

Tips for Parents: The Truth about Santa

Many parents teach their children early in life that Santa Claus is real and brings them Christmas presents if they behave well. At some point, usually early in grade school, kids learn that Santa isn't really real: either from other kids, or from their parents. This is often a disappointing time for kids.

Santa: Fact or Fiction?

Some families choose not to teach their kids about Santa Claus. Reasons for this can include a feeling that it is dishonest, that it interferes with religious beliefs, or because they don't have enough money to buy a present for the kids "from Santa." Others don't support the myth because they dislike the consumerism associated with it.

Many other families encourage a belief in Santa Claus because the tradition can be very fun for kids—it encourages imagination and fantasy, and can be an incentive for good behavior.

The Truth about Santa

Some kids cling strongly to the idea that Santa is real; others easily give up the fantasy. Often, kids hear from other kids at school that he isn't real, and go home to ask their parents. Or, you may decide that they are old enough to know the truth. Either way, this can be a tricky situation to maneuver. Here are some tips for making it easier:

1. If the child is very young, and you'd still like them to believe in Santa, you might try to side step the issue or change the subject. Or, you could simply ask them what they think about it. If they press you, tell them the truth. Honesty is important.
2. If they've heard it at school and are upset, comfort them. Some kids take the news as hard as the loss of a friend, so be sensitive, even if it seems that they are overreacting about an imaginary character.
3. Whether or not they ask you, they'll likely be wondering why you told them something that wasn't true. Explain why you encouraged their belief in Santa, and let them know that, if they wish, they can still see Christmas as a fun and magical time of the year. Some parents talk about Santa being a symbol of generosity and encourage their children to continue a tradition of giving in their own lives.

Keep in Mind

Most experts say that encouraging a child's natural imaginative belief in Santa isn't necessarily harmful or helpful. They do stress, however, that pointedly saying Santa Claus is a real person, or refusing to give gifts to kids who don't believe is wrong. In the end, you know your child best. Consider their personality, your beliefs, and do what you think is best. The same is true for the Easter Bunny, the Tooth Fairy, and other popular childhood myths—in fact, once a child finds out the truth about one, often they realize the same about the others.

Spoilers

When your kids do learn the truth, make sure to tell them that it's not kind for them to try to tell other kids that still believe. And begin another holiday tradition in place of St. Nick. Traditions can become fun and meaningful family activities.

For More Information:

Medicine.net's [Santa Claus: Naughty or Nice?](#)