

“MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE!”
(nativity tales from my grandkids)

With Christmas in the air and a one-hour slot on Christmas Day radio to fill, I sat down yesterday to record some quick interviews with a bunch of my grandkids. These youngsters have grown up with stories about Jesus, and I felt sure I'd get some useful comments about the 2000-year-old Bethlehem Event. But no such luck! Faced with a microphone, these kids mostly just giggled – and promptly forgot what they should've known! Here's the abbreviated transcript ...



WO-YEAR-OLD:

Do you like Christmas?
Umm ... yep. I'm seven ...
I Don't think so. How about two?
I two?
Yes. Do you know about Jesus?
Yep. Umm ... umm ... umm ...
What are you getting for Christmas?
I get Christmas tree.
Are you gonna put decorations on it?
Yep! Decorwayshins, aaaaaaand ...

Three-year-old:

Do you like Christmas lights?
Yeah, I like them.
What colour?
Green!
Any other colours?
Yeah, red! (Giggles.)

First four-year-old:

Do you like Christmas lights?
No, I like Transformer toys.
Why? Are you gonna get one?
Uhuh – a Bumble-Bee transformer!

Second four-year-old:

Why do you like Christmas?
Because ... (hysterical laughter)
What are you hoping to get?
A real digger and a real motorbike.
Oh, is that all?
No. And everything in the whole world!
Fair enough. That's not much. Is Christmas somebody's birthday?
Yeah. But I forgot ...
Let's see if I can remind you. Whose birthday is it?

Umm ... it might be ... umm ... Dad's?

First five-year-old:

Why do you like Christmas?
Because you get lots of presents.
You don't like presents, do you?
Yes! And you can get your Christmas tree and decorate it.
Is that good fun, eh?
Uhuh.
What makes Christmas so special?
It's Jesus' birthday ...

Second five-year-old:

So what's the Christmas story?
Well, Mary was in the castle, and the angel told Mary that her baby was Jesus. So Mary went to Joseph.
Was Joseph her boyfriend?
No (giggles)! He was her husband, silly! But Joseph didn't know it was Jesus.

Was Mary just a young girl?
Yes. When she had her

baby she needed to sell the castle. *The castle? Oh, I didn't know that ...*
She had to go into a stable.
A stable? With the animals? That's not a very nice place to have a baby, eh?
No. But they got new hay ...
New hay? So it was clean?
Yeah.
Did Jesus grow up to be a man?
No, Jesus is a boy, silly!

Seven-year-old:

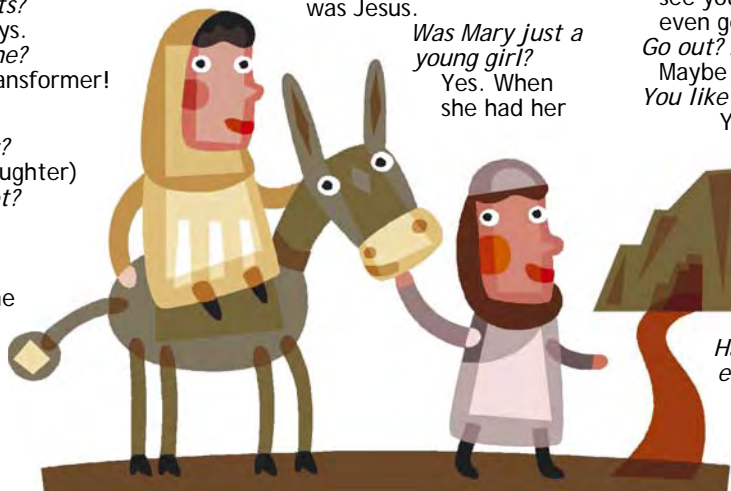
Do you know the story about Jesus?
No.
Really? Haven't your parents ever told you? They're hopeless, aren't they!
I know!
Come on, what's Christmas all about?
It's Jesus' birthday. And you get presents and stuff. And you get to see your cuzzies. Sometimes you even get to go out!
Go out? Like where?
Maybe a café or something ...
You like going to cafés? Really?
Yup!

