



# Santa Claus

*Does the man in the red suit spell “Saint” or “Satan” for Christmas?*

## Introduction

1. Poll: As a child, how many people here today remember believing in Santa for any period of time?
  
2. Poll: With your children, how many people have . . .
  - a. allowed their children to believe Santa was real without really influencing them one way or another.
  - b. actively encouraged belief in Santa and everything that goes along with it.
  - c. actively told their children that Santa wasn't real and discouraged all things Santa at Christmastime.
  - d. told their children Santa wasn't real, but allowed Santa to be a part of Christmas in a fun, playful way.
  - e. taught their children about St. Nicholas, the Bishop of Myra.

## What Are We Trying to Accomplish?

### Deuteronomy 6:4-9

1. Describe the responsibility God gives parents with respect to their children.

### Mark 10:13-16

2. As parents carry out this responsibility, what characteristic of children aids them? Why is that characteristic of children something to be taken seriously?

### Luke 2:10-14

3. What is the angels' (and humankind's) response to the good news of great joy that God sent his Son to be the Savior?

### Romans 4:4,5

4. In addition to teaching our children about God's greatest gift, what do we want them to know about the reason for which this gift was given?

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## How Do We Best Accomplish It?

*Evaluate each argument in favor of and against allowing children to believe in Santa Claus. Which one presents the stronger case in each instance?*

Santa = Satan [ ]  
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1. Focus on Santa takes the focus off of Jesus at Christmas.
2. Parents shouldn't lie to their children.
3. Telling your children that Santa is real blurs the line between fantasy and faith.

Santa = Saint

Focus on Santa adds to the joy of Christmas and makes it more special for children.

Parents lie to their children all the time when it serves a good purpose. (Can you think of examples?)

Encouraging belief in Santa fosters



wonder and imagination and encourages belief in the supernatural.

4. Santa operates on a system of work-righteousness that undermines the gospel.

The story of the real St. Nicholas is a story of unmerited generosity that actually reinforces grace.

OR

Santa provides a healthy, annual opportunity to teach children that, while we don't suffer eternally for our sins because of God's grace and Jesus' work, our behavior and actions do have temporal consequences.

5. The Santa issue allows parents to teach their children an important lesson about how different families have different rules and customs.

Children who are told that Santa isn't real will inevitably ruin it for children who are told that he is.

6. Regardless of the decision parents make about Santa, what are some ways that parents can help their children stay focused on the important meaning of Christmas in spite of everything we might bemoan about the holiday season?

## Bonus Material

1. How would you respond to this statement? “Not only because of Santa but also because of all the commercialization and secularization of Christmas, Christians should pick a new time of year to celebrate the birth of Christ. December 25 has no historical basis anyway.”<sup>[L][L][L]</sup><sub>[SEP][SEP]</sub>
2. Research St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra. What did he (reportedly) do at the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325?
3. Discuss a more recent Christmas tradition, Elf on the Shelf. How does this tradition compare with Santa Claus? Would your conclusion about taking part in this tradition be the same as your conclusion about Santa Claus or different?<sup>[L][L][L]</sup><sub>[SEP][SEP]</sub>
4. How do other childhood myths (tooth fairy, Easter bunny) compare to Santa Claus? How is the discussion about those examples the same? How is it different?<sup>[L][L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

