

the garden

-A monthly newsletter for moms who desire to blossom into all God created them to be-
"For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations." Isaiah 61:11



Sowing the 'Seed of the Word' in Our Daily Lives Practical, Biblical Encouragement for Moms

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

Christmastime in the garden is often a time of complete "death" and void of any color. But evergreen trees add rich color and offer hope of enduring life. For many, an evergreen tree is a focal point at Christmas. But why? Yes, they are beautiful, give off their wonderful pine aroma, but most importantly, their evergreen branches symbolize the heart of what Christmas is about: Jesus' gift of everlasting life.

On the very first Christmas, God sent us the best gift ever given: He arrived in humble surroundings and wrapped in swaddling cloth -baby Jesus, God's own Son! Jesus came down to Earth to

rescue us from the eternal punishment our sins deserve. It's a gift only He can give us and one that keeps on giving, like the pine trees that continue to give their color. His gift



Evergreens: a symbol of eternal life because of Jesus.

saves us from eternal suffering and separation from God in Hell, through forgiveness that redeems us in His sight. When we simply trust Jesus as our

Savior, we are made worthy, by grace, to enjoy eternal life in the presence of our perfect, holy, and awesome God. Jesus did for us what we could never do for ourselves, and something we can never earn or repay. He knows that we all "miss the mark", so He provided the only perfect and sinless sacrifice to take our place and pay the price of our sins-past, present, and future-completely: Jesus. All who believe this incredible truth live in freedom.

At Christmas and all year long, let's humbly remember God's amazing love for us. He loves YOU enough to die for you... He did! -WL

December 2008
e-newsletter of:



Moms in Bloom

momsinbloom.com

Founder/Editor: Wendy Lempner
wendy@momsinbloom.com
Co-Editor: Jenny Flakne

Supplement to Devotional:



Jesus' gift was accomplished by dying on a cross, made from a tree. As a poignant reminder that Jesus was born to die for us, a friend of mine saves the trunk of her family's Christmas tree to carve into a cross to put in their garden amongst their spring flowers at Easter time. What a fitting way to commemorate our precious gift from Jesus... that all began with His birth.

Happy Birthday, Jesus!

And Merry Christmas to you
and your family!

Peace and Joy,

Wendy



Here's To Your Health: "Cinnamon: More Than Tasty" To be all we need to be as moms, we need healthy bodies

A favorite taste and smell of Christmas is cinnamon. In recent years, research has pointed to its health benefits: Seasoning a high carbohydrate food with cinnamon can help lessen its impact on your blood sugar levels; it may significantly help people with type 2 diabetes to improve their ability to respond to insulin, normalizing their blood sugar levels; smelling its wonderful odor has been shown to boost brain activity to enhance cognitive processing; and it is a good source of calcium and fiber, which in combination, can improve colon health and protect against heart disease. Enjoy a spice that gives more than just good flavor... enjoy the benefits of cinnamon this holiday season and year-round.



Family Traditions... "Begin Christmas Morning By Celebrating Jesus' Birth"

Sharing Fun, Seasonal Ways to Teach our Children about God

In our society, Christ seems to get taken out of Christmas more and more with each passing year. I know I try so hard to keep Him as our focus during the season, but the older my kids get the busier December seems to be despite my best efforts. But I've learned something from reading my kids' school papers and journals each year. You know the ones that say, "what is your favorite holiday tradition?" and other such questions. I've learned that the entire month of December does not have to be one big "hallelujah" moment with angels singing in the background for them to grasp the true meaning of Christmas. Those little things you sprinkle throughout really do make an impact. And I think most significant of all is what you do on THE day, the day children (big and little) have waited all year for - Christmas.



This is what my children write about every year without fail. On Christmas morning, before we go downstairs to open presents or do anything, we all sit together as a family (usually all snuggled up on mom and dad's bed) and read the Christmas story out of the Bible. As our children have learned to read, they take great pride in being the one who gets to read for that year. We pray together and then we sing Happy Birthday to Jesus. The whole thing does not take very long, but it sets the tone for the day because we have put Jesus *first*, and it sticks with you. Think about it - can you remember what you got last year for Christmas? Or the year before that? I can't. The memory of the presents quickly fades, but I will always know how we start each Christmas morning, and so will my kids. -Tessa Perry, Ohio



Kitchen Connection

Got a recipe you love? Share it here!

Mini Cinnamon Orange Glaze Rolls -Joyce Nunns
Cinnamon Rolls:
 2 (8 oz) cans refrig'd crescent rolls
 2 Tbsp margarine or butter, soft
 2 Tbsp sugar
 1 tsp cinnamon
Orange Glaze:
 1 tsp vanilla extract
 1 cup powdered sugar
 1/2 tsp grated orange peel
 2 Tbsp orange juice
 Preheat oven to 375. Unroll crescent rolls, and separate to form 8 rectangles; press diagonal perforations to seal. Stir together cinnamon and sugar. Spread softened butter over each rectangle; sprinkle with cinnamon-sugar. Roll up, jellyroll fashion, starting at long end. Gently cut each log into 6 slices. Place rolls, cut side up, in an un-greased 9"x13" pan. Bake for 15 min. or until lightly browned. Meanwhile, combine glaze ingredients and drizzle over warm rolls. Makes 4 dozen

Your Tip "Pick": Simple Decorating

Everyday tips to simplify life...



Decorating for Christmas creates a festive and warm home. This can be done without much expense. My favorite decorations are based on simple, classic items -many found in nature: pine boughs, berries, and pinecones, which can be used with red bows and candles to "deck the halls!" It's simple to put together a wreath with a few items from a craft store and maybe some pinecones you or your child collected. After Christmas sales are the perfect time to stock up on the basics. My favorite centerpiece is a white candle surrounded by cranberries in a hurricane glass, with pine boughs (from my sister's tree clippings!) and pinecones arranged around it. Nature provides authentic and simple beauty. Don't let a tight budget cramp your decorations... you can do a lot with a little! -WL

Family Traditions... "Christ and the Christmas Cake" -Ann Pullem

This is a perfect way to celebrate Jesus' birthday ... with a Christmas Cake!



1. Chocolate cake: Represents being black with sin.

-Romans 3:23 "...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
 -John 3:19 "...men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil."

2. White Icing: Being cleansed of our sins by Jesus' sacrifice.

-Isaiah 1:18 "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow..."
 -Psalm 51:7 "cleanse me... I will be clean; wash me, & I will be whiter than snow."
 -Psalm 103:12 "as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

3. Angel: The bearer of good tidings.

-Luke 2:10-11 "The angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.'"

4. Red Candle: Jesus shed His blood for us.

-Hebrews 9:22 "...without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness."
 -Hebrews 9:26-28 Christ was sacrificed once and for all!

5. Yellow Star: The first sign of glad tidings.

-Matthew 2:2 "Where is He that has been born King of the Jews for we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."

6. Light the Candle: Jesus is the light of the world. Believing in Jesus illuminates your life with HOPE!

-John 8:12 "I am the Light of the World. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."
 -John 12:46 "I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness."

7. Encircle the Cake with Evergreens: Everlasting life & God's love.

-John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

This is reason to celebrate! On Christmas, your family can light the candle and sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus.