

Why I Don't Tell My Children About Santa

It's not that I have something against the friendly, old guy with the red suit and reindeer. I like his belly laugh and think it's cute that he has a perpetual twinkle in his eyes. Even so, my husband and I have decided to ban Santa from the Christmas activities at our house.

Before I get to the whys of our decision not to include Santa at Christmas, let me get this off my chest. Santa is not a doctrinal issue. Santa isn't even an issue that defines good parents or good Christians. Lots of people I know who love the Lord and love their kids tell their children about Santa. And to my knowledge no one has been scarred for life by the fairy tale of Santa and his eight tiny reindeer.

I'd just like to start a conversation about the reasons why I've decided the story of Santa is best untold to the little ears on my watch. Here are the reasons we've opted not to tell our children about Santa.

- **We want them to understand what happened in the manger as clearly as possible.**

Noel Piper wrote a great blog about her own decision not to tell her children about Santa. Her logic helped me crystallize my own reasons for leaving Santa out of our Christmas conversations. She writes:

"We want our children to understand God as fully as they are able at whatever age they are. So we try to avoid anything that would delay or distort that understanding. It seems to us that celebrating with a mixture of Santa *and* manger will postpone a child's clear understanding of what the real truth of God is. It's very difficult for a young child to pick through a marble cake of part-truth and part imagination to

find the crumbs of reality.”

- **Santa has some God-like characteristics.**

“He sees you when you are sleeping. He knows when you’re awake.” In other words, Santa is omnipresent and omniscient—he sees everything and knows everything. In reality, these are characteristics reserved only for God.

When pressed about our reasons for not teaching our kids about Santa, my wise husband usually says something like this:

“We don’t think they can understand the difference when we say, there is an Easter bunny who brings you presents if you’re good, but he’s not real. There is a tooth fairy who knows when you are sleeping and brings you money if you lose a tooth, but she’s not real. There is a Santa who brings you gifts if you are good, but he’s not real. And there is a Jesus who is always watching you and wants to give you good things, but He *is* real.”

It just seems plain ole’ confusing to ascribe attributes of God to fictional characters and then have to explain the difference between those characters and a living God some day.

- **Santa is soft on sin.**

No one actually gets a lump of coal for Christmas. It doesn’t matter how bad my children behave, there will always be gifts under the tree. I think it might be confusing to them to hear that Santa is keeping a list of their rights and wrongs, but there won’t really be any consequences for their sin. Also, that long list of naughties and niceties doesn’t really speak much to the gift of grace. Especially since Santa always checks the list twice.

- **We want our kids to know where presents come from.**

Our gifts are already under the tree. Our kids know that we

bought them, we wrapped them, and we can't wait to give them to them! They understand that those gifts cost money out of our pockets. It's not that I want to hold over their heads the financial sacrifices that come with giving gifts to them, but I do want them to be grateful, both to us as their parents, and to God who provides us with jobs so we can have money to buy gifts. Santa has a whole city full of elves making gifts all year long. Those gifts don't cost anybody anything. I think that makes them easier to disregard and be ungrateful for.

▪ **Because of the baby in the manger.**

The most important reason we have opted not to include Santa in our Christmas is because it isn't about him. It's about Immanuel—God with us! I know there are many other good things that creep into our holiday celebrations such as time with family, good food, and gifts, but I don't want anything to distract my kids from the wonder of the King who came to earth to die for their sins. It's not worth taking the risk of allowing a fella as jovial and generous as Santa to do just that.

What about you? What will you do to keep your family focused on Jesus this Christmas?

*Taken from **Erin Davis's** blog post "Some Thoughts on the Guy With the Red Suit.". Used with permission.*