

## Families That Thrive

By John Blackwell, Ph.D.

### Christmas Magic

To this day, our children have the best sense of how to spend Christmas. Even though they're now adults, they've never lost the sense of magic.

I remember a family that was in a church that I served years ago. They took a year off and traveled in an RV. Their children were in kindergarten and second grade. They were away from home during the Christmas holidays. They didn't do any shopping. They made their Christmas gifts and their decorations for the RV from whatever they gathered in the mountains where they were staying. They told stories, sang carols, and prayed together. There was no television, and they had no musical instruments. It was just the four of them, but that was a whole world!

Years later, the children still reported that it was the best Christmas ever. They were celebrating the birth of Christ, and they were doing so together. Their unique celebration, led largely by the children, embodied all of the mystery that we sometimes (or often?) find missing from Christmas.

Our celebration of the birth of Christ is an extraordinary opportunity to renew relationships. Nancy and I are not the ones who tend to be full of the best ideas about how to celebrate. Jaime and David are. I think that's part of the magic. They take charge. They are the shepherds communicating with the angel, or the wise men following the star. (Or perhaps they're the star and when Nancy and I follow them, we become wise.)

What if we were to ask our children how they want to celebrate Christmas. What would be fulfilling to them? What would meet their needs? What would make the best memory? What would fill them with the greatest joy?

How will we find out? Why not ask them? And why not tell them that on this Christmas, they're in charge of the celebration. Whatever they plan is okay. Let's simply celebrate together.

Might that not provide a way in which the Christ child can be reborn in our hearts? Might this not become the way that we are renewed? What if we simply opened our hearts to the mystery unfolding within us?

I hope and pray that the magic of Christmas will enfold you in love. I wish you a joyous celebration and God's richest blessing.