

Motivated

special
kids'
edition



NOTE TO PARENTS

The wonderful Christmas and New Year's season is always a special time for families—a time of love, warmth, togetherness, giving, caring—and lots and lots of fun! We hope that you and your children will enjoy the stories and activities featured in this special children's edition of *Motivated*. May it contribute to a memorable and meaningful holiday season. While the magazine is directed to children, you may even enjoy having your whole family read some of these heartwarming and character-building stories together, celebrating the beauties and joys of this special season that comes only once a year. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Christina Lane
For your *Motivated* Family

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SNOWMAN SPICY



Once upon a time in a faraway land—a very cold land—there lived a snowman named Spicy.

He was a special snowman, because he could walk, and talk, and sing! And sometimes ... he could even jump!

Spicy loved to sing songs in the moonlight. When the moon was full and round in the dark night sky, he would throw his head back and sing happy snowman songs.

One special holiday season, Spicy found a friend—a snow lady named Lala. She was a beautiful snow lady, and special like Spicy was. She had big glittering eyes. She loved to sing, too.

Spicy decided he wanted to give Lala a special present for Christmas. Oh, what, oh what, can I give to Lala for Christmas? He wondered, as he trudged through the snow. It has to be something special ... something different ... something big! Something she has never received before.

"Ouch!" Spicy yelped, as his big

snowy body tumbled into a heap. "Oh no, I forgot about the frozen lake again." He mumbled as he picked himself up from the ground.

"Hey, wait a minute ..."—he paused as an idea popped into his head. "Spicy, you're brilliant! Yes, that's what you'll do for Lala. You'll learn to ice skate to her favorite Christmas carol, and you'll be the greatest ice skater ever. She will be so pleased. It will be her best Christmas present ever!"



SPLAT! Spicy went headfirst into the snow...

Spicy laughed a happy snowman laugh. He took a big step out onto the ice. But his great big snowy body slipped, and he fell down hard on the ice.

"Oh dear, this is going to take some serious practicing," he realized.

All day, Spicy tried his hardest to balance on the ice. And at last, he found himself standing up long enough to manage one big slide across the ice. "I'm doing it!" he exclaimed as he slid quickly across the lake. "I'm skaaaaa ... UH-OH!"

SPLAT! Spicy went headfirst into the snow on the other side of the lake. "Oh my, in learning to skate I forgot I also needed to learn to stop," he groaned, as he picked himself out of the snow. "I don't think ice skating is for me. Besides, Lala probably wouldn't like that kind of a gift anyway."

He was rearranging the buttons on his snowy chest when something half-buried in the snow caught his eye—something bright and red and shaped like a "J". A candy cane!

Spicy was delighted. Holding the cane in his snow-packed hands, he thought what a great gift a big bag full of candy canes would be for someone special like Lala. "I will make the fullest bag of candy canes anyone ever had—and surely Lala will love it."

Spicy searched high. Spicy searched low. But search as he did, there were no more candy canes to be found. Finally, tired from his long search, Spicy slumped down against a tree. By now, the sun was

setting, and the beautiful moon was beginning to glow brighter and brighter.

"Perhaps the candy canes weren't such a good idea after all," Spicy concluded. "Anyway, it is almost time for my moonlight song."

Just as Spicy was taking a big breath to sing his song, a little firefly landed on his long carrot nose, making it shine a bright orange. Instead of singing his song, Spicy blew on the firefly to make him fly away. "Shoo, shoo, little fellow," he said, a little impatiently.

Then another idea came to him. "Yes, yes, that would do! That would definitely do!" Quickly Spicy took off his black hat and scooped the little firefly inside, covering the top with his cold snowy hands.

"I will catch a whole hat full of you little fellows and then set you on the tallest, prettiest evergreen tree. I will make the best Christmas tree anyone ever saw!—And that will be the perfect present for Lala."

Another flicker of light caught Spicy's eye and he ran after the next little firefly, scooping it up in his hat. Spicy ran for a long time, chasing one firefly, then another. But what poor Spicy didn't realize was that whenever one firefly was caught, one firefly would escape. When Spicy finally stopped running to check how full his hat had become, he was very disappointed to find only one firefly inside.

