

Earth to Planet Mom

Crossroads MOPS
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The Perfect Tree

By Dawn Scott Jones

Every Christmas season begins with a search for it. Why? Because a fragrant tree trimmed with lights, ornaments and shiny garlands is the focal point of so many holiday celebrations. How often during the years, in countless homes throughout the world, have friends and families come together, gathering in unity around a lighted tree and finding a moment of peace and goodwill!

The Christmas tree has become a tradition, taking such a place of significance during the holiday season that most of us spend precious time and effort creatively decorating at least one.

I can remember the first tree my husband, Terry, and I beautified, now affectionately referred to as the "newlywed tree." This sparse timber was finely decorated with the tinfoil I took off the TV dinners I made for him the first year we were married. Admittedly, the tree wasn't much to look at, but we did get great TV reception that first inaugural season!

As time progressed, we advanced to the homespun "preschool tree." You know the one, adorned with all the choice artwork of a 4-year-old and topped off with those tedious but fun-to-make popcorn strings. During this season, our short, fluffy pine was decorated only at the bottom (4-year-olds can't reach very high). The top remained empty ... except for the candy canes.

We soon graduated to the "garage sale tree." How can I ever forget those money-saving years when we adorned our lackluster artificial tree, the entire backside of which was missing its branches, with treasures found at someone's yard sale?

Then there was the country-charm tree, so pungent because of the countless cinnamon sticks on it that we lived with the windows open all season; the Victorian tree (country-charm tree gets a makeover); and the "risky partisan" tree, which leaned to the right the whole holiday. This year we will have a "grandparents tree," with all the yummy candy canes on the bottom for little ones!

As I recall these different decorations, I realize that my life's most significant events are associated with memories of a tree. For in truth, it was the presence of a simple tree that led to the greatest celebration of my life. The intrigue of this tree did not come from its elaborate beauty, shining lights or sparkling garland; indeed it had none of these things.

Yet mysteriously it drew me. So powerful was its attraction that I found myself wanting to possess it for myself. This tree, although adorned with the boughs of brokenness and the scent of suffering, became the source of life and joy for me. Embracing it, I found wholeness.

Life flowed from the branches of this tree -- the salvation tree -- in spite of its rugged form. For hanging from its limbs was the finest and most exquisite ornament there has ever been, the body of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.

There He gave his life for mine, as His tears and blood stained the tree with the colors of Christmas, filling the air with the fragrance of the season, the eternal aroma of life.

At last I had found the perfect tree, the flawless symbol of Christmas. Shouldn't THIS tree be the centerpiece of all our holiday celebrations? For where else can all the people of the earth be drawn together in unity? It's only the cross of Jesus, the life-giving tree, that can bring every age, gender, social class, race and nationality together as one, with one purpose - to reach a dying world for Jesus.

Upcoming Dates

Dec 8 - "When God Showed Up" by Eileen Mestas

Jan 12 - 7 Steps To A Sound Financial Plan by Julie Miles

Jan 26 - Healthy Dinner In No Time by Debbie Lyrly



Links

MOPS International
<http://www.mops.org>

Crossroads MOPS
<http://crossroadsmops.net>

Crossroads Fellowship
<http://crossroads.org>

Look us up on Facebook
Crossroads MOPS

December Recipe: Fudge Crinkles

1 box Betty Crocker® SuperMoist® devil's food cake mix
1/2 cup vegetable oil
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
Powdered sugar

1. Heat oven to 350°F. In large bowl, stir dry cake mix, oil, eggs and vanilla, using spoon, until dough forms.
2. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Roll balls in powdered sugar. On ungreased cookie sheet, place balls about 2 inches apart.
3. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until set. Cool 1 minute; remove from cookie sheet to cooling rack. Cool completely, about 30 minutes. Store tightly covered.

Success

To make cookies the same size, measure 2 tablespoons dough to shape into balls or use a small ice-cream scoop. Measuring the dough before shaping will make cookies about the same size and ensure that cookies in a batch are done at the same time.

How-To

Get the kids to help with this cookie favorite. They'll love to shape the dough into cookies.

Special Touch

Top each cookie with a chocolate candy.

Variation

For Chocolate Chip Fudge Crinkles, stir 1 cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips into the dough.

Good Search

What if **CROSSROADS MOPS** earned a donation every time you searched the Internet? Or how about if a percentage of every purchase you made on-line went to support our cause? Well, now it can!

GoodSearch.com is a Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Use it just as you would any search engine, get quality search results from Yahoo, and watch the donations add up!

GoodShop.com is a new on-line shopping mall which donates up to 37 percent of each purchase to your favorite cause! Hundreds of great stores including Amazon, Target, Gap, Best Buy, ebay, Macy's and Barnes & Noble have teamed up with GoodShop and every time you place an order, you'll be supporting your favorite cause.

Just go to www.goodsearch.com and be sure to enter **CROSSROADS MOPS** as the charity you want to support. And, be sure to spread the word!

