

“FAMILY CIRCUS” CHRISTMAS
Mommy Throws A Tantrum!

When I started this vocation called Mother I had it all down. I just knew my children (two, maybe three) would be the most perfect in the neighborhood. I was going to give June Cleaver a run for her money! Donna Reed . . . Ha! Betty Crocker, *oh pleazzzzze!* Over and over again in my head I said Ha! Then I actually had a child. And another. And another. And another. And another . . . boy, this wasn't how I played it all out in my head! Five babies in six years! Wow! Just getting out of the house I had to find shoes to go with 50 little toes . . . oh, and the socks needed for those same 50 little piggies! It was and still is an adventure!

Christmas was a fun time at our house but a frustrating time for me personally. I could not figure out why I could not have the sit-down dinner with everyone pressed, styled, combed, clean, smiling, happy and oh so grateful, singing “Silent Night” in perfect pitch just before the “Norman Rockwell” Christmas dinner was served!

One particular Christmas I was so frustrated. I tried all the “right” things and, when that failed, I resorted to bribery, blame, lavish promises and, finally, at wit's end . . . a tantrum. Not just whine, shed a tear, then go-about-life tantrum . . . a full blown on-my-face-tantrum in the living room in front of the Christmas tree kicking my feet, pounding my fist, screaming . . . “Why?! Why? and then to have my oldest (who was all of 5 years old), come tell me “Z, Mommy. ‘Z’ comes after ‘Y.’ Don't be sad, we will work on your alphabet together! You can get it!”

Thank God he didn't know the real reason for my tantrum! I dried my tears and looked at them. Really looked at them. They were happy, perplexed at mommy at that moment, but they had all their little hearts needed. A mommy and daddy who loved them.

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“FAMILY CIRCUS” CHRISTMAS (CONTINUED)

A safe place to put their blankie and to them, a fun place to be. They had more live-in playmates than anyone they knew!

I suddenly realized what the problem was. Not the kids—not my husband—but me! Not the me me—but the attitude me.

I missed out of the real wonders of the first few Christmases because of my terrible choice of holiday comfort friends. Yep, the trio Shoulda, Coulda and Woulda and their cousins Only and If had come to once again to the Hall house to “celebrate” the year! I don’t remember consciously inviting five more to our already full house . . . but nonetheless they showed up every year and seemed to be staying longer and longer! Uninvited . . . how rude!

No wonder I was so frustrated! I kept striving for the “Norman Rockwell” Christmas and kept getting “Family Circus” instead! I had my holiday comfort friends cheering me on, again. That year I gave them the boot! And I discovered “Family Circus” isn’t so bad!

The Friends still try to visit occasionally, usually when my spirits are a bit down . . . but there is no room! I still hold on to the fantasy of “Norman Rockwell” Christmas dinner but only in my dreams. As I watch my pieces of Heaven laugh, run, play with each other . . . I really have made best friends with the “Family Circus.” And I learned the whole alphabet too!

~ TERRI L. HALL

Contributor’s request: Please do not use any part of this out of context.

Editor’s note: In our conversation receiving permission to print this original work for the first time, Terri added: “In time God blessed me with a new life (in more ways than one) and now am remarried (for almost 10 years) and have a total of 12 children and 6 grand-children with one on the way (only 7 kids are still at home). It has been an adventure!”