Sadly, Spicy sat in the snow putting his hat beside him. One icy tear trickled down his cheek. "I only wanted to give Lala the best Christmas present ever," he moaned. "But tomorrow is Christmas and I still haven't found the perfect gift."

Spicy covered his black beady eyes with his big snowy hands and let out a sob.

A pipsqueak voice broke the silence.

The perfect gift doesn't need to be the biggest, or the best, or the most amazing ever.





“Spicy, this is the best present ever!”

Surprised, Spicy looked up to see the firefly slowly fluttering away from the hat. “Wait a minute! What did you say?” he asked.

The firefly replied, “Sometimes the best of presents are the smallest of presents, if they come with love.”

Spicy thought about that for a moment. Spicy looked up into the night sky. “Dear God,” he said, “I really like this snow lady, Lala, and I really want to give her a special Christmas present. It doesn’t have to be big, but I do want it to be special. Please show me what I can give her?”

As he looked down, he saw the snow start to melt away in a little spot on the ground in front of him. Then, a beautiful blue flower blossomed right before his eyes.

Wonderful! Spicy thought. He

reached down his snowy hand and picked the pretty flower. “Thank You, God, for showing me this wonderful gift for Lala.”

Spicy was one happy snowman on Christmas morning when he gave Lala her special Christmas gift.

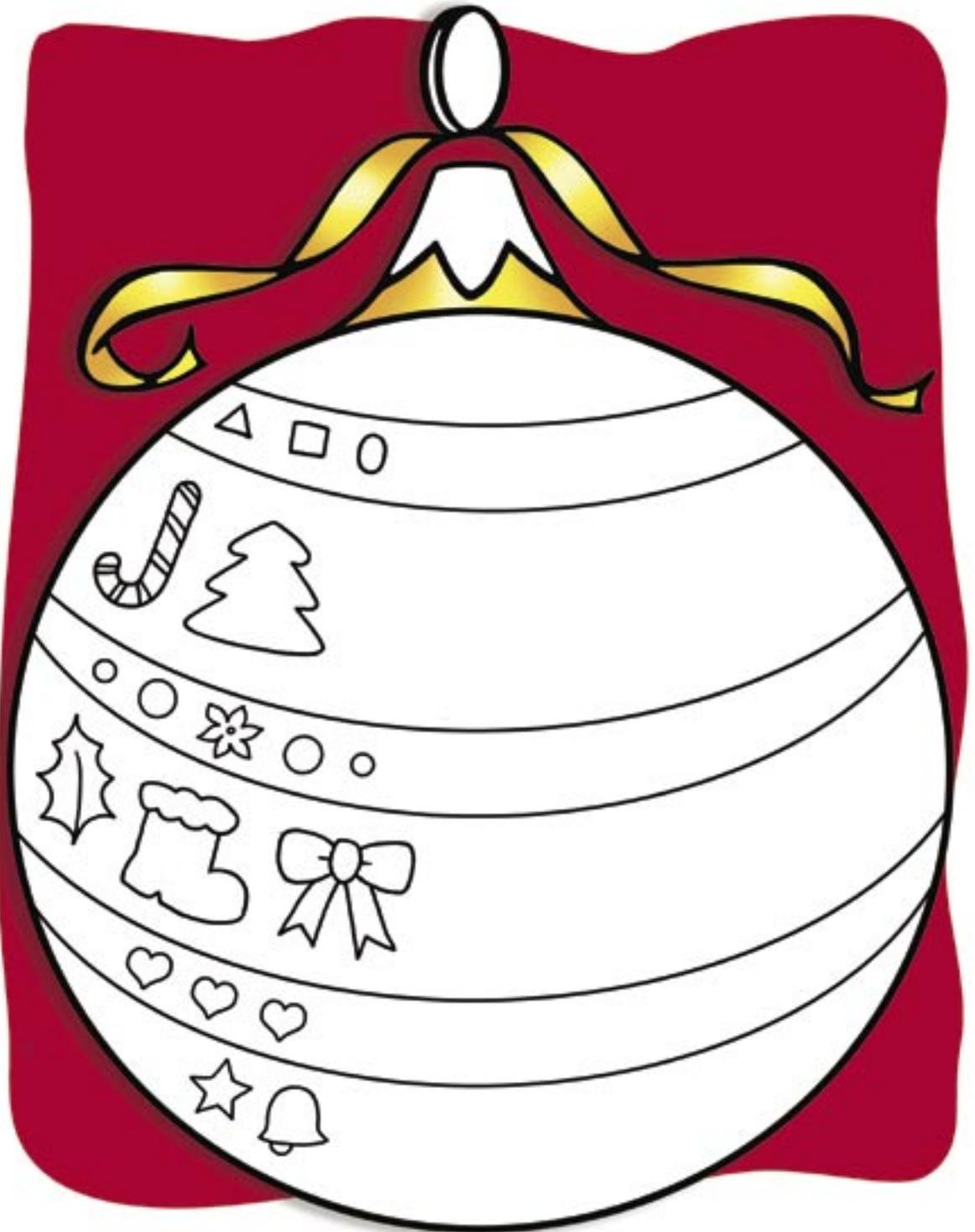
“Spicy, this is the best present ever!” Lala exclaimed as she carefully placed the pretty flower on her black hat. Then she gave Spicy a cheery snow lady hug and said, “And you are my best friend ever!”

