



SIEBENQUELL

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**Be Merciful and Tell a Story**

# **The Gift of the Magi**

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SOURCE: BIRGIT ZORIL 2015

My sister, Birgit, is a teacher of many years who works with children who have learning disabilities. Several years ago, she told me of one of her students, a girl named Coby. The story about this young lady inspired me to tell this story.

One day, Coby announced to her mother that she wanted to go Christmas shopping. She was not interested in going out to see what she could find for herself, but instead wanted to buy Christmas gifts for her classmates.

So she set out with her mother. While they passed through the various stores, she told her mother exactly what to get for each student in her class. Each time she explained what the interests of each classmate were and which gift was fitting for that person. That was the gift that was to be bought. Each student got a hand selected gift and each gift was dead on right.

My sister went on to tell me that Coby usually walks around the classroom and is in and out of activities, as she has a rather short attention span. Very often, people assume that she has not paid attention to what has gone on in class and has not followed the conversations, the teaching or the instructions of the moment.

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Yet, here is the person who knows exactly what the interests of each student are and is so in tune with each of them, that she can hand pick the perfect gift for each student. Coby is in my sister's life skills class and because she is of lower academic ability, she is not given the credit for how in tune she is with the people around her. She would not be recognized as one the wise. Yet, among her peers she was unanimously voted the Good Shepherd for her grade 5 class (25 kids), because she always has a smile and cheers people up.

At the very end of his wonderful short story, »The Gift of the Magi«, O' Henry has lines of deep wisdom. As my sister finished her story of Coby, I recounted these words. »The magi, as you know, were wise men--wonderfully wise men--who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. O all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.«

And so I have prayed for Coby often since, in gratitude to God that he still sends us wise men and wise women. If we are a little wise ourselves, we will follow people like Coby, for they know the way to Bethlehem and they will always find the Child. She, too, is the wisest. She, too, is a magi.

**Erik Riechers SAC**  
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