

# CONVERSATIONS WITH SANTA



FROM THE  
HEARTWARMING TO THE HEARTBREAKING  
HOPES OF CHILDREN  
COMES AN INSPIRATIONAL  
REMINDER OF  
THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

BY SANTA KEVIN

# CONVERSATIONS WITH SANTA



FROM THE  
HEARTWARMING TO THE HEARTBREAKING  
HOPES OF CHILDREN  
COMES AN INSPIRATIONAL  
REMINDER OF  
THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

BY SANTA KEVIN

## ❧ Table of Contents ❧

Dedication	page 7
Acknowledgements	page 8
And With a Nod	page 11
The Gift Givers	page 19
Naughty & Nice	page 29
One Liners, Questions & Other Surprises	page 41
Thankfulness	page 53
Disappointments & Other Sad Things	page 65
Letters	page 79
Santa Revisited	page 89
Wondrous Hope of St. Nicholas	page 103
Wrap it Up. the Epilogue	page 113
Author's Biography	page 126



## *The Joys of Toys*

*Toys are made in Santa's Toyshop. Dolls, Marionettes, Rocking Horses, Toy Trains, Cars and toys like that are what Santa has to give. Cell phones and electronic devices come from other places.*



## The Gift Giver

On cold mornings my Mrs. Claus makes cinnamon rolls for us along with eggs and sausages. The kitchen fills with the warm sweet aroma and everyone comes running. When breakfast is finally served, I always eat the main course first and save the cinnamon rolls till the end. Her rolls are so very delicious and just a tiny bit doughy with lots of sugar and cinnamon. They are wonderful to bite into. Their taste lingers with me all day. When I have something that good, I want to share it with others.

Santa loves good things and these particular stories are truly good and wonderful and worth telling first. And like Mrs. Claus's cinnamon rolls, I want to share my stories with everyone.

The closer our calendars get to Christmas morning, the more eager children become to see Santa. The lines at the mall grow long and the lists of toys children want also grow wildly. But not everyone comes wanting toys.

## ❧ Conversations with Santa ❧

The very first conversation I wrote down in my journal happened just after Thanksgiving.

Anne was nine-years-old. She was beautiful, had long blond hair and blue eyes and wore a somewhat modest dress. I will always remember her.

Her brother Denny came in with her and I could see that he had Cerebral Palsy. He was in a wheelchair. Since it was still early in the season, we weren't too busy, so Anne and Denny were able to come right to me.

Anne and I talked for a while and she told me of her school and friends and family. Finally, I asked her what she would like for Christmas. Anne didn't have much to say, but what she said brought tears to Santa. The only thing that Anne wanted: "I wish that my brother would have a happy Christmas. He has so much trouble doing things and can't go play with us. And the other kids are very mean to him and call him names." She asked for nothing for herself.

I choked emotionally. When I could finally recover my voice, I gave her a big hug and she jumped down and ran to her father.

Denny was helped onto my lap by his mother. He

## œ The Gift Giver œ

had extreme difficulty talking, so I talked to him and encouraged him, wishing him a Merry Christmas. As he sat there, it quickly occurred to me that I needed to pray for him. As I put my hand on his head and bowed my head, his mother saw what I was doing and quickly came over to join us. We prayed for his healing, his comfort and joy for this season and for his life. It was a prayer full of hope that the Lord would touch his body and heal him like He has so many others.

Having a daughter myself who is confined to a wheelchair with Spina Bifida, I knew what Anne told me was true about Denny's struggles and the insults. I found myself completely drawn into this family and Anne's request. There was not much I could really do except to pray.

I don't know what will happen to Denny. But it was very obvious to me that his mother loved him very much and that his parents themselves had entrusted Denny to the care of God. Just as my wife and I have our own daughter.

