

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

How Judy prepared for Christmas

By Janaan Manternach
NC News Service

"This is going to be a terrible Christmas," Molly told her best friend.

"Why?" asked Judy. She wondered why Molly seemed so down.

"My father has been looking for a job for months and he can't find one," Molly said. She began to cry. "Mom told us kids that we might not get presents for Christmas. She said she wasn't sure there would be money for that."

Judy felt terrible. During afternoon classes she couldn't keep her mind on what the teacher wanted. She imagined Molly's house at Christmas with no gifts. Something inside her cried at the image of so bare a Christmas at her best friend's house.

"Mom, do you know what?" she began as soon as she got home. "Molly's dad still doesn't have a job. And Molly might not have any presents for Christmas.

Judy's mother looked at her, then sat down at the kitchen table. "Sit down, Judy, and we'll talk about it."

"What can we do?" Judy asked. "I feel sad for Molly."

"Let's think hard," her mother said. "I'm sure we can think of something."

"I've got an idea," Judy said. "Maybe we could give up some things from now until Christmas. We could keep track of how much money that saves. Then just before Christmas you could give the money to Molly's parents."

"That's a great idea, Judy. And maybe we could agree to give each other fewer gifts this year. That would save still more money that we could share with Molly's parents."

During the rest of Advent both Judy and her mother gave up something every day and kept track of the money they were saving. Judy gave up the candy and ice cream she usually had at school.

"I can't believe mother is ac-



tually giving up smoking from now until Christmas," Judy thought to herself. "That will save a lot of money for Molly. I wonder what mother will get for me."

Judy worked a little every day on a book for her mother, with her own drawings and stories. That would be something special for Christmas and it wouldn't cost anything.

Four days before Christmas Judy and her mother sat down and counted up the money they had saved.

"I think we have a little more than \$100 for Molly's parents," Judy's mother concluded. "Isn't that great! I'll see to it that they have this today."

"And Judy. It was your idea," her mother recalled. "Thanks to you, I think this will be our best Christmas ever."

(Ms. Manternach is the author of catechetical works, scripture stories and original stories for children.)

Family Advent Activities

Here are two activities children and their families can do this Advent.

1. **Secret Friends.** At the beginning of Advent, put the names of all family members in a hat. Everyone draws a name. During Advent, do nice things for the person whose name you drew. Keep the name a secret.

2. **Advent Calendar.** Cut the appropriate number of "doors" or "windows," one for each day of Advent, on a piece of construction paper. Paste the construction paper over a picture of the Nativity. Each day of the Advent season a door may be folded open and gradually the different elements of the scene come into view.



HOW ABOUT YOU?

Judy has a brainstorm in our story this week. Do you have a brainstorm for Advent? What can you do for others during Advent?

Children's Reading Corner

"Sunrise in the Mountains" is a story by Natalie Savage Carlson. Children and adults might enjoy reading it together. Afterward they might talk together about kindness and trust in everyday life. In the story, Old Quill, a gold prospector, prepares for Christmas even though he is pretty sure that he and his burro can't make it through the winter. His findings have been skimpy; his gold dust is all used up. But Old Quill always shared his food with the wild creatures that lived in the mountains with him. And on Christmas morning Old Quill wakes up to find a gift, a gold nugget. He is overjoyed and as he shows it to his burro, he says, "See? We got a Christmas gift from a grateful packrat. It will last us till spring thaws the cricks. Now all of us will have a bite to eat once we've dropped in at the tradin' post." (Harper and Row Publishers, 10 East 53rd St., New York, N.Y. 10022. 1983. Hardback, \$9.95.)



Love

Making the warmth of God's love manifest to terminally ill patients is important to the ministry of Sister Rosella Molitor, D.C. With funding from the Catholic Church Extension Society she serves the spiritual needs of those living in Eastern Oklahoma's home mission territory.

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