Then Spicy and Lala linked hands, threw their heads back, and sang great, ringing snow-people songs as they danced in the snow. As they sang, big round snowflakes fell from the sky, covering the land in another blanket of snow. For Spicy and Lala, it was the perfect Christmas. ■

Draw all the things that you would like to put on your Christmas tree.
Then color the picture.



Finish drawing the Christmas bauble, continuing with the patterns started in each row.



Help the little girl through the holly maze to finish making her Christmas wreath.



SANTA'S SECRET

Mom, when I grow up, do you know what I want to be?"

"I have no idea, Radhi. Tell me."

"I want to be a Santa! I would have my own workshop, filled with all the toys you could ever imagine. I would have my own sled and reindeer, and I would go whoooosh in the sky. Actually, I think a jet would get me to all the houses faster than a sled and reindeer, don't you think, Mom? And Mandy could be one of my elves."

"I don't want to be an elf when I grow up, Radhi. I want to be a mother."

"Today at Silver's department store," Radhi went on, "I told Santa I wanted to be like him when I grew up, and he said that anyone could be a Santa Claus if they wanted to. I asked him if even eight-year-old boys could. He said yes. He said all it really takes is a good heart. He also said that there is a secret present that children can receive. This present is invisible until you discover a secret that makes it possible for you to see it!"

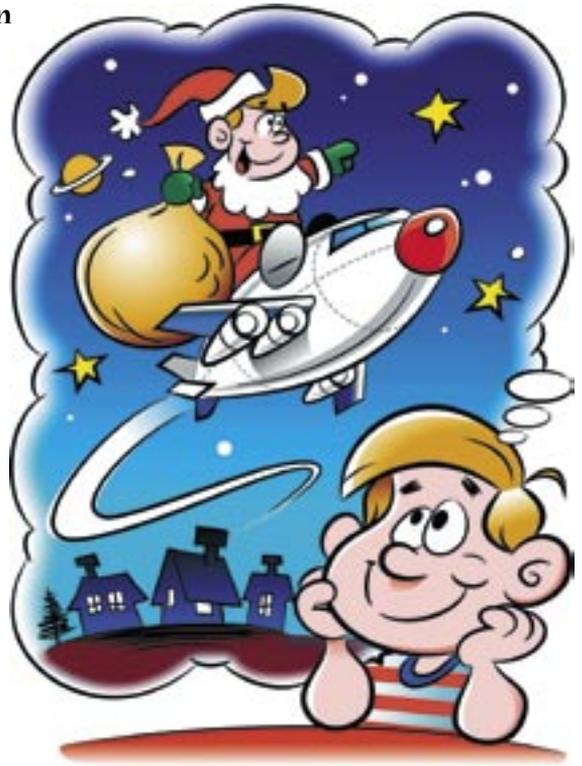
"Really? Did you ask him for the secret present, Radhi?" asked Mandy.

