

# ACADEMY REPORTER

## THE CHRISTMAS ORANGE

Jake was nine years old with tousled brown hair with blue eyes as bright as a heavenly angel. For as long as Jake could remember he had lived within the walls of a poor orphanage. He was just one of ten children supported by what meager contributions the orphan home could obtain in a continuous struggle seeking donations from townsfolk.

There was very little to eat, but at Christmas time there always seemed to be a little more than usual to eat, the orphanage seemed a little warmer, and it was time for a little holiday enjoyment. But more than this, there was the Christmas orange!

Christmas was the only time of year that such a rare treat was provided and it was treasured by each child like no other food admiring it, feeling it, prizing it and slowly enjoying each juicy section. Truly, it was the light of each orphan's Christmas and their best gift of the season. How joyful would be the moment when Jake received his orange!

Unknown to him, Jake had somehow managed to track a small amount of mud on his shoes through the front door of the orphanage, muddying the new carpet. He hadn't even noticed. Now it was too late and there was nothing he could do to avoid punishment. The punishment was swift and unrelenting. Jake would not be allowed his Christmas orange! It was the only gift he would receive from the harsh world he lived in, yet after a year of waiting for his Christmas orange, it was to be denied him.

Tearfully, Jake pleaded that he be forgiven and promised never to track mud into the orphanage again, but to no avail. He felt hopeless and totally rejected. Jake cried into his pillow all that night and spent Christmas Day feeling empty and alone. He felt that the other children didn't want to be with a boy who had been punished with such a cruel punishment. Perhaps they feared he would ruin their only day of happiness. Maybe, he reasoned, the gulf between him and his friends existed because they feared he would ask for a little of their oranges. Jake spent the day upstairs, alone, in the unheated dormitory. Huddled under his only blanket, he read about a family marooned on an island. Jake wouldn't mind spending the rest of his life on an isolated island, if he could only have a real family that cared about him.

Bedtime came, and worst of all, Jake couldn't sleep. How could he say his prayers? How could there be a God in Heaven that would allow a little soul such as his, to suffer so much all by himself? Silently, he sobbed for the future of mankind that God might end the suffering in the world, both for himself and all others like him.

As he climbed back into bed from the cold, hard floor, a soft hand touched Jake's shoulder, startling him momentarily and an object was silently placed in his hands. The giver disappeared into the darkness, leaving Jake with what, he did not immedi-

ately know!

Looking closely at it in the dim light, he saw that it looked like an orange! Not a regular orange, smooth and shiny, but a special orange, very special. Inside a patched together peel were the segments of nine other oranges, making one whole orange for Jake! The nine other children in the orphanage had each donated one segment of their own precious oranges to make a whole orange as a gift for Jake.

Sharing what we truly value is the true spirit of Christmas. Our Heavenly Father gave us His beloved Son. May we, like the children in the orphanage, find ways to share His love with others less blessed. *Rewritten from anonymous source by Laura Martin-Buhler*  
<http://www.best-christmas-stories.com/2009/11/christmas-orange/>



## REMINDERS

December 18 - End of 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter

December 18 - Christmas Break, 11:30 AM Dismissal

January 4 - Academy Classes Convene

January 18-24 - Winter Revival

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**DISADVANTAGES TO BEING A PROPHET DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON ... YOU ALWAYS KNOW WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO GET, AND YOU HAVE TO SEE THE COOL STUFF THAT PEOPLE WILL BE GETTING IN THE FUTURE**

I have seen and read the Friday Letter.

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please cut out, sign, and return this box to school.