



H-3 Monthly Newsletter



What is the true meaning of Christmas?

December is...

- Official Celebration of Jesus Christ's birth, December 25
- A time to Learn the True Meaning of the Christmas Season
- Holiday Season Safety Tips
- National Handwashing Week, December 1 - 7
- Holiday Tips for Family Caregivers
- Choosing Safe Toys

In His Service,



¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

Luke 2:11 -14

The true meaning of Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus who lived in Israel 2000 years ago and who died on the cross for our sins (1 Corinthians 15 1-4; 1 Peter 2:24). More specifically, when we use the word "meaning," we're talking about the purpose of his birth that Christmas is supposed to celebrate. His purpose was to enter into the world and become one of us, that he might deliver us from our sins. Jesus is not just any man. He is God in flesh (John 1:1, 14; Colossians 2:9). He is the second person of the Trinity who, by being born of the Virgin Mary, was made under the law (Galatians 4:4) and subject to the same temptations and limitations that we are. Christmas is the celebration of the historical event of where God entered into our world so that he might display the perfection and holiness of God and that through his work of living perfectly and also dying on the cross for our sins, that all who trust in him would be saved from the righteous judgment of God.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him," (John 3:16-17).

So, Christmas is supposed to be the time of year when we celebrate the birth of Christ. Unfortunately, it has become a commercial holiday rather than a religious one. It's mostly known as a time for businesses to make money, for people to give gifts, for children to be excited, for parties, etc. The "reason for the season: is supposed to be Jesus, not gifts, not parties, and not watching "the big game." Of course, having celebrations, attending parties, and watching the big game are not wrong. It's just that the meaning of Christmas is supposed to be the recognition and appreciation of the birth of the one who loves us and died in our place.




256.766.9958
info@tmbcal.org
 606 S. Marietta Street
 Florence, AL 35630

- "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit," (Matthew 1:18).
- "Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. 30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. 31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. 32 "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end," (Luke 1:26-33).

Jesus' birth place was prophesied in the Old Testament.

- "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity," (Micah 5:1-2).

Jesus' being born of a virgin was prophesied in the Old Testament.

- "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel," (Isaiah 7:14).

Jesus being God in flesh was prophesied in the Old Testament.

- "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace," (Isaiah 9:6).
- "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn," (Zechariah 12:10).

Jesus would be preceded by a great prophet was prophesied in the Old Testament

- A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God," (Isaiah 40:3).

Jesus is the reason for the season

Jesus gives meaning to Christmas. Jesus who was God in flesh, perfect, pure, holy, and who died on the cross and rose from the dead, is the one who gives the true meaning to Christmas.

Our wish for you during this special season is that you will have at the center of ALL your celebrations, the "REAL" meaning of Christmas: The magical and mysterious birth of a baby in Bethlehem approximately 2000 years ago!!!



Common Holiday Hazards

Watch out for your kids. Kids get excited, especially concerning a new place, new people, or new experiences. Many locations aren't as childproof as your own home.

- △ If you're travelling or you're a guest, you'll have to be alert for potentially dangerous food, drinks, household items, toys, tools, choking hazards, etc.
- △ Don't wait to clean up after a party. Kids or pets could get to hazardous alcohol, food, or decorations before you do.
- △ Poinsettias are poisonous to man and beast; keep them far from children and pets.

Be alert for fire hazards. Most residential fires occur during winter, and it's easier to get careless when you're caught up in good company.

- △ Never leave sources of fire or heat unattended.
- △ Never use charcoal- or gasoline-fuelled devices indoors.

Step aside for professionals and experts.

- △ Leave the fireworks to the professionals.
- △ Leave the grilling to the veteran barbeque-ers of the family.

If you're decorating,

- △ Assemble, clean, and inspect the location and all of your tools and equipment first.
- △ Never block exits.
- △ Never use damaged accessories, cords, lighting sources, etc.
- △ Never overload on electrical outlets or cables.
- △ Ensure your holiday lights aren't damaged (frayed, aged, cracked, etc.)
- △ All outdoor electrics should be plugged into GFI (ground fault circuit interrupter) outlets for extra protection.
- △ Always opt for non-flammable material (whether for Christmas trees, Halloween or Carnival costumers, Easter decorations, etc.)
- △ Never leave fire or heat sources unattended.

Seasonal Safety

Dress and behave according to the season. Stay warm in cold temperatures, and cool down in hot environments.

Prepare and guard yourself according to the activity.

△ Whether you're swimming or snowboarding, trick-or-treating or hunting for chocolate eggs, and running the risk of hypothermia or sunburn or drowning or firework explosions... be sure you know the basic rules and safety precautions for whatever you do.

Check and prepare the fireplace before using it.

- △ Never burn wrapping paper, which could cause flash fires.
- △ Keep all decorations and flammable objects at least a few feet away.
- △ Always use a sturdy and large metal screen.