"Yes, but he said he would only give me a clue to start with, and that to become a true Santa, I would need to find this secret out for myself. So that's what I plan to do. Do you want to help me, Mandy?"

"Sure! I'll help. I'm not sure how, though. I'm only six."

"Well, you know the story of Jesus' birth that we read with Daddy last week, right? The Santa said that the clue starts with that story."

"We know that story very well, Radhi," said Mandy,



excitedly. "We could be very close to finding out this secret already."



A week went by. Radhi and Mandy had read the story of Jesus' birth again and again. In fact, they read it every night with either their mom or dad before going to bed. Their parents were now also curious as to what secret the children would find, and tried to help give suggestions as to where to look. Each time, Radhi would only shake his head. He was sure that when he discovered it, he would know.

One afternoon, he and Mandy were talking with their dad.

"Dad, do you think that the Santa Claus we met last week really knows about a secret present and how I can become a true Santa? He could have been telling me a story."

"I don't think so. I think he had

a reason for telling you what he did. A discovery is never easy. It can be a lot of hard work. You may be very close to it, but if you give up too soon, you could miss ever finding it."

"Yes, Radhi, let's not give up too easily," Mandy said. "Maybe there is something else we should be doing, other than reading the story. But what could it be?"

Dad had an idea. "Even though Jesus Christ was born 2000 years ago, His spirit is still with us today. That means that His spirit can lead us to the next clue to this secret of what makes a true Santa. What do you think?"

Radhi thought for a moment and something told him that they were getting warmer. They asked God to send them the clue they needed.



The next day, while Radhi and Mandy were playing in their front yard, they heard their next-door neighbors' car pulling into the driveway next door.

Sammy was asking his mom as he got out of the car, "Why can't we get that Lego castle set with all those knights and horses and carriages?"

His mom answered, "Honey, I explained it to you already. I know it's difficult to understand, but we won't be able to get fancy new toys this Christmas. We don't have that much money. We don't know if we will even be able to stay in this house. Things have been very difficult for your dad and me. Can you please try to understand, sweetie?"

"Okay, Mommy," mumbled Sammy.

They then went into their house.

Mandy shook her head. "That's sad, Radhi. I didn't know the Bradleys don't have enough money."

"Yes, it is sad," agreed Radhi.

"Imagine not getting any special new toys at Christmas! Every year we have something we want under our tree."

"Mom always says God gives us presents because He wants us to be happy," Radhi said. "Mom also says that we need to give gifts back to Him. I always forget about that. What do you think are gifts we can give in return?"

"Well, I try to be a good girl, obey Mom and Dad, make my bed in the morning, and keep the house tidy," answered Mandy.

"I do, too. Oh, Mandy! I have an idea. Do you think that God let us hear the Bradley's conversation to give us a clue as to help us find the secret present?"

"Yes! Maybe there is something we can do for Sammy that will lead us to the secret present. Let's think about it."



A few days before Christmas, Mom needed to go back to Silver's department store, and asked Radhi if he wanted to come along. She knew he wanted to meet Santa again to ask him some very important questions.

To Radhi's relief, the line to talk to Santa Claus wasn't very long. When he got his chance to go shake Santa's hand, he asked, "Do you remember me?"



You told me that anybody could be a Santa Claus if they wanted to. You also told me about a secret present I could find and gave me a clue about how to discover it."

"Ahh yes," replied the Santa, "I remember very well. I didn't know whether you would believe me or not."

"Well, my sister and I think that we're very close to finding this present, but we aren't sure," said Radhi.

"Tell me what you've discovered, and I'll tell you if you're getting close to finding the present," replied Santa.

"We overheard our neighbors talking. Little Sammy Bradley won't have any new toys underneath the Christmas tree this year. They don't have enough money. That made me and my sister sad. We want to do something for Sammy."

"My boy, you are indeed on the brink of discovering this secret. I am sure that God will show you what you should do next," said Santa with a twinkle in his eye.

