



FUN DAY TIMES

We wish you
Peace and Joy
this Christmas!



Art by Rasandi Ranasinghe (8 years)



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Please send competition entries to:



Funday Times
C/O the Sunday Times
P.O. Box 1136, Colombo.
Or
8, Hunupitiya Cross Road,
Colombo 2.

Please note that competition entries are accepted by email.

Write the name of the competition and the date clearly at the top of your entry and include the following details:

Full Name (including Surname),
Date of Birth, Address,
Telephone Number and School.

Please underline the name most commonly used.

All competition entries should be certified by a parent or guardian as your own work.

Competition entries without the full details requested above, will be disqualified.

Closing date for this week's competitions:
January 8, 2025

Telephone: 2479337/2479333

Email: fundaytimes1@gmail.com



In our online issue this week:

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Please log on to the Funday Times website on www.fundaytimes.lk or check out the Sunday Times epaper on www.sundaytimes.lk for additional pages of this week's Funday Times.

Christmas Storytelling at British Council



British Council, Colombo held a special Christmas Storytelling session with Country Director Orlando Edwards on December 14, 2024.

Pix by Priyanka Samaraweera



Maple Kids International Christmas Party was held on December 2, 2024.

Pix by M.A. Pushpa Kumara

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Siyath Dissanayaka 15 years on December 22



Christmas celebrations organised by the Model Early Childhood Development & Daycare Centre - University of Kelaniya, on December 6, 2024.



Christmas

By Cecilia Hewavitharana

Christmas is the annual celebration on December 25 that marks the birth of Jesus Christ. Celebrated by non-Christians as well, despite being a Christian holiday, it is arguably the most celebrated holiday worldwide. However, in the Christian calendar, Christmas is only the second most important holiday, with Easter ranking first.



The Birth of Jesus

Around 2000 years ago, Mary and her husband, Joseph, travelled from Nazareth to their hometown, Bethlehem, because the Roman Emperor had decreed that a census was to be taken, resulting in everyone having to return to their hometowns.

Upon reaching Bethlehem, they were unable to find accommodation due to the large number of people who had travelled for the census, so they are believed to have taken shelter in a cave.

That night, Mary gave birth to Jesus and had to lay him in a manger (a long trough for animal

feed), as there was nowhere else to keep him.

The baby's first visitors were shepherds who were informed by angels of his birth. A few days later, three Magi (wise men) followed a bright star (the Star of Bethlehem), which led them to where Jesus was and brought him gifts.

According to the Bible, Jesus is a descendant of King David and is the Son of God, but events led him to being laid in a manger after he was born, with his first visitors being poor shepherds, to emphasize the importance of humility.

Several yuletide traditions exist, notably recreating the nativity scene, exchanging gifts, sending Christmas cards, decorating Christmas trees, singing Christmas carols and partaking in special Christmas meals.

However, although Christmas is often associated with these, the most important aspect of the festive season is giving to those less fortunate.



Christmas Truce during World War I

The Christmas season is also universally considered a time for peace, forgiveness and making amends. One of the best examples is the Christmas Truce during World War I.

On Christmas Eve of 1914, the German troops in the trenches began singing carols, such as 'Silent Night' ('Stille Nacht' in German). The British Forces heard them from across

No Man's Land and joined them.

This led to a brief truce between the opposing sides in certain areas and on Christmas Day, they met, exchanged gifts and even played football.



"Christmas" in other languages

- Navidad (Spanish)
- Natale (Italian)
- Natal (Portuguese)
- Noël (French)
- Noel (Turkish)
- Weihnachten (German)
- Jul (Swedish)
- Jól (Icelandic)

'Klaus' (2019)

The 2019 animated film, 'Klaus', spins a creative tale about the beginnings of Santa Claus.

The film which revolves around a selfish postman stationed in an isolated town in the North Pole, who ends up befriendng a reclusive toymaker, heartwarmingly shows how one small act of goodwill can have a snowball effect and make a difference in the world.





The Christmas Bon-Bon Surprise

By Manoshi de Silva

“Look at my new necklace!” said Savi holding her new pebble necklace near her neck. “I am going to wear it to church on Christmas day!” “It’s very beautiful!” said her little brother Sanju.

But it was not just Savi’s brother who was admiring the necklace. Peeping down from a small hole in their ceiling were two little mice, named Tutu and Kiki.

