And in that stable dark and drear
The shepherds in great awe drew near,
For here was God in human form
And He would bear our sin and scorn.

The star stopped o'er that place of old
And by itself a story told,
As wisemen came searching for
The King who would reign forevermore.

O the miracle of virgin birth!
O the grace of God on earth!

And so the story's told again
Of how our Christ came down to men.
As we search Christmas through and through,
Dear God, give us a Christmas True.
For in that manger is a cross
That God's elect might not be lost.
So now we may, in joy and strife,
Live the Christmas way of life.

CHRISTMAS JOY

Elaine Faber

December is a month of preparation and excitement in the anticipation of celebrating a joyful Christmas. Many homes undergo extensive cleaning. Decorations are bought and displayed. New clothes are purchased for programs and parties. Children try to be extra good and helpful. The days are counted. It is the season to show acts of kindness and love. Cards and gifts are shared and given. For many people it is a joyful time.

So soon this special day is over, and with it the numerous expressions of love and kindness. When one truly experiences the joy of Christmas he continues to give of himself throughout the year, expressing true thankfulness for that wondrous gift of salvation made possible through Jesus' humble birth and suffering for His people.

When then can we show this joy?

Remember those hot summer

days of last August? Preparations were excitedly being made to get the children ready for the new school year. Many purchases were made then too: new clothes, lunch pails, notebooks, pencil boxes and supplies. It was a lot like Christmas. Excitement mounted as the days went by. The days were counted off. Clothes were laid out as well as lunches made the night before the eventful day. Morning came. Everyone was up early! A good breakfast was prepared and eaten. Good-byes were said, maybe even a kiss or hug given. Children were out early to the bus stop. They were eager to get to their classroom.

A few weeks later. . . . What has happened to that joyful anticipation for school? Mornings begin with everyone trying to get a few extra winks. Children can't find their clothes. Breakfast is perhaps eaten on the run if not neglected altogether. The bus has been waiting and people yelling. Upon arrival at school one finds mittens, boots, or assignments forgotten or lost. Not much time was spent in preparation for the day's activities. Where is joy now?

Children begin the school day sometimes frustrated because of lack of organization. They have to sort out feelings about themselves before they can go on with their work or express concern and love for others. As parents and teachers we must take enough time to develop these skills and attitudes in our children. We must show by our example and our instruction how to be properly prepared for each day's activities. Children do model the behavior of those around them. When children are prepared to begin the day with good attitudes they will experience joy, Christmas joy, in their life from day to day as they show love and care to those around them in thankfulness for God's love to them.

Here
joy enters into the saints;
in heaven,
"they enter into joy."
Thomas Watson