

# Surviving the Holiday Season

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A collection of articles from the writers at  
Angel Babies Forever Loved

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# No Tree This Year

I feel like there is a stone in my chest,  
Where my heart used to be,  
My precious son is laid to rest,  
Way too soon, that precious life taken  
from me.

I must have asked WHY a thousand  
times or more,  
but the answer still eludes,  
Others say, "There is something in store",  
John's death is but a prelude.

The love I once had for Christmas lights,  
and trees and ribbons and bows,  
has turned into somewhat of a blight,  
The sight somewhat gross.

John and I shared in the delight,  
of Christmas decorations galore,  
We decked our halls with lights,  
now his light shines no more.

I cannot bear to see houses shining so bright,  
and decked in Christmas finery,  
I once could not wait to see the lights,  
that are now a knife in the heart to me.

People say, "It is not right, you must  
have a tree",  
But what it is they don't understand,  
Is I don't have John to share it with me,  
I don't have him here to hold my hand.

I don't have him here this year,  
to brag about my tree,  
to gaze in awe and wonder here,  
to share the delight with me.

So no tree shall grace my abode,  
no lights shall trim my door,  
I'll go through the season in robot mode,  
Without my John to decorate for.

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Written for her son, John.  
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# Beginnings

By Tammy Novak

The holiday season is beginning. I can already feel the pressure to get everything done, be everywhere at once, and just generally be too busy to enjoy the time with my family. I would like to take a moment to say to everyone - please be kind to yourselves.

For those of you who are experiencing your first holiday without your baby: No one else knows what you can handle. One of the things I wanted to do was just stay home and have a quiet Christmas (we always go back home for the family). I didn't do that - I went home anyway - and I was miserable. It is a regret for me. I have a good friend who had her first Christmas as an angel mommy last year. When I planned my Christmas party, of course she was invited. I was *so* proud of her for telling me that she wasn't up to it at that time.

Please do what you *need* to do - JoAnn Taylor says - “don't let people *should* on you!” Be gentle with yourself. Holidays are stressful, grief is stressful, and we have to endure both at the same time.

# Holidays: They Come Whether We Like It or Not

By Deena McCauley

Holidays are once again upon us and we all know that this time of year can be such a struggle for anyone who has suffered a loss, either recently or years ago.

Someone is missing from our lives. We lost our hopes and dreams of a whole person(s). How does one ever feel the joy of the season again, when something so devastating as this has happened to them? Well, I don't have an answer. I wish I did. Some magic pill, some secret words, anything to ease the pain so many are feeling.

Seems we now live on "Planet Grief" and have to create a whole new reality for ourselves. All we really want to do is go back to the way we were before. Acceptance is hard, maybe the hardest thing. To accept that our baby or child is never coming back, that our lives will never be the same is overwhelming to say the least. But it is something all of us have to do, and all of us will do, in our own good time. There are lots of sites with suggestions for making mementos, ways to cope, and all of them can help immensely. Take what you need from them and leave the rest.

Ultimately I think you need to do what feels right for you. Don't let anyone tell you what you should or should not be feeling or doing. Listen to your true friends. If they have helpful suggestions, remember that they are not in your shoes so it's still up to you what you do.

The most important thing I think we can do right now is to remember to take care of ourselves. We should be kind to ourselves. Be patient. Grief is a process and it takes time, sometimes lots of time. Do something just for you, making sure you take care of your physical needs so that you are strong enough to move through your grief process.

Work at creating your "new normal." Be observant of how you are feeling and what you are capable of each day. Then do your best. That's all any one can ask of you, that you are doing your best to move through your grief and come out the other side a stronger, more compassionate person. We never forget our babies but we can get to the point where we smile more at the memory than we cry.

There are so many other ideas. Do what feels right for you for where you are right now.

# Holidays Are Coming

By Joann Taylor

Well, it's that time of year again – time when everyone is supposed to be happy, excited, and thankful. But how does one become all of this when you're dealing with the loss of one or more precious babies? We face this time of the year with fear and trembling and wishing it would just go away! We get tired of dealing with the sadness, pain, and loneliness.