Savi left her necklace on her dressing table and went to the hall with Sanju to decorate their Christmas tree. The two little mice came down and got on top of the dressing table. “Look at this beautiful string of pebbles,” said Tutu. “Let’s take it home!” said Kiki. So they both carried Savi’s necklace back to their home in the ceiling.

Later Savi came back to her room. “Where is my pebble necklace?” She started searching everywhere. But Savi’s pebble necklace was missing. The two children along with the rest of their family searched for it all over the house, but they couldn’t find it. Savi was very sad. “Now I don’t have a necklace to wear with my new frock to church,” she cried.

Seeing how sad little Savi was, her grandmother got a small present for her and Sanju as well. While the children were decorating the tree, their grandmother walked in with a little box covered in colourful Christmas wrapping paper.

“You’ll never guess what this is!” smile the children’s grandmother, holding the box up. “Is it a cake?” “Is it a box of sweets?” “No,” she said handing them the box. “In the box were toffee-shaped things wrapped in colourful shiny paper. “What are these?” wondered Sanju. “Are these Christmas decorations?” asked Savi.

“Yes, these can be used to decorate the tree,” smiled the grandmother. “But these are not just decorations. These have a surprise toy in them. These are called Christmas crackers or bon-bons.” How excited the children were. Their grandmother showed the kids how to pop them open by pulling



the thin strips attached to their sides.

Savi and Sanju pulled the strips and the bon-bons opened in the sides, dropping small gifts like whistles and balloons. It was so much of fun. “Now you can use the empty bon-bons to decorate the Christmas tree,” said their grandmother. And they place the empty bon-bons on different branches.

Finally the Christmas tree was decorated. Sanju turned on the tiny fairy lights and the whole living room looked absolutely magical. The kids played around the tree and wrapped Christmas presents to keep under the tree. “Day after tomorrow is Christmas!” said Sanju. “I can hardly wait!” beamed Savi.

After the kids went to sleep, Tutu and Kiki slowly came out and climbed down. They went to the hall and saw the Christmas tree. “Oh how beautiful this is!” they said, their eyes sparkling with joy. “Look at this!” shouted Kiki, seeing a bon-bon. “I have never seen anything like this!” “It looks like a giant toffee!” said Tutu. “Let’s carry it home,” said Kiki. So the two little mice carried the empty bon-bon back to their little house in the ceiling.

It was the day before Christmas. Savi and Sanju were very busy helping their mother in the kitchen to prepare different types of food for Christmas. The kids made small Christmas sugar cookies with the help of their mother. They cut the dough in different shapes like bells and angels.

But Savi and Sanju were not the only two who were busy that day. Tutu and Kiki too ran around in their house in the ceiling, playing with the necklace and bon-bon.

“What are these? Where did you get these from?” asked the mother of the two little mice, who was surprised to see the necklace and the bon-bon in their den.

“We went down and brought these,” squeaked Tutu and Kiki, feeling very proud. “Well, there is no space in here to keep all that,” said their mother. “Also you shouldn’t take things that don’t belong to you. So please go and leave them back where you found them,” she advised the two little mice.

“Why make two trips down? Let’s put the string of pebbles inside the big toffee and take both of them together,” said Tutu and Kiki agreed. So they put Savi’s necklace inside the empty bon-bon and carried it down. They got on top of the dressing table to keep the necklace there, but they heard someone’s footsteps. So they left the bon-bon there and ran off.

Savi walked into her room and was surprised to see a bon-bon on her dressing table. “How did this get here? Didn’t we hang all the bon-bons on our Christmas tree?” she said picking up the bon-bon. The bon-bon felt heavy. There was something inside it. The girl held the open hole on the side of the bon-bon close to her eyes and looked inside.

“My necklace!” shouted Savi and everyone came running to her room. “What a surprise!” My lost necklace is inside this bon bon!” Savi was so happy. “Now I can wear it to church with my new frock,” said the girl dancing around. “But who left it here?” Sanju was confused. “It’s Christmas, maybe some angels left it here for me!” smiled Savi.

Savi went to the kitchen and came back with two small angel-shaped sugar cookies. “Thank you angels, for returning my necklace. These are for you,” she said leaving the cookies on her dressing table. “Oh look!” pointed Tutu. “She left gifts for us!” squeaked Kiki. The mice waited till no one was around and went near the cookies. “Thank you kids,” shouted Tutu running back home with a Christmas cookie. Kiki also took a cookie and followed Tutu, “Thank you kids! We wish you a Merry Christmas!”



