



## **Christmas Day in the Morning**

By Pearl S. Buck

Illustrated by Mark Buehner

**Summary:** This is a moving story of the power of the simple gift of love, written by Pulitzer and Nobel Prize-winning author Pearl S. Buck (*The Good Earth*).

“On Christmas Eve, a man recalls the holiday many years ago when he gave his father, a struggling farmer, a most-appreciated gift: the boy rose extra early to do his father's biggest chore, the milking. Buehner's inky, starlit winter skies and rustic barn revealed by lantern light transport readers to a hushed and humble setting, reminiscent of the manger.”

### ***Sunday Morning:***

**Welcome everyone warmly!** As they arrive the children can color, do beading, or other simple activities. About 10 minutes into the session, gather the children around you. You can sit on the floor or a slightly higher spot; the kids can sit on the floor or benches.

**Icebreaker:** Say something like, “We’re coming into the Christmas season and you might be thinking about what gifts you would like to receive for yourself and, hopefully, what gifts you would like to give to others...” Have each child share their name and one gift they would like to receive and one gift they would like to give.

**Introduce the Book:** Show the cover and read the title. Read the book “librarian style,” with the pictures facing out. Make sure everyone has had a chance to see the pictures before you turn the pages. Afterwards, ask:

### **Wondering Questions:**

- I wonder what made Rob’s gift so special?
- Remember Rob said he was surprised to hear that his father loved him... How do we know that our family loves us?
- I wonder how members of our family know that we love them?

## Hands-On-Bible:

Let's find out what the Bible has to say about gift-giving...

- First, go to the Table of Contents.
- The Bible is divided into two big sections – what are they? [Old/New Testament]
- The passage we're looking for is in the New Testament. What's the difference between the Old & New Testament? [Old – before Jesus ; New – life of Jesus and after]
- Go to the book of Matthew – do you see that in the Table of Contents? What page does that start on? [p. 939] Flip to that page.
- [Wait until everyone is together on the same page.] Now we're looking for chapter 6 – do you see those blue numbers on the top of the page?
- [Wait until everyone is on the same page.] If you've found chapter 6, now locate verse 4 – see those tiny numbers? When everyone has found the verse, read aloud:



### Matthew 6:4

**Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.**

## Bible Follow-Up:

- What does this mean to you?
- Why is it better to give a gift in private rather than in front of many others?

## Snack/Activity:



### Cookie decorating!

Have plain sugar cookies, white frosting, maybe some food coloring to tint the frosting, bowls, knives to spread the frosting, and sprinkles ready to go. The kids can make one (or two!) for themselves and then contribute to a festive tray to share at coffee hour.

Don't forget the milk for the kids to wash it all down!