

The Meaning Behind the 12 Days of Christmas

When most people hear of "The 12 Days of Christmas", they think of the song. This song had its origins as a teaching tool to instruct young people in the meaning and content of the Christian faith.

The hidden meaning of each gift was designed to help young Christians learn their faith. The song goes, "On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me..."

The **"partridge in a pear tree"** was Jesus Christ who died on a tree as a gift from God.

The **"two turtle doves"** were the Old and New Testaments - another gift from God.

The **"three French hens"** were faith, hope and love - the three gifts of the Spirit that abide.

The **"four calling birds"** were the four Gospels which sing the song of salvation through Jesus Christ.

The **"five golden rings"** were the first five books of the Bible also called the "Books of Moses".

The **"six geese a-laying"** were the six days of creation.

The **"seven swans a swimming"** were the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

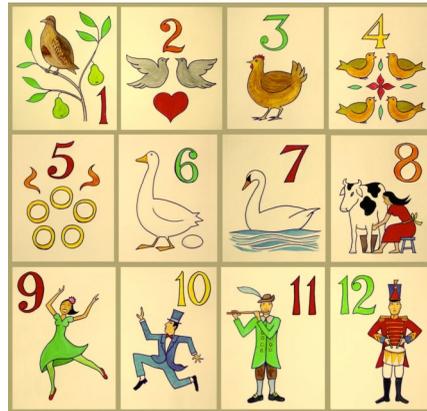
The **"eight maids a milking"** were the eight beatitudes.

The **"nine ladies dancing"** were nine fruits of the Holy Spirit.

The **"ten lords a-leaping"** were the Ten Commandments.

The **"eleven pipers piping"** were the eleven faithful disciples.

The **"twelve drummers drumming"** were the twelve points of the Apostles' Creed.



So, the next time you hear "The 12 Days of Christmas", consider how this otherwise non-religious sounding song had its origins in the Christian faith.

"Merry Christmas" in many languages

Arabic - I'd Miilad Said Oua Sana Saida

Basque - Zoriontsu Eguberri. Zoriontsu Urte Berri On

Celtic - Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda

French - Joyeux Noel

German - Froehliche Weihnachten

Hawaiian - Mele Kalikimaka

Iraqi - Idah Saidan Wa Sanah Jadidah

Italian - Buon Natale or Buone Feste Natalizie

Navajo - Merry Keshmish

German - En frehlicher Grischtdaag un en hallich Nei

Pig Latin - Errymay ristmaskay

Polish - Wesolych Swiat Bozego Narodzenia

Russian - Pozdrevlyayu s prazdnikom Rozhdestva i s Novim Godom

Spanish - Feliz Navidad (Used in Spain as well as Mexico and most of Central and South America)

Swahili - Krismasi Njema

Tagalog - Maligayamg Pasko. Masaganang Bagong Taon

Vietnamese - Chung Mung Giang Sinh

Welsh - Nadolig Llawen

Zulu - Nginifisela inhlanhla ne mpumelelo e nyakeni.



Thank you for joining us at St. Mary's Parish to celebrate the birth of our Lord! May your holidays be truly blessed.



The wise men or Magi came from an area which is now in either Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia or Yemen (then known as Persia, Arabia and Sheba).

They were indeed 'wise men'. The Magi were 'Magupati', a title given to priests in ancient Persia. Today we call them astrologers. The magi would have followed the patterns of the stars religiously.

They had seen an unusual new star in the sky, and knew that it told of the birth of a special King in Israel. But what did they see? The Bible says they 'saw it in the east' and then when they were in Jerusalem that it 'went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was'. It signified (in their astrology) there was a new King in Israel and that it was worth travelling to find him!

St Nicholas was a Bishop who lived in the fourth century AD in a place called Myra in Asia Minor (now called Turkey). He was a very kind man and had a reputation for helping the poor and giving secret gifts to people who needed it. The most famous story about St. Nicholas tells how the custom of hanging up stockings to get presents. One night, Nicholas secretly dropped a bag of gold down a chimney to save a poor family, and it landed in a sock someone had hung up to dry. Because of his kindness Nicholas was made a Saint.