Well, I for one have decided that I will choose to be different this year. Instead of dwelling on what I don't have, I'm choosing to be thankful for what I have, especially in light of events on September 11, 2001. I'm letting my family and friends know how much I love them and how special and important they are to me. I'm not letting a day go by that I don't tell them, "I love you. I'm so glad you're in my life!" I'm not saving anything for a "special Day!" Everyday that God gives us is special. I'm not living in fear. I'm trusting in that POWER that is greater than any germ warfare or bomb. I'm using my good china for everyday, wearing my most expensive perfume to work, giving my family gifts when it's not even a birthday, anniversary, Christmas, etc. I'm not going to live my life looking back and wondering, "What if." There will always be things that I should have done and other things that I shouldn't have done or said. I'm writing my life story every day. I hope to leave a legacy for my grandchildren that their grandmother lived everyday to the fullest, whether I feel like it or not. I want them to know that

my faith is in Jesus Christ my Lord and that they can fully trust Him for everything.

I'm thankful for my wonderful husband of 40 years, for my two handsome sons, my beautiful daughters-in-love and my four wonderful grandchildren. I'm thankful for my Christian heritage. I'm thankful for my two sisters and three brothers. I'm thankful for the love given to me by my mom and dad.

I want to thank my precious Darrell and Melody for making me the person I am today. There is no telling how selfish and self-centered I would have been, had they not left their footprints on my heart. To both of you, "Mom loves you more than you can imagine! Can't wait to see you and I know it will be soon. Mommy is going to sponsor a candle-lighting ceremony on December 9th (2001) in your memory. I'm asking the moms and dads to bring a toy in memory of their child and we're going to give these to children who won't have much of a Christmas unless someone comes through for them. I'm so thankful for having known both of you for those short, but precious 16 weeks. Who could have known what an impact those weeks would make on my life? And just knowing what wonderful things you're both experiencing in heaven makes my life worth living. HAPPY HOLIDAYS to you both."

To you, all my precious friends, I want to say thanks for enriching my life. You have left a part of yourself on me and I will never be the same. I have many questions about why things happen and why we don't have our precious babies. But

I'm so thankful to know the ONE who has all the answers, and while He may not give them to me now, someday I will understand.

On behalf of all our precious babies, I'd like to wish all of you a wonderful and thankful holiday season. May you live the rest of your life with no regrets. I love you all.

# A New Year !!! ???

By Terry Cartwright

Starting a New Year brings out two sides in me. One side that says, "Wow! A new start to get new things done in my life and make it better, a new beginning." And then the other darker side says, "Oh no! More times without my Angels. Birthdays, Angel days and holidays when we are apart."

What I really wish sometimes is that I could start my life over with the New Year. I wish I never knew what it is like to go to the doctor's office and be told the baby I am carrying is dead; Not going 9 months only to deliver a dead baby; and not to watch my young child fight to live and only to lose him.

But, I can't change life. I can't make those things go away. So I fight them. I fight to be happy because I was born to be happy. My parents had me not to have me sad and depressed, but to have a happy loving child. I could stay in a depressed state all the time, but why would I want that? I want to be happy, all the time. I want to laugh and enjoy life.

When I do get sad about losing my angels I try to remember all the bad things in life they will never have to go through. Like baby shots, ear infections, the scary first day of school, getting hurt by a boy or girl friend, and many, many more things. My Angels are not in pain and only know happiness and love. Never hate.

Next time your Angel has a Birthday or Angel day, try not to think of what you have lost but what you have. You have an Angel who is perfect and who's love will always be with you.

And during hard times remember my motto, "Find one thing good in your life each day. Even if it is a flower blooming. The next day find two things. And each day find more. Before you know it there will be more good than bad things in your life if you only look for them.

# What will you remember this holiday season?

By Deena McCauley

Will your thoughts be filled with sadness and loss? Yes, they most likely will, at least to some degree.

It's alright to feel that way, it's alright to change your regular holiday ritual if you aren't up to it. It's definitely alright to miss those that should be there with you.

Even if there are plenty of people around you who may tell you different, it's alright to be sad. Even if it has been a long time since you lost your loved one. You are in charge of your grief, no one else.

But, a goal to help you get through the holidays is to gather happy memories. Gather them like you would your special keepsakes and save them for those sad times.

Maybe it's remembering how happy you were when you learned you were pregnant, maybe feeling the baby move. Maybe it was just seeing how absolutely perfect that sweet baby was even if they couldn't stay.

Gather the kind words that might have been said and remember them, rather than dwelling on those who said stupid

things. There will always be those who don't understand but I choose to hang onto those who at least made an effort.

Gather any special rituals you may do to remember your baby. Remember how they made you feel. Hold those good memories close.

