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## Religion XML

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Posted on Sat, Dec. 10, 2005

### What child's play is this? Why, it's the Magic Elf of Advent

By KRISTEN CAMPBELL  
Religion News Service

At first glance, your confusion can be forgiven: He's an elf! He's an angel! He's Santa Claus!

The Magic Elf, 12 inches from the bottoms of his pointy green boots to the top of his faux-fur-trimmed stocking cap, depicts all three in one. He has the Santa beard, the elf get-up and the angel's wings.

It's a lot to take in.

What's more, the Magic Elf isn't just another Yuletide knickknack.

He's designed to serve as a sort of interactive Advent calendar and to help teach children about the religious meaning of Christmas.

Unlike typical chocolate- or picture-filled cardboard calendars that likely spend all of Advent in the same spot, the Magic Elf flies -- with the help of a parent -- around the house each night and lights in a new location. Every morning, from Dec. 1 through Dec. 25, children search for him and his message about Christmas' significance.

Printed on glossy paper the size of business cards, the daily letters remind readers about who Christians believe Jesus was and encourage them to celebrate the season by loving their neighbors and spending time with their families.

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One such card reads: "Good Morning. Christmas is a time for giving. We all love presents! Practice giving today by giving your mom or dad a compliment. They will love it! See you tomorrow. Love, Magic Elf."

The next day the card notes that Christmas is also a time for receiving. "When you receive a gift it is important to use your manners and say, 'Thank you.' Practice saying 'Thank you' today to your teachers and your parents for all the things they do for you."

All in all, the lessons, though perhaps not earth-shattering, offer fine direction for young Christian children who need a refresher course on compassion in the midst of so much consumerism.

According to the legend that accompanies the doll, that's precisely why the Magic Elf, which retails for \$19.95 at [www.themagicelf.com](http://www.themagicelf.com), was made.

Once upon a Christmas long ago, Santa was reading his mail, enjoying the letters from children around the world. But he noticed something different about the missives: "The kids were demanding extravagant gifts with few manners and little mention of goodness. Santa was concerned."

So, the story goes, he created Magic Elves, "sprinkled them with magic dust and sent them on their way to help children learn the meaning of Christmas."

Alone, there's little the Magic Elf can do but collect dust. But if he's used as a tool to remind all of Christmas' message of love and grace, he might accomplish much.

Besides, this time of year, it's wise not to underestimate the power of the tiniest of items or the smallest of creatures.



It's an elf, an angel and Santa Claus all in one. This 4-inch-tall doll designed to teach children about messages of love and grace.

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