DID YOU KNOW?

Candle Fires Are Rampant During Holidays

Christmas, Christmas Eve, and New Year's Day are the top 3 days of the year for candle fires. ⁽²⁾

Children At High Risk for Electrical Accidents

According to the CPSC, 70% of child-related electrical accidents occur at home, when adult supervision is present. ⁽⁴⁾

Winter is Fire Season

The number of children injured or killed in home fires more than doubles during the winter months. ⁽²⁾



ACTION ITEMS

- ✓ Always practice extra safety precautions in an unknown setting.
- ✓ As always, but especially in an unfamiliar setting, protect your family's wellbeing as well as your own.
- ✓ Dress according to the season and the activity.
- ✓ Keep your hands and your kitchen spotless.
- ✓ Plan ahead to ensure a safe and enjoyable holiday.
- ✓ Share travel plans only with a select (trustworthy!) few.

Safe Travels

Plan ahead. Know where you're going and how you're going to get there. Download the latest GPS data or obtain a new map. Check for construction detours, and consult the weatherman.

Let a trusted person know where you are and leave them an itinerary and your contact info.

Never inform strangers of your travel plans.

Create the illusion that somebody's always home (see [home safety tips](#) for more security tips and ideas)

If you're driving, keep these holiday safety tips in mind:

- △ Never drive under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or distractions.
- △ Buckle up—yourself and your family; use the car-seat for small children.
- △ If possible, travel by day. Quite simply, it's safer. If you're worried about traffic congestion, get a very early start or avoid the hours when most folks drive to and from work.
- △ Keep a breakdown kit (spare tires, jumper cables, fuses, flares, flashlights, blankets, etc.).

IF YOU'RE FLYING OR USING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION...

- △ Travel with a buddy (or a few); there is safety in numbers.
- △ Always travel with a trusted source. The airline or bus or train company (as well as any middleman company being used) should be familiar and trusted.

Don't carry too much cash or valuables on your person; don't look like an expensive target.

A Very Healthy Holiday

Avoid smoking and second-hand smoke.

It's a good time for your regular check-up and vaccinations. We typically interact with more people during holidays, increases our chances of catching infections along with those hugs.

Always practice your good judgement. That happens when you're sober, and not under the influence of anything else.

Drink responsibly.

Stay active and get regular exercise.

De-stress! You already know stress isn't healthy. Here's a few tips to fight it off:

- △ Make time to sleep and eat properly
- △ Drinking plenty of water
- △ Enjoying the people and living in the moment
- △ Pre-plan as much as possible; whatever you can do today, don't leave off for the "big day"
- △ Have a lot of back-up plans
- △ Make time for exercise
- △ Settle on a positive attitude no matter what goes awry

Hearty and harmless holiday food

Wash your hands often. You come into contact with plenty of people, and you're handling unusual things (it's not every day you're setting up the Christmas tree).

Avoid cross-contamination; separate raw food from cooked food.

Cook at the proper temperature.

Thoroughly wash raw food (fruits and vegetables). Having a [food safety training](#) is one easy way on learning the proper food handling especially if you're in the food service industry.

Refrigerate leftovers promptly. Don't leave perishable food out for more than a couple of hours.

Thaw meat in the fridge, not the counter.

Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables and limit sugary and alcoholic and fatty food intake.

Stuff with care. If you're stuffing a turkey or any other meat, prepare the stuffing and then insert it immediately and loosely. Whether it's cooked inside or outside the main meat, be sure to cook it to at least 165 degrees f.



Personal hygiene begins and ends with our hands. And though we're taught as youngsters to wash our hands before dinner, it's important to remember that germs don't care what time of day it is. Clean hands prevent sickness. So it's especially important to learn the basics about hand hygiene so that you, too, can become a champion hand washer! Let's examine some handy (see what we did there?) tips and info in honor of National Handwashing Awareness Week, which takes place each year during the first week of December.

NATIONAL HANDWASHING AWARENESS WEEK ACTIVITIES

1. DO IT RIGHT

Experts recommend washing your hands with soap and clean water for at least 20 seconds. Be sure to get a good lather going and clean the back of the hands, between the fingers and under the nails. Dry them using a clean towel. There is a lot of science behind these recommendations, so be sure to follow them each time you wash your hands.

2. MEMORIZE THE FIVE STEPS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention calls hand washing "a do-it-yourself vaccine" and suggests remembering five easy steps: Wet, lather, scrub, rinse, dry.

3. LEARN THE FOUR PRINCIPLES OF HAND AWARENESS

Endorsed by the American Medical Association and American Academy of Family Physicians, the four principles are: 1) Wash your hands when they are dirty and before eating; 2) Do not cough into hands; 3) Do not sneeze into hands; and 4) Don't put your fingers in your eyes, nose or mouth.



Say
WHAT!