I truly believe that our angels are around us all the time, watching over us and wanting us to be happy.

Dare to believe, dare to be happy. Dare to make the good memories more prominent than the bad.

Dare to have a wonderful holiday season in whatever way feels right for you.

# Christmas Poem

Another angel on my tree  
Another pair of tiny wings  
Another little memory  
A voice inside my head that sings  
Of another time, another place  
Where our souls will soon again embrace.  
Merry Christmas little one  
My angel up above  
I hope you like this one  
I've selected with much love  
I'll hang it here for all to see  
That you are always near  
It is perfect in every little way  
Just like you my dear.

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Author:

"Give Them Wings and Let Them Fly" Surviving the Loss of a Child [www.givethemwings.com](http://www.givethemwings.com)

"The Sleepy Little Star" [www.kymzinn.com](http://www.kymzinn.com) 2003 Benjamin Franklin Award for Book of the Year

Contributor: 911: The Day America Cried, A Collection of Poems, Letters, and Stories on an American Tragedy [www.kymzinn.com](http://www.kymzinn.com)

All author royalties donated to the Todd Beamer Foundation to aid 911 victims and their families.

# Can I sleep thru the holidays??

By Deena McCauley

How often we feel that way after a loss, like we'd just like to go to sleep for a couple of months and wake up feeling better? Sadly it just doesn't work that way although I gave it a valiant try more than once. So what can we do to help ourselves get through the holidays? Seems everyone has an opinion on it but I think what it really comes down to is doing what feels right for you.

Sometimes that means doing very little, and just having a quiet time at home. Sometimes it means going all out and staying very busy. There is nothing wrong with either end of the spectrum. We can have special mementos such as a special Thanksgiving prayer or ornaments for our Christmas trees that memorialize our babies. They can be a private thing or a very public thing.

When it seems like holidays only remind us of what we are missing we need to wrap our happy memories around us like a suit of armor to protect us. Above all we need to remember that our babies would not want us to be sad forever, that it is perfectly alright to feel joy, to smile and laugh. Our lives may now be very different but we have survived one of the worst things that can happen, the key word there being "survived." So please seek your joy and keep living. Take care of your blessings.

# Finding Joy in the Holidays

By Lorraine Yuriar

Once again the holidays are upon us. It seems that there is such pressure to be joyful and happy. However, for the majority of us, the holidays are such a stress-filled time, it's hard to find joy. Add to that the feelings that someone is missing, and it's downright hard to be cheery this time of year.

All four of my angel days are coming up in the next few months, so I know how hard it is to find the joy of the holiday season. Over the years since the loss of my first little Angel, I've learned that I will have to find my own joy. When I'm feeling down, and missing the sounds of little feet that never saw the light of day, I change my "Stinkin' Thinkin'" as Marla Cilley([www.flylady.net](http://www.flylady.net)) calls it, and dwell on the positive.

I remember the joy that welled up inside the instant the stick turned blue. I remember the look on my husband's face when I told him the news. Then I go out and do something for someone else, my husband, mother, kids, anyone. When it is time for the Christmas tree to be decorated, I buy a new Angel ornament each year, in memory of my little angels. I also sponsor Angel Babies Forever Loved each year in memory of my little ones, and that even brings a sense of joy. To know that I have remembered my little ones, and helped out an organization seeking to help others like me just brings a smile to face.

# Christmas In Heaven

*I see the countless CHRISTMAS TREES around the world below  
with tiny lights like HEAVEN'S STARS reflecting on the snow.*

*The sight is so SPECTACULAR please wipe away that tear  
for I am spending CHRISTMAS WITH JESUS CHRIST this year.*

*I hear the many CHRISTMAS SONGS that people hold so dear  
but the SOUND OF MUSIC can't compare with the CHRISTMAS CHOIR up here.*

*I have no words to tell you of the JOY their voices bring  
for it is beyond description to HEAR THE ANGELS SING.*

*I know HOW MUCH YOU MISS ME, I see the pain inside your heart  
for I am spending CHRISTMAS WITH JESUS CHRIST this year.*

*I can't tell you of the SPLENDOR or the PEACE here in this place  
Can you just imagine CHRISTMAS WITH OUR SAVIOR face to face*

*I'll ask him to LIFT YOUR SPIRIT as I tell him of your love  
so then PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER as you lift your eyes above.*