Radhi was very happy. A big smile spread across his face. His mom came to pick him up just in time to see this smile.

Before leaving, Radhi asked Santa one more question. "Do you like being Santa? I mean, do you enjoy meeting children and giving them gifts?"

"Why, yes I do! And my favorites of all the gifts I like to give are the gifts that come down from above. There are so many of these gifts to give out. I try to help the children receive these wonderful gifts, but many children would rather receive presents that they can play with or show to their friends. They miss out on some of the most special gifts of



all. You know what, Radhi?"

"What?"

"I'm helping you to find one of these secret gifts because I know you'll appreciate it. You can't see this gift yet; it's still invisible. But if you can find it, you'll know that it was worth all the work to find it."



On Christmas morning, Radhi and Mandy were up before the sun had a chance to rise. They knew it would be awhile before they would open their Christmas gifts as a family, so they sat together and discussed the secret gift. Radhi said he was pretty sure they would find it under the Christmas tree.

"Radhi, are you sure it will be there?"

"Yes, Mandy. We have been working very hard to find out what the secret is. We've followed the clues. Santa said I was very close to finding it. I know we will get it today."

"But Santa said that you were close when you said you wanted to do something for Sammy—and we haven't actually done anything for him yet."

"I know. We haven't been able to think of anything to do for him, but I'm sure that God will help us to find something."

When Mom and Dad were up and ready, they all gathered around the Christmas tree to open their

presents.

Dad said, "Why don't we say a prayer and thank God for giving these presents to us?"

Radhi prayed, "Dear Lord, thank You for these Christmas presents. I am sure we will really like our toys. I'm also really looking forward to seeing the secret gift that Santa told me about. He said that the most special gifts come from You, so thank You for giving it to me. Amen."

They all took turns opening their presents. Radhi wanted to keep his biggest present until last. He thought that must be the box with the secret present Santa was talking about. Finally, it came time for him to open it. He tore at the paper and pulled all the wrapping off with hasty excitement.

Radhi's eyes grew wider and wider as he looked at it. Then he broke out into a huge grin, and said, "Mom! Dad! Mandy! I found the secret present!"

"I don't see anything secret about your present," Mandy said. "It's a box with a Lego castle set."

"Mandy, remember what Sammy

said he really wanted, but that his Mom and Dad couldn't buy?"

"Ohhhh," she said when she remembered. "Are you thinking what I'm thinking?"

"Yes!" Radhi turned to his parents and said, "Dad, Mom, I know you chose this present for me, and I really do like it and have wanted one of these. But Sammy won't be able to get any new toys at all this year. So I want to give this to him."

Dad and Mom were surprised, but so proud of Radhi.



The kids wrapped the present back up. Then they quietly went over and put the box on the doorstep of the Bradleys' house. They left a card on the top of the box with a note:

"To Sammy Bradley
From Santa."

They went back into the house happy and excited. "Mom," said Radhi, "I think the gift Santa was talking about is the gift of giving. I found my secret present—making someone happy is a wonderful present! It makes me feel so glad!"

Mom gave Radhi a hug. "I don't think you will grow a beard anytime soon, but you really have become a true Santa, and I don't think I've ever seen a wiser little Santa." ■

Christmas is a season of hope, a season of love, a season of faith, a season of trust, a season of believing in what we cannot see, a season of miracles and wonders, a season when the angel declared, "Fear not, because I bring you good tidings of great joy for all the people. Christ is born!" And the angels chorused in praise, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men."



