



Grandfather, what is Christmas about?

{3 Horses Sly Fox}

One day, on the reservation, a youth approached a respected elder (commonly referred to as “Grandfather”, in most southern Plains Indian tribes) and asked, “Grandfather, what is Christmas all about? I hear other kids in school talking about Christmas, Santa Claus, gift giving and a baby named Jesus”.

The elder responded, “Christmas is a holy day that people called Christians celebrate during the last week of December. The whites have told our ancestors a tale of a special baby who was born long ago in a land far away. Creator had sent the Great Spirit to a very special woman and had Him tell the woman that she would carry a very powerful chief in her womb and that many would come to honor Him. The woman was very scared, but she was obedient and very honored to be chosen by Creator. The woman bore the very special boy and she named Him Jesus. He grew up in their village as any young brave, but instead of riding horses or hunting, his earthly father taught him to use his hands and build things from wood. He grew into a very smart and respected young man. He spoke to many adults as their equals. Medicine men and shaman came long distances to listen to him. He spoke of Creator’s great love for his people and he spoke of how we should conduct ourselves in all our thoughts and deeds. He led many people to follow the “Good Red Road”. He performed many miracles in his lifetime. It was said that even upon his death, as he crossed over to be with the Creator and the Great Spirit, he appeared to his people to give them peace, love and hope. To this day, white, black and yellow men, as well as Indians, who are Christians, honor his birth on this day.”

The youth looked at the elder in wonder. “What a great chief He must have been!” Then he continued, “Grandfather, tell me about Santa Claus and giving presents”.

The elder was tired, but loved to tell stories. He repositioned himself on the buffalo skins and started to speak, “Again, my son, this story takes place a long time ago in another far off land. It was said that a very special man, named Nicolas, loved the village children and would visit them and bring them gifts. It was said because of his love for the children and for giving of gifts, which came from the heart, the white man’s church made him a holy man. The white man later created a story that if a child was good, anywhere on mother earth, Saint Nicolas, with the help of the Great Spirit, would travel across the sky and deliver his gifts. As time passed there were many changes made to the telling of his story, he grew to be known as Santa Claus. It is said that he still travels on the night before Christmas in honor of Creator’s son, Jesus.”

The boy’s eyes were wide with excitement. “Grandfather, if I’m good, will this holy man visit me at Christmas and bring me gifts of toys and food?”

The elder, who was very wise, asked the boy, “Why do you think that you have to wait till one certain day to get gifts? The Creator along with the Great Spirit and His Son give you gifts every day.”

The boy sat and tried to figure out what the elder was talking about. “Grandfather, what do you mean? I’ve never seen one of these great chiefs and I don’t see any gifts.”

The elder looked sternly at the boy and said, “Who do you think gave us mother earth to live upon? Who do you think gives us water to drink? Who do you think gives us food to fill our bellies? Who do you think gives us the four seasons with all it’s beauty? Who do you think gives us all our relations, the 2 legged, the 4 legged and the winged ones? You need to ask yourself, where does this all come from, and then you will know that the Creator gives us many gifts every day. Don’t think of being good just for that one day of the year, or celebrate, just once a year, or to help those in need, once a year. Creator want’s us to live, give gifts and love every day of the year. Now, go out and play, and remember who gives you this day and who gives you your friends, and your family and everything to enjoy.”

“I will Grandfather.” said the boy, with a smile on his face, as he ran out to greet the day and his friends.



Christ with children. by Fr. John Giuliani
(Jesus as seen by the Comanche).



Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world.
Whether red, yellow, black or white,
They’re all precious in his sight,
Jesus loves the little children of the world.