*Please let your HEARTS BE JOYFUL and let your SPIRIT SING  
for I am spending CHRISTMAS IN HEAVEN and I'm walking WITH THE KING.*

*~ by Wanda Bencke*

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*<http://www.christmasinheaven.net/>*

# How to Remember the Joy

By Abby Canada

This coming spring, it will be 9 years since we found out that our first baby, Judith Alexis, passed away at 8 weeks gestation. I can remember that day so vividly. It was a Wednesday, April 12, 1995. A cold rainy day that will never let my mind go. Three months later, July 3, 1995 we lost our second baby, Mark Kevin II at 6wks gestation. Those two days will forever change my life. Living your life after losing a child can be a painful life. Learning to live without them is even harder. It is possible; not easy, but possible. After losing our last baby in 1995, we were told that we would never have any children. In September of 1996, our first miracle baby boy came into the world. Four years later, another miracle son.

It's been so long ago, but yet only yesterday. Their anniversaries always bring questions to my mind. Have I really let go? Have I forgotten my first babies? Am I being fair to them? All these questions have made me look at my two sons and look deeper into my heart.

Have I really let go? Yes, I have learned to accept that I did nothing wrong. My losses had nothing to do with anything that I did or didn't do. Letting go of my guilt and anger meant that I could start dealing with grief. First thing I needed to know was "how?" How do I deal with losing something that I didn't even see, only felt? I knew in my heart that I was hurting but I

couldn't show anyone. Losing a child is an invisible hurt that no one can see. To me, that made it tougher to deal with. No one can tell you how to deal with a loss of a child. Not even me. I can tell someone that I understand what they are going through, but I do not know how *they* feel. It took me almost 4 years to deal with my losses, but I did. I can't tell you how, mainly because I do not know how myself.

Now, the next obstacle was how was I going to "go on" with my life with two living children and still remember my other two? How do you remember the good stuff when there was nothing but bad? Not everything was as bad as I thought. I remember the good feeling of when that test came back positive, the drive back home rubbing my belly and singing to my baby. That one week when nothing else mattered and I could sleep and do nothing but think and talk "baby" all I wanted. But what about the pride in my babies? I have pride in my two living children, is it fair that I cannot show that I have four babies and not two? Is it fair that when asked how many children do you have that I say 2 or do I say 4? How do I show the world that I am the mother of 4 and not 2??

When is it time to "go on"? For every mother, the time frame is different. For some it can be months; other's, years. Then for some, it just never ends. It shouldn't matter how long it's been, last week, a month, year or even 6 years or more, we should always remember the joy of feeling that life inside of us.

I've had many people that want to say that they are sorry for my loss. I've said this over and over again. I'm not sorry, at least not anymore. Going thru my valleys has made me who I am today. I would rather have 8wks or 6wks of that joyous feeling than a lifetime of nothing. Those were the happiest 8wks and 6wks of my life. That is what I focus on now. It hasn't been easy, and it's not been overnight. I still have my bad days, but the good outweighs the bad now.

My goal in life is to always remember, but to remember means to somehow separate the bad from the good. Realizing what this month is, I HATE this month!! I hate it with every breath in me, but yet, I look forward to this month. It means I'm one more year in remembering the joy that came into my life and gave me so much happiness and even though ended in sadness, made me the person who I am today-strong, protected, involved, and loving mother that takes nothing for granted. Not even sleepless nights.

# Words Entwining

I can still remember the day  
after months of trying  
"it will come" they say  
But I always ended up crying

Finally, the test turned blue  
being fill with so much happiness  
I can't believe it, could it be true?  
My belly I rubbed with such maternal tenderness

Nervous, excitement and joy  
I remember very well  
the thoughts of a girl or boy  
and watching my tummy swell

Oh how my heart broke in two  
sorrowed filled my life  
there was nothing I could do  
I thought I had done it right

Years now have come and gone  
I can speak their names  
the pain is still just as strong  
but now, no one do I blame

Once long ago I felt the sorrow  
became an expert in defining  
trying to hold onto clouds that I only borrowed  
descending with a raveling silver lining

Now my heart is full of pride  
I have the memories of long ago  
still tucked away deep inside  
and the feeling of joy I now can show

Sorrow brings tears and pain  
and at the end of it all  
You let go of the guilt and shame  
and from the joy you now can stand tall

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# Now What?

