

Why Do Some Children Believe in Santa Claus?

by Stephen DeVoy

Bobby's parents never lied to him about Santa Claus. They always tried to tell him the truth. His family had a Christmas tree every year and presents were found under the tree every Christmas morning, but Bobby knew that they were from his mommy and daddy. Just like other children, he dreamed for Christmas morning. Opening up the packages was fun.

Christmas time was coming and the other boys and girls in school were talking about Santa Claus and what he would bring them. They were very excited. Bobby was excited too, only he knew it was their parents and not Santa that would be putting the presents under the tree.

Their teacher, Mr. Romero sensed the excitement. He asked the children to draw a picture of the present they most wanted Santa to bring on Christmas Eve. Bobby didn't know what to do. Santa would not be bringing presents. He couldn't draw Santa's present because Santa doesn't bring presents. There is no Santa!

Mr. Romero noticed that Bobby was not drawing. He asked Bobby, in front of the class, why he was not drawing.

"I can't draw it," Bobby said.

"Why?" asked Mr. Romero.

"Because Santa will not come," he said.

"Why won't Santa come," asked the teacher, "have you not been a good boy?"

"Mr. Romero," he replied, "there is no Santa Claus."

"Don't say that," Mr. Romero said sternly. "Step outside, I need to talk with you."

Bobby was afraid that he was in trouble. He and Mr. Romero walked out of the class and into the hall. Mr. Romero closed the door and looked at Bobby.

"Bobby," he said, "what did your parent's tell you about Santa?"

"Nothing," said Bobby, "they never told me that there was a Santa Claus and I know that they put the presents under the tree because each present has a note. The note says, 'love mom' or 'love dad.' There is no Santa."

"Bobby, some parents tell their children that there is a Santa Claus and we don't want you to ruin it for the other children." The teacher looked at him intimidating. "Don't talk to the other children about Santa. Just draw a picture of the thing you want for Christmas and say nothing."

Bobby felt very uncomfortable. He returned to his seat and remained quiet. He was not happy now. He did not like someone telling him what he could and could not say. There is no Santa. He felt angry that someone would tell him not to say the truth.

When Bobby came home from school, he was sad. His mother noticed that he looked sad. "Bobby," she asked, "what's wrong?"

"Mr. Romero told me not to talk in class today," he said with sad eyes.

"Why? Did you say something bad or were you talking too much?" his mother asked.

"No. I just answered his question. I said the truth. He made me walk out into the hall and he told me not to talk to the other children." Bobby was very upset.

"What did you say?" his mother asked.

"He told me to draw a picture of the present I wanted from Santa! I told him I couldn't because there is no Santa. He got mad at me." Bobby looked down at the floor.

"Oh Bobby, I'm sorry," his mother said. She sat on the couch and Bobby sat next to her. "He's afraid of getting the mommies and daddies of the other children upset. You see, many parents tell their children that Santa Claus brings them gifts on Christmas day. They put a lot of work into making their children believe it. If some of those children come home asking if Santa is real, some parents will be mad at the teacher. He's afraid."

"He's afraid of the truth?" Bobby asked.

"I don't know about that," his mommy replied, "but he's afraid of the parents of your schoolmates."

"Why would they get so angry about the truth," asked Bobby?

"I think they are afraid of explaining to their children that they've been lying to them," she answered. "Parents lie to their children for years about Santa and when they need to tell their children the truth, they have a difficult time explaining why they lied."

Bobby's face scrunched up. It all sounded very confusing to him. Adults must be strange. "Why do they lie to their children?" Bobby asked.

"Well, Bobby, there are many reasons. Anyone raised believing in Santa Claus remembers a very magical feeling. When they believed in Santa Claus, as children, they felt excited and enchanted by the thought of a big fat elf riding a sleigh pulled by flying reindeer..."

Bobby burst out laughing and his mother laughed to.

"Their parents want them to feel that excitement," his mother continued. "It makes the parents feel wonderful to see their children so excited. The life of adults is often not very happy and they cherish

the chance to see their children happy, even if it lasts only a few years."

"But Mommy," Bobby interrupted, "what happens when they need to tell them the truth. They can't believe in a lie forever."

"That's one lie they can't believe forever," his mommy said, "but some people do believe in other lies forever. They believe in a god, they believe in their government, they believe that they are special to be the color they are or the nationality that they are. People believe in some very strange lies all of their lives. Maybe Santa is just a way of practicing. Perhaps the Santa lie makes it easier to believe other lies. I don't know. What I do know is this, sooner or later they need to tell their children that Santa is not real."

"Why didn't you lie to me about Santa," Mommy?

His mother looked sad for a moment. She was remembering the day she learned that there was no Santa Claus.

"My mother told me that there was a Santa Claus. I trusted her very much. My daddy told me the same thing. I enjoyed the Santa Claus myth. I was very excited about it every Christmas. As I grew older, my parent's didn't tell me the truth. Other children teased me and told me that Santa did not exist. I had younger brothers and sisters and my mother and father didn't want to 'spoil it' for them, so they continued to lie to me. One day, coming home from school, a group of girls made fun of me. They told me that my mother was a liar. I defended my mother and we had a fight. It was a bad fight. I hurt one girl and another hurt me. I came home a mess. When my mother saw me, all messed up and crying, she hugged me and asked me what happened. I explained to her that the other children called her a liar for telling me that there is a Santa Claus. I explained how I got into a fight defending her. 'My mother is not a liar,' I said. My mother started to cry and pat me on the back. She told me that there was no Santa and that she was sorry for not telling me the truth sooner.

"I was very angry at my mother for lying to me about Santa. I asked her why and she told me that she lied to me about Santa because she loved me. She wanted to see me happy every Christmas. I forgave her and I believe she meant what she said, but I decided that if I ever had children, I would tell them the truth, always. That is why I always have told you the truth."

Bobby smiled. "I love you mommy," he said.

"I love you too, Bobby," she replied with a smile. "Tell me Bobby, do you wish that I had lied to you about Santa?"

Bobby looked at her. He smiled and said, "I would rather have a present from my mommy or daddy than a fat old elf any day!"

His mother hugged him.

cost. Notwithstanding the preceding, permission to reproduce is permanently and unequivocally denied to law enforcement agencies, security agencies, the FBI, the CIA, the DHS (or any subpart thereof), the DIA, any and all intelligence agencies, police departments, investigative agencies, and educational institutions specializing in the education, instruction, or training of any of the organizations or types of organizations listed in this sentence. For the purposes of this document, contractors or individuals employed by or working on behalf or in consort with any entity herein prohibited from reproduction or distribution of this work are prohibited permission to reproduce or distribute this work in any form.