

Lesson Notes:

The Twelve Days of Christmas

All of us at one time or another have heard the song, “The Twelve Days of Christmas”. Did you know that there are hidden meanings behind each of the gifts? Below are the secrets of the “Twelve Days of Christmas”:

Scriptural Principles

My True Love gave to Me – An obvious reference to **Our Father in Heaven**.

- 1) **A Partridge in a Pear Tree.** – The partridge in a pear tree is **Jesus the Christ**, the **Son of God**, whose birthday we celebrate on December 25, the first day of Christmas. In the song, Christ is symbolically presented as a mother partridge that feigns injury to decoy predators from her helpless nestlings, recalling the expression of Christ's sadness over the fate of Jerusalem: "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! How often would I have sheltered you under my wings, as a hen does her chicks, but you would not have it so" (**Luke 13:34**)
- 2) **Two Turtle Doves** – The Turtle Doves represent the **Old and New Testaments**, which together bear witness to God's self-revelation in history and the creation of a people to tell the Story of God to the world.
- 3) **Three French Hens** – This refers to the **three great virtues (Faith, Hope and Love)** that God gave us and Paul references in **1 Corinthians 13:13**.
- 4) **Four Calling Birds** – A reference to the Four Gospels: **1) Matthew, 2) Mark, 3) Luke, and 4) John**, which proclaim the Good News of God's reconciliation of the world to Himself in Jesus Christ.
- 5) **Five Golden Rings** – This gift refers to the first Five Books of the Old Testament, known as the Torah: **1) Genesis, 2) Exodus, 3) Leviticus, 4) Numbers, and 5) Deuteronomy**, which gives the history of humanity's sinful failure and God's response of grace in the creation of a people to be a light to the world.
- 6) **Six Geese a Laying** – The **six days of creation** that confesses God as Creator and Sustainer of the world (Genesis 1).
- 7) **Seven Swans a Swimming** – The **seven gifts of the Holy Spirit**: 1) prophecy, 2) ministry, 3) teaching, 4) exhortation, 5) giving, 6) leading, and 7) compassion (**Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-11**)
- 8) **Eight Maids a Milking** – This refers to the **eight Beatitudes** given to us by Jesus himself in **Matthew 5:3-10**: 1) Blessed are the poor in spirit, 2) those who mourn, 3) the meek, 4) those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, 5) the merciful, 6)

the pure in heart, 7) the peacemakers, 8) those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

- 9) **Nine Ladies Dancing** – A reference to the **nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit**: 1) love, 2) joy, 3) peace, 4) patience, 5) kindness, 6) generosity, 7) faithfulness, 8) gentleness, and 9) self-control. Presented by Paul to the Galatians in **Galatians 5:22**.
- 10) **Ten Lords a Leaping - The ten commandments**: 1) You shall have no other gods before me; 2) Do not make an idol; 3) Do not take God's name in vain; 4) Remember the Sabbath Day; 5) Honor your father and mother; 6) Do not murder; 7) Do not commit adultery; 8) Do not steal; 9) Do not bear false witness; 10) Do not covet. (**Exodus 20:1-17**)
- 11) **Eleven Pipers Piping - The eleven Faithful Apostles**: 1) Simon Peter, 2) Andrew, 3) James, 4) John, 5) Philip, 6) Bartholomew, 7) Matthew, 8) Thomas, 9) James bar Alphaeus, 10) Simon the Zealot, 11) Judas bar James. (**Luke 6:14-16**). The list does not include the twelfth disciple, Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus to the religious leaders and the Romans.
- 12) **Twelve Drummers Drumming - The twelve points of doctrine in the Apostles' Creed** 1) I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. 2) I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. 3) He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. 4) He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell [the grave]. 5) On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. 6) He will come again to judge the living and the dead. 7) I believe in the Holy Spirit, 8) the holy Church, 9) the communion of saints, 10) the forgiveness of sins, 11) the resurrection of the body, 12) and life everlasting.