By Kimberly Grimme

Ever heard of "holiday let down"? It's that feeling people get after the holidays when suddenly there is nothing left to do. The days are no longer filled with shopping, wrapping, or cooking etc. For angel moms, we have yet another reason to experience "let down". So many of us do special things to remember our angels during the holidays, and most of the world allows us to do that. It's O.K. that we light a special candle on Christmas Eve and take a moment to remember what could have been, but we'd better get back to "normal" after this. Yet again we are faced with having to go on with our daily lives, there is nothing special now, no reason why we should be remembering in a special way.

Now we are left with the question of "What now?" What can we do to memorialize our angels now that the season has passed? Some of us are taking the new year with a new strength, perhaps starting some new traditions.

I'm thinking back to the first year of my journey of grief. Every 13th (death day) and 21st (b-day) of each and every month was heart wrenching, but it was also a time of reflection for our family. We memorialized our angel twice a month. After the first year, we no longer did that. I'm not sure what made us stop, but it just felt right.

During my second year of the journey, I just sunk into a depression. I felt like I wasn't doing anything and I felt like the world expected my timeline of grief to be over. I went through the motions of daily living, but made very little progress.

Now we are beginning our third year. I feel like we've made a lot of progress, but I want to make some changes this year. I intend to donate to organizations such as Angel Babies in Hannah's name as much as I can. I also intend to donate money to the new library we are building in our town, which will print a "dedicated to ...." in a number of books. I really want to get creative, and find some positive ways to remember our angels.

I encourage each of us to consider what we can do now. Make it positive, and embrace the New Year with a new outlook.

# *Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas! Bah Humbug!!!!!!*

By Tammy Novak, JoAnn Taylor. & Lorraine Yuriar

That's pretty much the way one may feel about the holidays after losing a baby. Doing the holiday thing and decorating is the last thing in the world you want to do. Yet, you know you really should do something. You want to do something for your baby's memory, but what? You don't even know where to start!

We want to help you by giving you some ideas and ways to remember your precious baby during the difficult holiday times. The following are some suggestions only - you may want to try some of them, and you may not wish to do any of them. You may have your own ideas. That's fine. Whatever you do or don't do is your choice. Only you know what you're feeling about the holidays and how much you'll physically want to be involved.

For someone who's lost a baby, the holidays can be the most trying time to deal with. Some of us don't want to celebrate it at all - we'd like to just do away with it entirely - others want to celebrate but don't know how they'll get through it. There is no easy answer. For the first holiday after a loss, you may not need to do anything. It's okay to do something different. You may just want to be with your immediate family, especially if you

have other children. Others of you may feel a need to be with family members rather than facing it by yourself. Whatever you choose to do is okay.

Some of these ideas are geared to Christmas, but with a little thought, they can be for whatever holiday you celebrate. We hope these things will help you and get you started on your own holiday ideas. ALL of these ideas came from Angel Babies Forever Loved Mommies.

- \* Make the holidays a gratitude time. Even through our losses, we can always find something to be grateful for. One of the ladies makes a list of at least 20 things her family is grateful for and encourages her guests to do the same. Then they take turns reading them aloud.
- \* Set some limitations. You don't have to participate in everything that takes place. If you normally have holiday traditions, think about leaving some of the difficult ones out and replacing with some new ones of your own.
- \* Find someone else to do something special for. I find that becoming involved in doing for others, gets my mind off of me and my problems, even if it's just for awhile.
- \* Let your family - parents, siblings, etc. - know that you won't be involved in all the normal family stuff this year. If they don't understand, it's their problem, not yours. You have to do what works for you.

- \* If you don't feel like sending out cards - don't! There's no written law that says you have to.
- \* There's not a right or wrong way to handle the holidays.
- \* Don't let people "should" on you. Things like: "You should put up a tree." "You should go see your parents." "You really should get out more. Don't you like the holidays?" Only you know how much you can handle and deal with.
- \* If you have the money, it would probably be easier on you to have someone else do your baking and cooking, especially if this is the first holiday since your loss. Or maybe you have a friend that loves to cook and would do this for you!
- \* Expect to be sad. Holidays are a time for entire families, and it's normal for you to be sad when someone, especially your baby, is missing.
- \* Try to rest more often. Holidays are emotionally and physically draining.
- \* Don't be afraid to ask for help - from your husband, other children, mom, friends, etc. Perhaps someone else could take your children shopping so you don't have to face the hustle and bustle and excitement.
- \* This may be a good time to keep a journal about your thoughts. As you read it from year to year, you'll see how you've grown and how far you've come in your grief process.

