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Elf teaches true magic of season

• Toy created and sold by a Newport Beach woman offers way 'to tie Santa Claus into the real meaning of Christmas.'

By Andrew Edwards, Daily Pilot

The Magic Elf has a long white beard, insect-like wings and a forest-green tunic. About a foot tall from his feet to the tip of his pointy red cap, he was designed to be hidden around the house.

On looks alone, the red-and-green-clad Magic Elf resembles a typical Christmas decoration. But Newport Beach resident Nancy Vaughan, the creator of the elfin product, intended it to be more than just another knick-knack people stick on a shelf in December.

advertisement Her idea was for parents to use the Magic Elf as a tool to link Christmas' secular and religious traditions in a month-long game of hide-and-seek.

"I think it was a great way to tie Santa Claus into the real meaning of Christmas," Vaughan said.

As Vaughan explained, the game works like this: Parents show the Magic Elf to their

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LOS ANGELES TIMES



children on the first day of December, and tell the youngsters that the elf has been dispatched by Santa Claus as a messenger to teach children about the history of Christmas.

Every day, parents hide the elf in a different spots around the house, and kids start their morning by searching for it. Each time, parents hide the elf with a different card inscribed with holiday tidbits such as an explanation of the Biblical story of Christmas or an invitation to make a decoration.

"I wrote the legend that Santa Claus sent these elves to teach the meaning of Christmas," Vaughan said. "The letters he was getting were all about gifts and not about being good."

This is the second year Vaughan's Magic Elf has been on the market. For product testing, she enlisted her three children.

"I just thought it was a great way to teach my kids everything I wanted them to know about Christmas," Vaughan said.

Vaughan sells the doll through her company, Rise and Shine Designs Inc., which she runs from her Newport Beach home. She also sells packs of "Chore Cards" and has plans to create a product similar to the Magic Elf that would be used to teach lessons about the Easter holiday.

Vaughan's website is www.riseandshinedesigns.com.

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