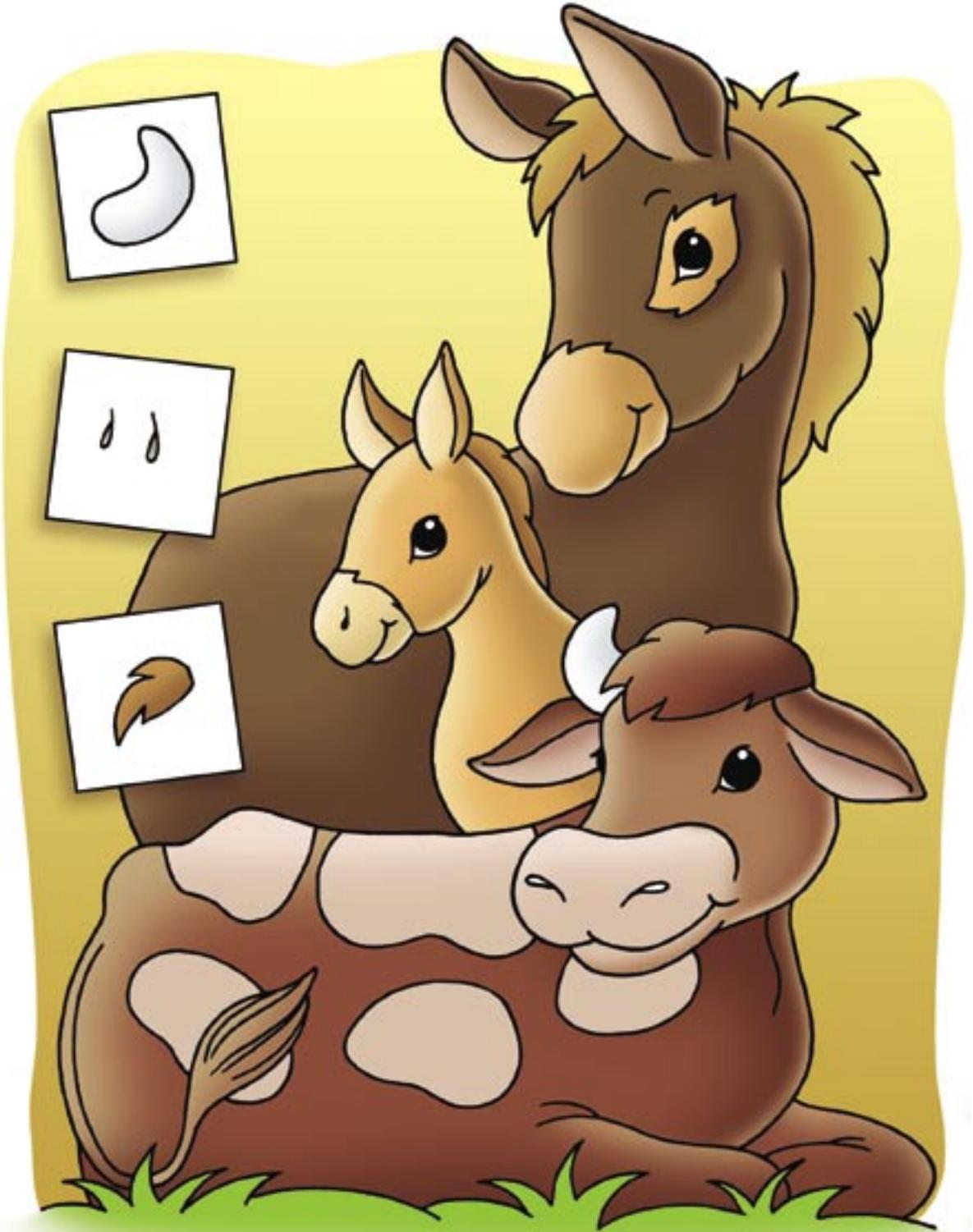
There are five differences in these two pictures.
Circle each place where something is missing.



Draw a line to match the shapes in the oval to where they belong on the characters in the picture.



Each animal is missing one thing. Can you draw a line from the shapes in the boxes to the correct place in the picture?