- \* If you're familiar with the Twelve Days of Christmas (not the song), this might be something you'd want to do, since it involves doing for others. And they're secretive, who doesn't love secrets?
- \* Make a donation to "Toys for Tots" or adopt an angel tree angel or make a donation to an organization in memory of your baby.
- \* Put up a special tree just for your baby, and have your regular family tree for the rest of the family.
- \* Include a special poem in with your cards that get sent out.
- \* For the signature in the holiday cards, put little footprints, handprints, or little angel stamps to symbolize the baby(s) not with you.
- \* Donate flowers to the church or synagogue in memory of your baby.
- \* Hang a stocking for your child
- \* Buy a gift for a baby in your area whose parents are struggling financially.
- \* Place a candle for each of your babies in the window. (I use electric candles for this)
- \* Buy a special ornament that reminds you of your baby to go on your Christmas tree. You can do this each year, or just the first Christmas.

- \* Get the clear plastic snap together ornaments and fill them with something that reminds you of your baby.
- \* Write your baby a letter and place it on the tree or at the grave. (or your special place to remember your baby)
- \* Decorate the grave. (or your special place to remember your baby)
- \* Make a special Holiday website for your baby.
- \* This year I will have three angel babies to remember during the holiday season. I am planning to buy three pairs of booties (or maybe even three little outfits) and donate them to the crisis pregnancy center that is affiliated with my Church. This will bring me great joy and satisfaction. - Anne Costa
- \* I have 3 pair of ceramic booties with "October" on them that we hang on the mantle with the other kids stockings. Last year I took their picture and made a copy small enough to fit on a clear glass ornament. I used decoupage glue to attach the picture and sprinkled it with very fine glitter so they would shine when the lights hit them. I also buy a new family ornament every year. Something very special and has ALL of our names or something special about us on it. - Kimberly Dowell
- \* In past years I have bought books on parenting and children's books to stock our church's lending library and donated them in my angel babies' names: Samuel, Hope and now this year, Katie Faith. I love books and reading and it is a way to share this passion with others while remembering and honoring my precious little ones. - Anne Costa

- \* If you have family pictures taken for Christmas cards, wear an Angel pin as a way to include your Angel in the picture. - Dana Brown
- \* Each year, I buy a toy that is appropriate for the age my son would be and donate it to a local charity that gives holiday gifts to needy families. - Sally Strudell
- \* I had some really nice Christmas tree decorations engraved for the first Christmas and now every year I buy an angel of sorts for the tree. Some of the cards I sign with a little squiggle angel shape around the family names. - Judi Geenty
- \* Light a candle during family gatherings to represent your child. Wear your child's birthstone to holiday celebrations - Patti Kenney
- \* Something that helps me is to focus on the real reason of Christmas. So we do a Birthday cake for Jesus and sing to Him! When I focus on Him and not my loss, the holiday is much easier.

Even though it will be hard, remember - you will get through the holidays. We are all living proof of that. We never know what we can do until we've done it.

# The Christmas Present

There was a special little present,  
Sitting under the Christmas tree.  
The card attached simply said,  
'From Mary, with love, to my Mummy'.  
Oh, how my heart did sing,  
When I saw that special gift.  
Your daddy did this for you,  
And it gave me such a lift.  
I don't think he really understood,  
Just how much it meant to me.  
For him to do something so lovely,  
And create a memory.  
I felt like you were with us,  
That you were a part of this time.  
A gift from you, my little one,  
Helped fill this gap of mine.  
And as the Christmas lights,  
Shone upon my silent tears.  
I made a little wish,  
That he'd do it again, next year.

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# Our Holiday wishes for you...

By Tammy Novak

May you all become "Joy Seekers" this year and every year. Sadness has a way of finding us, but sometimes we have to make a concentrated effort to find the JOY! And the effort it may take is well worth it.

May you be able to include into your holiday rituals a special memento of your baby. If your family is not prepared to take part in that you can still do it in your own way. A special ornament on the tree, a donation to a library in your babies name or something very simple like a candle burning in memory.

May you have at least one person who really LISTENS when you need to talk. There is probably no greater gift anyone can give or receive than to be a good listener and friend.

May you know in your heart that dreams still can come true, and may you find peace in your self to be able to deal with the day-to-day issues of life and grief.

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