will keep Your Heart warm with love for us. 800 Our Fathers, and each word of that beautiful prayer You Yourself taught us, a well made stitch in the warm garment we want you to have on Christmas Day. Your loving,  
Harry and Rosie Nearling”

It was Christmas morning. Harry and Rosie were chatting with Sister. “Oh, it was easy,” Rosie was saying. “Each of us said ten Our Fathers every day: two in the morning at our morning prayers; two in the evening, at our evening prayers; and the rest during special little visits to the Blessed Sacrament.”

“Sure it was easy,” said Harry, “and Sister, is it possible to tell how very, very happy I am today, because I helped Rosie knit a sweater for Little Jesus.”

Then everybody smiled, such a Christmas smile as you never saw before.

# *King John's Christmas*

*A. A. Milne*



King John was not a good man –  
He had his little ways.  
And sometimes no one spoke to him  
For days and days and days.  
And men who came across him,  
When walking in the town  
Gave him a supercilious stare,  
Or passed with noses in the air –  
And bad King John stood dumbly there,  
Blushing beneath his crown.

King John was not a good man,  
And no good friends had he.  
He stayed in every afternoon ...  
But no one came to tea.  
And, round about December,  
The cards upon his shelf  
Which wished him lots of Christmas cheer,  
And happiness in the coming year,  
Were never from his near and dear,  
But only from himself.

King John was not a good man,  
Yet had his hopes and fears  
They'd given him no presents now  
For years and years and years.  
But every year at Christmas,  
While minstrels stood about,  
Collecting tribute from the young  
For all the songs they might have sung,  
He stole away upstairs and hung  
A hopeful stocking out.

King John was not a good man,  
He lived his life aloof;  
Alone he thought a message out  
While climbing up the roof.  
He wrote it down and propped it  
Against the chimney stack;  
"TO ALL AND SUNDRY – NEAR AND FAR –  
F. CHRISTMAS IN PARTICULAR."  
And signed it not "Johannes R."  
But very humbly, "JACK."

“I want some crackers,  
And I want some candy;  
I think a box of chocolates  
Would come in handy;  
I don’t mind oranges,  
I do like nuts!  
And I SHOULD like a pocket-knife  
That really cuts.  
And, oh! Father Christmas, if you love me at all,  
Bring me a big, red india-rubber ball!”

King John was not a good man –  
He wrote this message out,  
And gat him to his room again,  
Descending by the spout.  
And all that night he lay there,  
A prey to hopes and fears.  
“I think that’s him a-coming now,”  
(Anxiety bedewed his brow.)  
“He’ll bring one present, anyhow –  
The first I’ve had for years.”



“Forget about the crackers,  
And forget about the candy;  
I’m sure a box of chocolates  
Would never come in handy:  
I don’t like oranges,  
I don’t want nuts,  
And I HAVE got a pocket-knife  
That almost cuts.  
But oh! Father Christmas, if you love me at all,  
Bring me a big, red india-rubber ball!”

King John was not a good man –  
Next morning when the sun  
Rose up to tell a waiting world  
That Christmas had begun,  
And people seized their stockings,  
And opened them with glee,  
And crackers, toys and games appeared,  
And lips with sticky sweets were smeared,  
King John said grimly: “As I feared,  
Nothing again for me!”

“I did want crackers,  
And I did want candy;  
I know a box of chocolates  
Would come in handy;  
I do love oranges,  
I did want nuts.  
I haven’t got a pocket-knife –  
Not one that cuts.  
And, oh! if Father Christmas had loved me at all,  
He would have brought a big, red india-rubber ball!”

King John stood by the window,  
And frowned to see below  
The happy bands of boys and girls  
All playing in the snow.  
A while he stood there watching,  
And envying them all ...  
When through the window big and red  
There hurtled by his royal head,  
And bounced and fell upon the bed,  
An india-rubber ball!

AND, OH, FATHER CHRISTMAS,  
MY BLESSINGS ON YOU FALL  
FOR BRINGING HIM  
A BIG, RED,  
INDIA-RUBBER  
BALL!

*The Legend of the  
Christmas Rose*



On a cold December night, everybody was coming to see their new Savior and brought Him all kinds of gifts and presents. The three Wise Men came in with their valuable gifts of myrrh, frankincense and gold and offered them to Baby Jesus.

At that point, a shepherdess, Madelon, who had seen the wise men passing through, reached the door of the stable, to see the Child. However, being very poor and having brought nothing to offer to the Child, she felt helpless and started weeping quietly at the sight of all the wonderful gifts that the Three Wise Men had got for the Child. Earlier, she had searched, in vain, for flowers all over the countryside but there was not even a single bloom to be found in the bitter winter.

An angel outside the door was watching over her and knew about her fruitless search. He took pity on her and, when he saw her head drooped down in sorrow, decided to help her with a little miracle. He gently brushed aside the snow at her feet and where her tears had fallen, sprang a beautiful cluster of waxen white winter roses with pink tipped petals. Then he softly whispered into the shepherdess' ear that these Christmas roses are far more valuable than any myrrh, frankincense or gold, for they are pure and made of love.

The maiden was pleasantly surprised when she heard those words and joyfully gathered the flowers and offered them to the Holy Infant, who, seeing that the gift was reared with tears of love, smiled at her with gratitude and satisfaction. Thus, the Christmas rose came to symbolize hope, love and all that is wonderful in this season.