Denny and the many others who struggle against often insurmountable odds and bear frequent ridicule are people who have much to give us. They get up day after day year after year and struggle through. So many



## *The Key*

*There is a myth that a magical key opens any door of homes that don't have fireplaces for Santa to enter by.*

## Naughty & Nice

The countdown was on. Malls were packed, the lines had grown very long and children were way beyond excitement.

It was December 21<sup>st</sup>, just four days till Christmas.

Daryl was eight and looked the part in every way. It looked as if he had been in a brawl with something or someone in the yard just before he came. Tousled hair, dirty jeans and shirt. When he finally got up to me, he wasted no time.

“I just want to get off the naughty list!” Daryl said. It was all he asked for.

He had a very mischievous manner about him. Even as he sat on Santa’s lap, he squirmed and tugged on everything, including my beard and gold suit buttons.

We talked for a few minutes and as he began to get up from my lap, I asked him what he thought he needed to do. He thought for a second, and then replied that

## ❧ Conversations with Santa ❧

he needed to do what his mom asked him to do. I asked him about the kinds of things his mom usually asked him to do and why he hadn't been doing them all along. He simply shrugged his shoulders and said he didn't know. So I asked him if he thought he could obey his mom and he said, "Yes."

I left him with one final thought: "Great blessing comes from obedience. When we do the right thing, we are blessed because others like to be around us and trust us. Obedience causes people to respect us."

The fictional Santa that we have all come to love and enjoy brings the good boys and girls all the presents their hearts can desire on Christmas morning. In times past, bad children would receive lumps of coal for the fireplaces. At least it would keep them warm.

Being good and doing the right thing is important for all of us. I always teased the children, "If you aren't good, all I can bring you is underwear and socks."

That's what Daryl heard as he turned to leave.

There really is something to the "naughty and nice" query. People, even children, do actually know when they are doing something wrong. They may argue that

## œ Naughty & Nice œ

whatever it is they are doing isn't all that bad. But they still know. They know like they know the sky is blue and the sun is hot yellow. And they know when they have done something right. It is a knowledge that runs bone deep in all of us no matter how we may try to convince ourselves otherwise.

If there is one thing I learned as Santa, it is that if I ask the right questions, people will understand this "naughty and nice" truth well.

One of the most memorable conversations I had was with an elderly couple early one morning. Even as I write, I am obliged to say they weren't that elderly, perhaps in their early to mid-60s.

I had never seen them before, but as they walked by the set, they were clearly enjoying being with each other.

Then suddenly the wife stopped and said something to her husband that I didn't hear. The two of them burst out in laughter.

The husband turned to me and told me his wife said that he wasn't going to get anything for Christmas this year because he had been naughty.





### *So Little Time*

*Parents, friends and elves help me keep up with all the mail that comes in. But some evenings after a wonderful day with children, I get to read a few of their letters myself.*

## Letters

The letters came in all shapes and sizes. Some brightly colored; others, just chicken scratch and almost indecipherable. Some came written on beautiful stationery and others on notebook paper. Probably the hardest part of the letters was that I rarely knew who brought them. Some were mailed; some were delivered to the office or to the Toyland set. Occasionally, a child would give me the letter as he crawled up in my lap.

The letters started coming slowly, but by mid-December there was a regular river of mail coming in. And by the way many of them were written, the writers had apparently already met me.

A brother and his sister wrote letters that were delivered to me one evening while I was at dinner. By the handwriting, I presumed David was the older and Michelle was the younger. David just wanted a pile of toys. But Michelle went on and on for almost five pages with questions and observations. Less than a page was concerned with hopes and wants for Christ-

## ❧ Conversations with Santa ❧

mas. But her letter was interesting and I quote from some of it here:

*Dear Santa and Mrs. Santa,*

*I hope you had a good summer and fall. Did you get enough rest? What about the elves, did they get enough rest?*

*I hope you don't get cold when you deliver presents.*

*Were you really a Kringle?*

*Did you know Bergermister Mister Berger?*

*Where did you get your whiskers? Where did you get your red suit?*

*When did you and the Mrs. get married? How did you meet?*

*How did you name the reindeer?*

*Where are the first and last places you go on Christmas?*

*We will leave cookies and milk for you when you come and some corn and carrots for your reindeer.*