The North Pole is the northernmost point on the Earth, lying diametrically opposite the South Pole. It defines geodetic latitude **90° North**, as well as the direction of true north. At the North Pole all directions point south; all lines of longitude converge there, so its longitude can be defined as any degree value.

Santa's Address



You can send a letter to Santa Claus using this address:
 Santa Claus
 Santa Claus Main Post Office.
 FI-96930 Arctic Circle

TrackingSanta.net — This very popular site mirrors the map used in the Tracking Center at the North Pole showing Santa's present position. The is the most accurate Santa tracking map in the entire world because it comes from the North Pole!

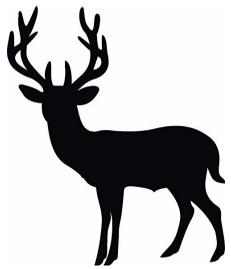
Kwanzaa is a seven day festival that celebrates African and African American culture and history. Kwanzaa takes place from 26th December to 1st January. The name Kwanzaa comes from the phrase 'matunda ya kwanza' which means 'first fruits' in the Swahili language. Kwanzaa is mostly celebrated in the USA.

The seven days and candles in Kwanzaa represent the seven principles of Kwannzaa: **Happy Kwanzaa!**

- Umoja: Unity - Unity of the family, community, nation and race
- Kujichagulia: Self-Determination - Being responsible for your own conduct and behaviour
- Ujima: Collective work and responsibility - Working to Help each other and in the community
- Ujamaa: Cooperative economics - Working to build shops and businesses
- Nia: Purpose - Remembering and restoring African and African American cultures, customs and history
- Kuumba: Creativity - Using creativity and your imagination to make communities better
- Imani: Faith - Believing in people, families, leaders, teachers and the righteousness of the African American struggle.



Things to know about Reindeer



Beyond their sled-pulling capabilities and discrimination towards those with red noses, what do you really know about reindeer?

Reindeer and caribou are the same thing.

They go by many names, all of which seem appropriate.

Reindeer comes from the Old Norse word "hreinin," which means "horned animal." Caribou is based on the French word for "snow shoveler," in reference to the animal's habit of digging through the snow for food

Santa's reindeer are most likely the R.t. platyrhynchus subspecies from the Svalbard islands off of Norway.

We know that because Clement C. Moore's poem, "A Visit from Saint Nicholas," which first introduced the world to Santa's reindeer, describes them as tiny, weighing about half as much as the average reindeer--that definitely proves useful when landing on roofs.

Live-action films usually use full-sized reindeer and animations usually draw the creatures as a cross between a regular deer and a reindeer.

Reindeer were originally connected to Santa through poetry.

Before Moore wrote "A Visit from Saint Nicholas" (aka "The Night Before Christmas") in 1823, no one thought about reindeer in conjunction with Santa Claus. Moore introduced the world to Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen.

As for little **Rudolph**, he wasn't introduced until Robert L. May wrote a children's book in verse for Montgomery Ward in 1939 titled "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer." Rudolph's name means "famous wolf" in German.

Reindeer are ideally designed for life in hostile, cold places Life in the tundra is hard, but reindeer have it easy. Their noses are specially adapted to warm the air they breathe, Their fur traps air, which provides them with excellent insulation and their hooves are special, providing them with extra traction.

They used to live a lot farther south.

While reindeer now live exclusively in the northern points of the globe, when the earth was cooler and humans were less of a threat, their territory was larger. In fact, reindeer used to live all the way down in Nevada, Tennessee and Spain during the Pleistocene era. Their habitat has shrunk considerably in the last few centuries. **In the 19th century, reindeer still lived in Southern Idaho.**

As for how 9 reindeer manage to fly while pulling a sled carrying presents for every child in the whole world, science still hasn't worked that out.

Upcoming Parish Events: December 31: New Years Eve Mass and Toast at 11pm

- January 1: Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God Mass at 10am
- January 7: Knights of Columbus Breakfast between the Masses
- January 15: Senior Gathering at 1pm
- January 27: St. Mary's School Auction at the Best Western