5 SUPER CLEAN FACTS ABOUT HAND HYGIENE

1. HANDWASHING EQUALS HAPPINESS

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, handwashing can prevent 1 in 3 diarrhea-related illnesses and 1 in 5 infections, including the flu.

2. BEWARE THE TWIN KILLERS FOR KIDS

About 1.4 million children under age 5 die from diarrheal diseases and pneumonia — the two most deadly afflictions for children worldwide.

3. THE DIRTY SECRET OF PUBLIC RESTROOMS

The CDC also reports that only 31 percent of men and 65 percent of women washed their hands after using a public restroom.

4. HANDWASH YOUR WAY TO HEALTH

Using antibiotics creates antibiotic resistance. Handwashing prevents many sicknesses, so people need less antibiotics. Therefore, less antibiotic resistance.

5. SNEEZES ARE MINI HURRICANES

A typical human sneeze exits the body at about 200 miles per hour and emits around 40,000 droplets into the air.

10 Holiday Tips For Family Caregivers

1. Recognize Your Signs of Stress & Burnout
2. Anticipate Your Holiday Hot Button Moments
3. Acknowledge Your Feelings Good & Bad
4. Put Selfcare Back On Your List
5. Find a Healthy Stress Relief Outlet
6. Get Support
7. Do Mindful Planning
8. Ask for Help
9. Keep Your Holiday Simple
10. Start New Traditions

CHOOSING SAFE TOYS

Toys are a fun and important part of every child's development. But each year, many kids are treated in hospital emergency departments for toy-related injuries. Choking is a risk for kids ages 3 or younger, because they tend to put objects in their mouths.

Manufacturers follow guidelines and label most new toys for specific age groups. But the most important thing a parent can do — especially when it comes to younger children — is to supervise play.

TOY GUIDELINES

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) closely monitors and regulates toys. Any toys made in — or imported into — the United States after 1995 must follow CPSC standards.

Here are some general guidelines to keep in mind when shopping for toys:

- Toys made of fabric should be labeled as flame resistant or flame retardant.
- Stuffed toys should be washable.
- Painted toys must use lead-free paint.
- Art materials should say nontoxic.
- Crayons and paints should say ASTM D-4236 on the package, which means that they've been evaluated by the American Society for Testing and Materials.

Steer clear of older toys, even hand-me-downs from friends and family. These might not meet current safety standards.

And make sure a toy isn't too loud for your child. The noise of some rattles, squeak toys, and musical or electronic toys can be as loud as a car horn — even louder if a child holds it directly to the ears — and can damage hearing.

THE RIGHT TOYS AT THE RIGHT AGES

Always read labels to make sure a toy is right for a child's age. Guidelines published by the CPSC and other groups can help you make those buying decisions.

Be sure to consider your child's temperament, habits, and behavior whenever you buy a new toy. Even a child who seems advanced compared with other kids the same age shouldn't use toys meant for older kids. The age levels for toys are determined by safety factors, not intelligence or maturity.

KEEPING TOYS SAFE AT HOME

After you've bought safe toys, it's also important to make sure kids know how to use them. The best way to do this is by supervising kids as they play. This teaches kids how to play safely while having fun.

Parents should:

- Teach kids to put toys away.
- Check toys regularly to make sure that they aren't broken or unusable:
 - Wooden toys shouldn't have splinters.
 - Bikes and outdoor toys shouldn't have rust.
 - Stuffed toys shouldn't have broken seams or exposed removable parts.
- Throw away broken toys or repair them right away.
- Store outdoor toys when they're not in use so that they are not exposed to rain or snow.

And be sure to keep toys clean. Some plastic toys can be cleaned in the dishwasher, but read the manufacturer's directions first. Another option is to mix antibacterial soap or a mild dishwashing detergent with hot water in a spray bottle and use it to clean toys, rinsing them afterward.

REPORTING UNSAFE TOYS

Check the CPSC website for the latest information about toy recalls or call their hotline at (800) 638-CPSC to report a toy you think is unsafe. If you have any doubt about a toy's safety, err on the side of caution and do not allow your child to play with it.

Play it Safe

— Shop Smart this Holiday Season!

Keep deflated balloons away from children younger than 8 years old. Discard broken balloons at once. Avoid small balls and toys with small parts for children younger than age 3.

Get the right size helmets and safety gear for children using bikes, scooters, skateboards and skates. Ensure they are worn properly while riding or skating.

High powered magnet sets are dangerous and should be kept away from children under 14. Building & play sets with small magnets should also be kept away from small children.

NSN
NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY NETWORK
A PROJECT OF THE U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

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resources this issue

Resources: <https://carm.org/what-is-the-true-meaning-of-christmas>
<https://www.atlantictraining.com/safety-tips/holiday-safety-tips.php>
<https://nationaltoday.com/national-handwashing-awareness-week/>
<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/safe-toys.html>