What's so special about Jesus?

He looks after people. And he's always watching over us. *He sounds like a good friend – is he?*
Yeah ...

Have you got a special wish for everyone at Christmastime?

Umm, I've got a wish for me ...
What's that?
I want a motorbike!



A motorbike?

Yeah, I want a four-wheeler.
All right. I'll tell your parents, and I'm sure they'll get you one. Okay?
Yep!

Eight-year-old:

What do you like about Christmas?

I don't know ...

You don't know? Come on, why do you like Christmas?

Because you get presents?

Presents? But you don't like presents!

Yes, I do!

So what's the real Christmas story?

Jesus was born.

Whereabouts?

In heaven?

I don't think so. Was it in a hospital?

No.

Well, where?

Umm ... what's it called? ... in a trolley!

Ten-year-old:

What do you know about Christmas?

Well, in school we had the three kings: King Kong, the one in the movie. The King of Pop, Michael Jackson. And the King of Kings — and that's Jesus.

So what's the real meaning?

It's not actually about getting presents ...

What? Don't you like presents?

Yes, I do. But Christmas is not about presents — it's about Jesus being a friend to us.

So what happened on that first Christmas Day?

Umm, Jesus rose again.

No, that's Easter ...

Oh, yeah (laughs) — I mean, Jesus was born!

Well, do you want to wish everybody a happy Christmas?

Yes, I do.

Well, go on then (laughs) ...

Oh, Merry Christmas, everybody!



LOVE CHRISTMAS. I LOVE THE WAY it comes around like clockwork and sneaks into our weary souls. I love the way it gets us splurging on lights and pinetrees ... turning all generous and jolly ... humming carols in shopping malls ... and going a little religious.

I love the fact that Jesus, suddenly, is everywhere — riding on red-nosed reindeer, lurking in Christmas cards, adding meaning to season's greetings, and putting grins on the faces of granddads and kids!

Ours is the visited planet — that's what Christmas claims. And although it doesn't pop *everyone's* cork, that story keeps inspiring millions to live and love more fully than they otherwise might.

*"Away in a manger
no crib for his bed
the little Lord Jesus
lay down his sweet head ..."*

Christmas, first and foremost, is a time to be **THANKFUL**. And I want to state, once again, that Grapevine's supporters are fantastic! You supply the resources we need, you encourage us like you wouldn't believe, and you enable Grapevine to do what it does in countless households — by your generosity and your willingness to share our dream for families.



HIS IS GRAPEVINE'S 28TH Christmas. And, along with our thanks comes this heartfelt invitation: Grapevine isn't yet reaching every home in the country. Hundreds of thousands of families are still missing out on our magazine. Many of those families are struggling — and Christmas, for them, will feel anything but 'merry' ...

In last month's newsletter I explained that, thanks to the recession, we'd been left with a \$43,000 shortfall. I asked you to help us turn that 'millstone' into a 'milestone' by donating to our 2009 Christmas Appeal. And I'm happy to report that, at last count, WE'D PASSED THE \$30,000 MARK!

Isn't that great!

But, of course, this is not just about balancing-the-books. It's about happier households, healthier marriages, more confident parents, fewer-at-risk kids, and the hope of Peace-On-Earth/Peace-At-Home for the next generation of young New Zealand families.

These are the things WE long to see ... and I'm sure YOU feel the same. So, please ...

- If you **HAVEN'T** already done so, I'm inviting you to make a double-sized, overweight, bigger-than-normal, extra-generous **CHRISTMAS DONATION!**
- If you **HAVE** already contributed to our Christmas Appeal, please accept our deep appreciation. And if you felt able to add a further donation towards this \$43,000 milestone you'd truly make our day!

A very Merry Christmas — from all of us here at Grapequarters!

John Cooney
(founder/editor)



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