

The hard thing that made Christmas better



by Dawn Reed
Eastern Ky. Columnist

It was the hard thing that made Christmas better. A year many moons ago, we were in crisis.

Christmas was coming fast,

but my beloved and I didn't have two nickels to rub together. We were so broke . . . we couldn't even afford to pay attention. With layaway at K-Mart we would be able to get our kids a few special presents. But that was it. Nothing for each other.

We would have to break it to our families. There would be no exchanging gifts.

So, we told them: no drawing names, no trading presents.

It might seem trivial, but it wasn't to us. Honestly, it was embarrassing. I was horrified. Don't get me wrong. We were certainly blessed. We never missed a meal! Every single need was met by our generous Father in heaven! It was just a tough time.

The gift-giving/not gift-giv-

ing scenario goes all the way back to the first Christmas. The shepherds only brought themselves while the wise men gave gold, myrrh, and frankincense. It's funny when you don't have gifts at Christmas that you focus on what's important. That hard time changed our Christmas. It made it better! When we weren't shopping for presents we couldn't afford, we had more time to spend together. We didn't have much under the tree so we wrapped up a baby doll in a blanket to represent the Gift of all Gifts-the newborn Messiah.

We loved Jesus. Of course, we did. He just hadn't been the main thing for us at Christmas. After that hard year, He became the main thing. He deserves it! If I'm honest, I was never a good gift-giver before that. Finding a life-changing gift when we DID

have Christmas money was tough. What did people need? What did they want? And what color would that be? Shopping was terribly stressful!

We survived that embarrassing no-gift holiday. Though it was difficult, we grew tougher skin. Time passed, situations changed, but the lesson stayed with us. Years later, we still don't do the big shopping thing.

For my children's workers and jail ministry team, I buy items at the Dollar Tree and connect them to Bible verses or a Jesus quote. A pair of inexpensive gloves might have a tag with "Jesus G-loves you!" or "God bless your hands and all that they do!" A whisk or serving spoon might have: "I pray your heart will always be stirred by God's Word." One year, in honor of my children's helpers at church, I purchased

chickens for a village through Samaritan's Purse.

Recently, I've been making what I call "A Cup of Strength" to share with ladies in our church and community. Using old mugs or teacups, I put 30 "Be strong" Bible verses in them. The instructions are to tape the verses to their mirror or dashboard or carry in their pocket to memorize and share when possible. (You can often find coffee cups/teacups at flea markets and antique stores for only 50 cents!)

This has been a year of difficulty and change. Nothing is the same as before. Businesses have closed, jobs lost, hours cut, and money is tighter than ever. This may be the year to switch your focus from gifts to THE GIFT. It might be the hard thing that makes your Christmas better, too!

Kitchen Diva by Angela Shelf Medearis

Aromatic Holiday Gifts from the Kitchen

Gifts from the kitchen are easy and inexpensive to make and are always welcome during the holidays.

Sachets and potpourri make beautiful and aromatic Christmas gifts. They can be fashioned from a variety of herbs and potpourri, and are simple to make. Bath sachets can be put directly into the tub or tied to the faucet so that the hot water passes through the herbal mixture as the bath is drawn.

Sachet bags also may be placed inside clothes drawers, tucked into the corners of couches or armchairs, or placed inside of closets to freshen up a closed space.

Any number of creative and inexpensive combinations may be used to make potpourri. Spices, flowers, essential oils, your favorite perfume, dried herbs and citrus peels all make a wonderful potpourri.

Using a fixative -- such as a tincture of benzoin, styrax or orris root -- will extend the life of the perfume and ingredients. Most fixatives can be purchased at craft stores or ordered online.

These easy-to-make recipes for bath sachets, potpourri and an herbal rubbing lotion will be fragrant reminders long after Christmas is over. Remember, gifts from the heart are part of the true meaning of Christmas. Have a happy holiday season!

BATH SACHETS

2 cups dried herbs (lavender, sage, rosemary, pennyroyal, lemon verbena, chamomile, thyme or mint -- alone or in any combination)

8 (4-inch) squares of cheesecloth or cotton (8 small decorative handkerchiefs also work well)

8 (12-inch) lengths of ribbon or lace

1. Place the herbs in a plastic bag. Roll a rolling pin back and forth over the herbs until they are slightly crushed. Place 1/4 cup of the dried herbs in the center of the cloth square.

2. Gather the square in a pouf and knot a piece of ribbon or lace around the neck of the pouf to secure

the herbs. Make ribbon or lace into a bow, leaving the ends long enough to tie the bath sachet to a faucet. Makes 8 bath sachets.

ROSE PETAL POTPOURRI

3 cups dried rose petals

2 cups dried lavender

1 cup dried lemon verbena

1 tablespoon dried lemon peel

1 tablespoon allspice

1 tablespoon cinnamon

1 tablespoon cloves

1. In a large jar, combine the rose petals and laven-

der. In a medium bowl, mix the lemon verbena, lemon peel, allspice, cinnamon and cloves. Pour the lemon mixture into the jar containing the rose petals and lavender.

2. Cover jar tightly and shake ingredients. Let potpourri stand for 2 to 3 weeks, shaking mixture frequently to combine the scents.