Or, use the link to go straight to the **CROSSROADS MOPS** search window <http://www.goodsearch.com/?charityid=912581>

Local Events

- **Dec. 10, 6pm Capitol Tree Lighting** - watch the annual lighting of the Capital Tree, listen to seasonal music, and check out the local museums.
- **Dec. 10, 6-8pm Phone Calls From Santa** - The Wake Forest Parks & Rec Dept. is offering "Calls from Santa" to kids ages 3-7. Registration is available at the Wake Forest Town Hall or online. Forms must be completed by 5pm Dec 9. No charge, but calls must be local.
- **Dec. 10-13, 4-9pm - 2009 Holiday Express at Pullen Park.** Children and adults alike will enjoy this holiday experience as they take the ride of a life time aboard the Santa Express Train! Experience an unforgettable adventure through acres of pure holiday magic where thousands of lights dazzle your senses and then stop off at Santa's Village where you'll meet Santa himself! The evening will also feature concessions, carousel rides, holiday entertainment and more! Cost: \$7/person
- **Dec. 11, 7pm & 12-13, 5pm- Living Christmas Tree** at Tabernacle Baptist Church <http://www.tabernacle-Raleigh.org>
- **Dec. 12; 1-3pm - Wake Forest Christmas Parade,** Downtown Wake Forest
- **Dec. 12-13, 1-7pm Candlelight Tour** in Historic Oakwood. Tickets are on sale now. <http://www.historicoakwood.org/>
- **Dec 12, 1-4. Oakwood Scavenger Hunt** - Raleigh Parks & Recreation Dept. is sponsoring a scavenger hunt during the Candlelight Tour.
- **Dec. 23, 6-9pm - Christmas Unwrapped** at Crossroads Fellowship including *Live Bands, Frosty's Magic Show, Inflatables for Preschoolers, Carnival games for children, Carols & Candlelight, Tunnel of Lights* and a *Live Nativity*. <http://crossroads.org>
- **Dec. 31 First Night Raleigh 2010** - 2-6pm, Children's celebration; 7-11pm—nighttime events (First Night button required for entry.) <http://www.firstnightraleigh.com>
- **Dec. 31, 7pm - First Light Wake Forest** - 7pm begins with games, activities and wholesome fun. Sleeping Booty takes the stage at 8pm, 10pm & 11:30pm. Kids will enjoy a special countdown and fireworks display at 9pm
- **Morehead Planetarium**, now showing Star of Bethlehem. <http://www.moreheadplanetarium.org>
- **NC Museum of History** - has some great programs planned this month! Time for Tots: Seasonal Symbols, Triangle Youth Jazz Ensemble, History Corner: Christmas Trees. <http://ncmuseumofhistory.org/wgo/Programs.html>

Do you have a suggestion or information to share in the newsletter?
Email it to Sarah Clark at pwfaith@yahoo.com



Teacher Gift Ideas

- Gift cards for: coffee, book stores, Walmart/ Target, teacher supply stores, Dairy Queen or similar treat
- Movie Basket: Lg plastic bowl (or popcorn container) filled with microwave popcorn, movie-sized candy and movie tickets or movie rental gift card.
- Coffee Break: a pack of gourmet coffee and a nice mug are a classic favorite. Add a nice twist with a box of biscotti. Mix up a batch of instant cappuccino and tie a bow around the jar.
- Tea Time: Individual teapot with mug and a box of herbal tea is a relaxing treat.
- For the Birds: a hummingbird feeder or small bird feeder is always appreciated. Add a handbook on bird identification.
- Read It: books for the classroom make a wonderful gift for teachers. Choose one of your child's' favorite tales.
- Say Thank You: a handwritten note from parents and/or children is always a blessing to those who spend time teaching our children every day.
- MOPS crafts: many of our crafts make great gifts - neck wraps, bath salts, glass tile necklace, candle holders. Get crafty with your children and make a personalized gift.



1 Corinthians 13 Christmas Version

If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows, strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas cookies, preparing gourmet meals and arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtime, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing home, and give all that I have to charity, but do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.

If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties and sing in the choir's cantata, but do not focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child.
Love sets aside decorating to kiss the husband.

Love is kind, though harried and tired.

Love doesn't envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens.

Love doesn't yell at the kids to get out of the way, but is thankful they are there to be in the way.

Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

Love bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.

Video games will break, pearl necklaces will be lost,
golf clubs will rust. But giving the gift of love will endure.
Merry Christmas!

Christmas Word Search

Words associated with Christmas are hidden in the puzzle. Can you find them all?

J C Z K F G C F Z R A T S B X Y H
M Q H W T J A R T A E F S H A A I
C D P R P M W S T V M D L F K R B
Y Z E Z I Y L N U T M X O R U E O
S E T L O S A U Z S E Y R U H I Y
Z U Y L Q S T G B L E P A I J N T
N S R B I K T M O X P J C T G D I
F J N D N G M P A R S U N C O E V
D D T O S G H C S S T E T A L E I
A W Y Z W T U T Y D N G W K E R T
A A M S R S O G S I E V O E L S A
C G S O D C H X T N S Z H W U K N
I O N R K L Z D C N E N O J Y I C
R W A I D M G N R E R D M R Q M E
E C N H S I P T L R P F X T C O Z
G G W Y Q W T S E V L E I U Y I Z
I H A I C I C L E S N A A Q P Y L

CARDS
CAROLS
CHRISTMAS
DINNER
ELVES
FAMILY
FRUITCAKE
ICICLES
JESUS
LIGHTS
NATIVITY
NORTHPOLE
PRESENTS
REINDEER
SANTA
SNOW
STAR
STOCKING
TREE
YULELOG

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



"Can we open them NOW? Grandma didn't put 'Don't Open 'Til Christmas' stickers on them."



What is MOPS?

MOPS was created with the goal of meeting the needs of Mothers Of Preschoolers (infancy through kindergarten). MOPS is a place for women to make friends, share experiences, laugh together and receive understanding and gentle encouragement. MOPS groups are run by mothers for mothers of preschoolers. Our program includes an encouraging message, time for ladies to gather and talk in small groups, a craft and a variety of other activities intended to deepen friendships and spiritual growth.

Crossroads MOPS meets every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month, September through May, from 9:30-11:30am at Crossroads Fellowship.

For more information visit our website at <http://crossroadsmops.net>

2009-2010 Steering

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December 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 MOPS	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22 No MOPS	23	24	25 Merry Christmas	26
27	28	29	30	31	Happy New Year 2010	