Christmas Art



Dylan Roshan (10 years)
St. Thomas' Preparatory
School, Colombo



Esandi Ranasinghe (10 years)
Musaeus College, Colombo



Melynda Fernandopulle (10 years)
Ladies' College, Colombo



Sayuni Nishsana (8 years)
Kegalu B.V.



Nevini de Silva (15 years)
Lexicon College, Kandy



Seneli Perera (12 years)
St. Bridget's Convent, Colombo



Deanne Jansz (13 years)
Methodist College, Colombo



Maleesha Wijerathne (14 years)
Girls' High School, Kandy



Vidasna Pilippuheva (8 years)
Visakha Vidyalaya,
Colombo



Seja Abeywickrama (9 years)
Southlands College, Galle



Daniel Miron Roshanth (13 years)
Carmel Fatima College, Kalmunai

Win super books from



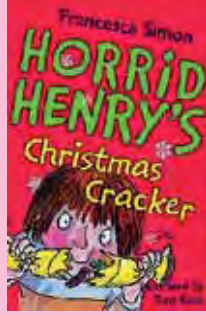
Age: 9 years and below

Word Count: 150

Topic: Your best Christmas gift

Win: Horrid Henry – Christmas Cracker by Francesca Simon

This book contains a school play, some stolen sweets, a visit from Father Christmas and a HELLISH dinner!



Four utterly hilarious and totally brilliant Horrid Henry stories by Francesca Simon, with illustrations by Tony Ross. An irresistible introduction to reading for pleasure.

Age: 10 – 12 years

Word Count: 150 – 200

Topic: Christmas Eve with family and friends

Win: Diary of a Wimpy Kid – Hot Mess by Jeff Kinney

The pressure is building for Greg Heffley, who discovers that when you mix heaps of family, a tiny beach house and sweltering heat, it's a recipe for disaster.



Speaking of recipes – the secret ingredients behind Gramma's famous meatballs have been closely guarded for years. Can Greg unpack all of his family's mysteries before their vacation is over? Or will he just stir the pot?

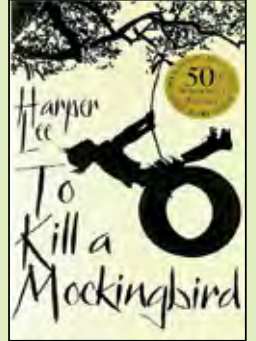
Age: 13 – 15 years

Word Count: 200 – 250

Topic: Your wish for Christmas

Win: To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

Through the eyes of Scout and Jem Finch, Harper Lee explores with exuberant humour, the irrationality of adult attitudes to race and class in the Deep South of the 1930s.



The conscience of a town steeped in prejudice, violence and hypocrisy is pricked by the stamina of one man's struggle for justice.

Write at the top of your Essay

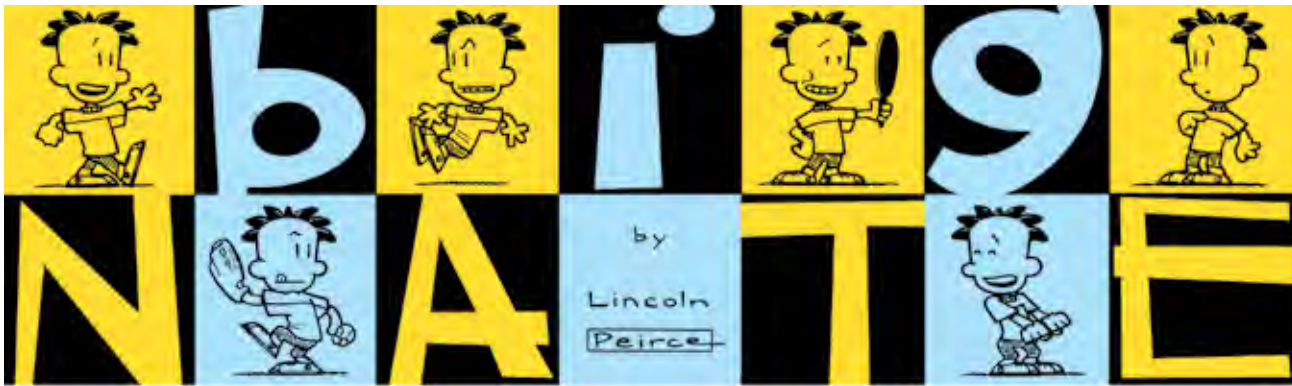
- Book Competition
- Essay Topic



Or



fundaytimes1@gmail.com





'Wizard of Oz' slippers sell for \$28 million

December 12, 2024

A pair of red shoes worn by Judy Garland in 'The Wizard of Oz' was sold at auction for a record-breaking \$28 million. That makes the slippers the most expensive movie item ever sold. The sale is the latest chapter in the slippers' complicated history.