*Sincerely,*

*Michelle*

*P.S. Please leave a picture of you and Mrs. Claus, your reindeer and your sleigh.*

*PP.SS. Write back please!*

About the same time as Michelle and David's letters came in, Sam wrote me. I'm guessing Sam is a toddler and he had some help from his mom with the letter. It

❧ Letters ❧

was very business-like:

December 8

Santa Claus

The North Pole

Dear Santa,

Merry Christmas! Are you and your elves busy getting ready for Christmas? My family sure is!

I have been very good this year. I learned to eat food, can say "car" and "ball" and have started walking.

Please bring me some fun toys this year. Some things I would like are a barnyard with lots of animals, puzzles and books.

Love,

Sam

Rebecca's letter came with Sam's. It wasn't quite a form letter though it was on the same stationery and was equally business-like:

December 8

Santa Claus

The North Pole

Dear Santa,

Merry Christmas! Are you and your elves busy getting ready for Christmas? My family sure is!

I have been very good this year. I help take care of my little brother Sam, make my bed every day, clean my room, use my manners and tell the truth.



### *Santa & Cupid*

*Cupid is 15 months old and has a full set of antlers. It is early summer and she has lost her winter fur. When I showed up at the barn for this picture, a mom and her two children were there. The little girl kept running over to me to give Santa a big hug.*

## Author's Bio

Kevin Haislip started out telling stories as an advertising/editorial photographer for newspapers and magazines, and I guess kind of ended up as a story for most of his 30 year career.

Born and raised in Denver, Colorado, Haislip moved to Portland, Oregon while in college. He married his wife, Jody, 35 years ago. Along the way he and his wife have spent their lives and fortunes raising a whole passel of children: 15 of them to be exact (2 born to them, 13 adopted). They have been a homeschooling family since 1984 and are now residents of Waxahachie, Texas.

He combined his love of children and the mystical joys of Christmas as he played the part of Santa, a most revered character anytime of year. It was a natural for him.

He is a published author with 3 photography books (one of them now a collector's item among guitar collectors), an autobiographical book on how God moved in his family titled 'Promises Kept' and two decades as an advertising and editorial photographer at the Oregonian and other magazines. In addition, he has more than ten years of published daily devotional emails.

# CONVERSATIONS WITH SANTA

*"A gift of the heart and a treasure to own! An adventure for all ages. Sure to be on the North Pole Times Best Seller List!"*

Curtis T. Elf

From the mouths of children comes a book of conversations that inspires the imagination and gives a fresh look at the importance of Christmas to each one of us. It became a lesson in gentleness and a treasure of hope and joy for Kevin as he donned his Santa suit.

Over five weeks as Santa, he met and talked with nearly 9,000 children. He listened as they told him their wish lists and some of their wondrous and heartbreaking stories. Kevin took the time to write these stories down, from the outrageously funny to the eye-opening surprises, and from the poignant to the sad. It truly is amazing how insightful children can be!

"Conversations with Santa" will open your eyes to the wonders and the hopes of children (and even a few adults). From one boy's seven-page list to a little girl's only request: to "know what Santa wants for Christmas;" and from one young woman's hope for an engagement ring to a memorable dinner with Santa for two girls.

You just never know what is going to happen next. Truth is stranger than fiction. This is one book you will enjoy all the way through and be telling your friends about. As one girl who came to see Santa said, "Surprise me!" You will be!

ISBN 978-0-9795010-1-2  
Great Collections Publications  
791 No Hwy 77, 501C 222  
Waxahachie, Texas 75165  
[www.greatcollections.net](http://www.greatcollections.net)



*Great Collections*  
PUBLICATIONS

ISBN 978-0-9795010-1-2



9 780979 501012

5 1495 >