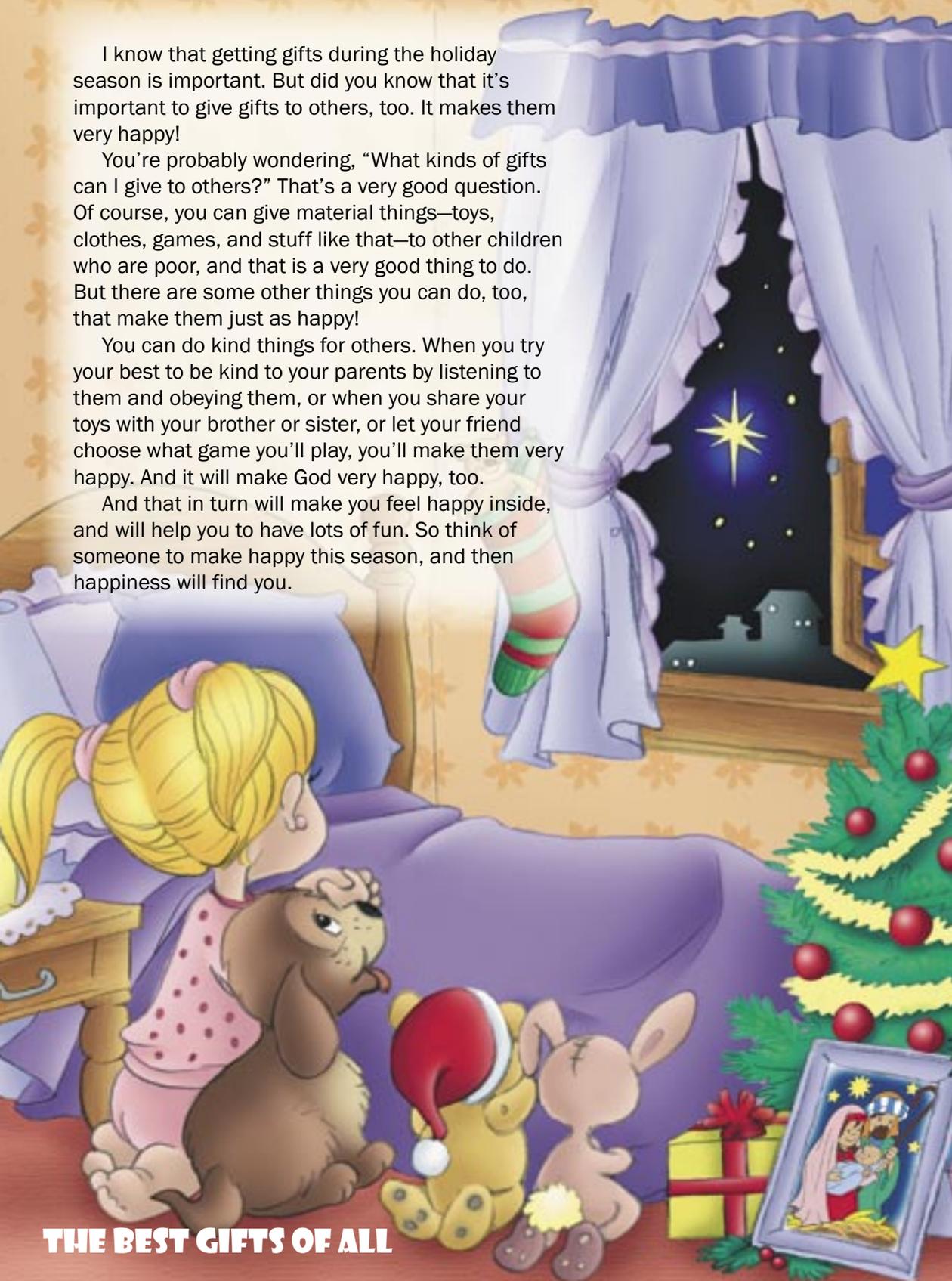


I know that getting gifts during the holiday season is important. But did you know that it's important to give gifts to others, too. It makes them very happy!

You're probably wondering, "What kinds of gifts can I give to others?" That's a very good question. Of course, you can give material things—toys, clothes, games, and stuff like that—to other children who are poor, and that is a very good thing to do. But there are some other things you can do, too, that make them just as happy!

You can do kind things for others. When you try your best to be kind to your parents by listening to them and obeying them, or when you share your toys with your brother or sister, or let your friend choose what game you'll play, you'll make them very happy. And it will make God very happy, too.

And that in turn will make you feel happy inside, and will help you to have lots of fun. So think of someone to make happy this season, and then happiness will find you.



THE BEST GIFTS OF ALL