To give as gifts:

8 small drawstring bags or 8 (4-inch) squares of cheesecloth or cotton (8 small handkerchiefs work well)

8 (12-inch) lengths of ribbon or lace

Place the potpourri in a decorative bag with a drawstring, or to make a sachet, place 1/4 cup of the potpourri in the center of a cloth square. Gather the square in a pouf and knot a piece of ribbon or lace around the neck of the pouf to secure the potpourri. Make the ribbon or the lace into a bow. Makes 6 cups.

HERBAL RUBBING LOTION

This is refreshing herbal lotion is a wonderful pick-me-up for sore muscles and tired minds at the end of a long day. The herbs also give the rubbing alcohol a pleasant fragrance. The herbs may be obtained from grocery stores or online sources. You also can purchase decorative bottles online or from craft stores.

1 cup fresh lavender leaves

1/4 cup lemon verbena

1/4 cup mint leaves

1/4 cup rosemary sprigs

2 cups unscented rubbing alcohol

1. Place the herbs in a plastic bag. Roll a rolling pin back and forth over the herbs until they are slightly crushed to release the oils and fragrance.

2. Place herbs in a glass jar that has been sterilized by boiling. Add the rubbing alcohol. Cover tightly and label the jar NOT TO BE USED IN-



TERNALLY. Set aside in a cool, dry place for 5 to 7 days. Strain the alcohol through several layers of cheesecloth into pretty jars or bottles.

3. Cap tightly and label bottles or jars, NOT TO BE USED INTERNALLY. Tie a pretty bow around the bottles or jars, if desired. Makes 2 cups rubbing lotion.

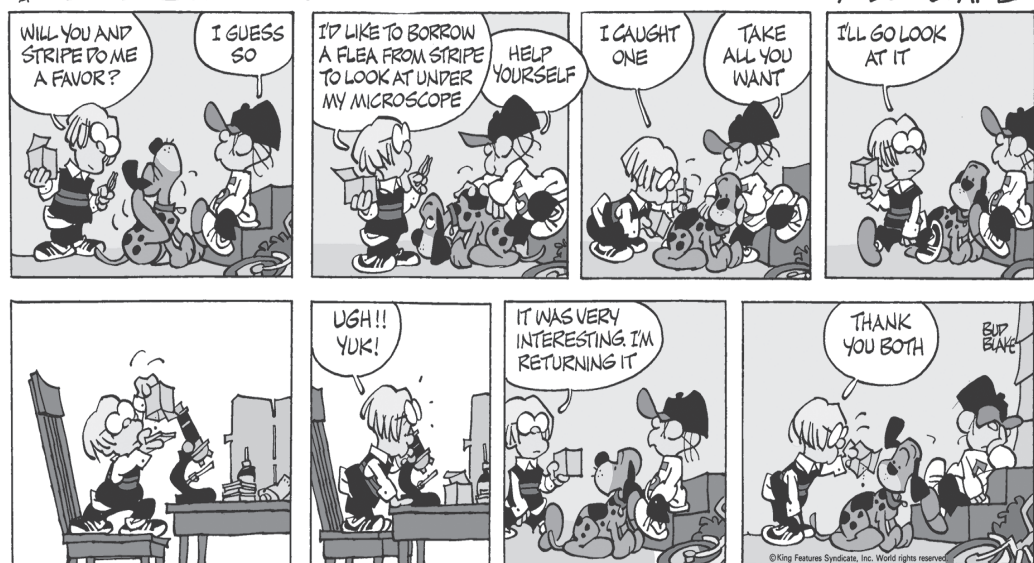
Angela Shelf Medearis is an award-winning children's author, culinary historian and the author of seven cookbooks. Her latest cookbook is "The Kitchen Diva's Diabetic Cookbook." Her website is www.divapro.com. To see how-to videos, recipes and much, much more, Like Angela Shelf Medearis, The Kitchen Diva! on Facebook. Recipes may not be reprinted without permission from Angela Shelf Medearis.

Births -- Baptist Health of Richmond

County	DOB	Parents	Town	Gender
Estill	Nov. 17, 2020	Hanna Long and Philip Jenkins	Irvine	Girl
Lee	Nov. 17, 2020	Chantel Newton and Dalton Charles	Beattyville	Girl
Jackson	Nov. 19, 2020	Haley Howard & Glenn Neeley	Tyner	Twin Girl
Jackson	Nov. 19, 2020	Haley Howard & Glenn Neeley	Tyner	Twin Boy
Powell	Nov. 23, 2020	Amber and Cody Turner	Stanton	Girl
Owsley	Nov. 23, 2020	Kelly and Joseph Banks	Booneville	Boy
Madison	Nov. 23, 2020	Mahaleigh Broaddus & Jason Norton	Madison	Boy
Madison	Nov. 23, 2020	Ashley and Alan Scott	Madison	Girl
Estill	Nov. 24, 2020	Olivia Gross and Terru Hurd	Irvine	Girl
Madison	Nov. 24, 2020	Sandra Sizemore and David Isaacs	Berea	Boy
Estill	Nov. 25, 2020	Amanda Patton and Richard Centers	Irvine	Girl
Estill	Nov. 25, 2020	Kristen Beckler and Charles Cox	Irvine	Boy
Owsley	Nov. 25, 2020	Alivia and Cody Gibson	Booneville	Boy

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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