The classic movie 'The Wizard of Oz' was first shown in movie theaters in 1939. In the movie, a young girl named Dorothy gets lost and has an adventure in a magical land. Along the way, she gets a pair of special red "ruby slippers". At the end of the movie, Dorothy learns she is able to return home by clicking the heels of her shoes together three times, and saying, "There's no place like home."

The movie and the ruby slippers are famous around the world. The movie was based on the book 'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz' by Frank L. Baum. In the book, the slippers are silver. The movie makers changed the colour of the slippers to red so that the shoes would show up better.

During the making of the movie, Ms. Garland used many different pairs of ruby slippers. Some were used for close-ups and others were used for dancing. After the movie was made, the shoes were stored away and forgotten. In the 1970s, someone found and sold the old shoes.

A man named Michael Shaw bought one pair of the shoes for \$2,000. He made money by renting the shoes out.

In 2005, he loaned the shoes to the Judy Garland Museum in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. But someone broke into the museum, smashed a glass display case, and stole the slippers.

The shoes remained missing for 13 years. Then, in 2018, the FBI tracked down the slippers.

It took five more years to catch the thief, who was in his 70s by that time.

The thief had never seen the movie. Police believe the man thought the shoes had real rubies on them. When he found out that they didn't, he got rid of them.

Mr. Shaw finally got his shoes back in February of this year. Many collectors were excited when they heard that Shaw planned on selling the slippers.

Heritage Auctions, the company that sold the slippers, thought that they might sell for around \$3 million.



FBI image of the recovered shoes.



The ruby slippers being auctioned off.

But in less than a minute, the price rocketed past \$3 million. For 15 minutes, the price continued to climb, as people offered more and more money. In the end, the slippers sold for \$28 million.

So far, the name of the buyer has been kept a secret. But the buyer will wind up paying even more than that. With taxes and the costs of the auction company, the total came to \$32.5 million.

The slippers set a new record for the highest price paid for a piece of movie history. The previous record came in 2011, when the white dress worn by Marilyn Monroe in the movie 'The Seven Year Itch' sold for \$5.52 million.

Did You Know...?

Some of the high interest in this auction may have to do with the movie 'Wicked', which has recently come out in theaters.

'Wicked' tells a similar story, but from the point of view of the Wicked Witch of the West. Dorothy's magic slippers also show up in 'Wicked', but, as in the original book, they are silver.



A poster for the movie 'The Wizard of Oz'.

Source: NewsForKids



November 17

News in Pictures

**York, UK**

Alida Freding wears a crown of candles symbolising St. Lucy as she leads the celebration of 'Sankta Lucia: Festival of Light' at York Minster, based on the bravery and martyrdom of a young Sicilian girl who died in the early 4th century. The service is run as a partnership between York Minster and York Anglo-Scandinavian Society (YASS).



Changchun, China
Aerial view of ice sculptures at Changchun Ice and Snow New World in Jilin province.

**Wisconsin, USA**

Schoolchildren prepare to board a bus bound for the reunification center where they'll meet their parents after a shooting at Abundant Life Christian School in Madison, Wisconsin.

Khan Younis, Gaza

A Palestinian girl shares her portion of food with another girl at a distribution centre south of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip.

**Seoul, South Korea**

The National Dance Company of Korea performs a traditional Korean dance at a press call for its new programme, 'Hyangyeon', meaning 'banquet', at the Haeoreum Grand Theatre.

**Khao Kho, Thailand**

The big Buddha statues at Wat Pha Sorn Kaew Temple in Phetchabun province.

**Colombo, Sri Lanka**

People gather around the body of a stranded short-finned pilot whale that washed ashore. According to the National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA), five pilot whales were stranded on a beach in Colombo on December 16. The Sri Lanka Navy, along with the NARA and the Department of Wildlife, drove them back to sea.

Runnymede, UK

Tom Cruise receives a Navy Distinguished Public Service Award from the US secretary of the navy at Longcross South Studios in Surrey, England.

**Val Gardena, Italy**

Switzerland's Marco Odermatt in action during men's downhill training for the FIS Alpine Ski World Cup.

Sources: The Guardian & Reuters