

## The Twelve Days of Christmas

When most people hear "The Twelve Days of Christmas," they think of the song. This song had its origin as a teaching tool to instruct young people in the meaning and content of the Christian faith. From 1558 to 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not able to practice their faith openly so they had to find other ways to pass on their beliefs.

This song is one example of how they did it.

The song goes, "On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me ..." The "true love" represents God and the "me" who receives these presents is the Christian.

The "Partridge in a pear tree" was Jesus Christ who died on a tree as a gift from God.

The "two turtle doves" were the Old and New Testaments - another gift from God.

The "three French hens" were faith, hope and love - the three gifts of the Spirit that abide. (1 Corinthians 13)

The "four calling birds" were the four Gospels, which sing the song of salvation through Jesus Christ.

The "five golden rings" were the first five books of the Bible, also called the "Book of Moses."

The "six geese a-laying" were the six days of creation.

The "seven swans a-swimming" were the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:9-11, Romans 12, Ephesians 4, 1 Peter 4:10-11)

The "eight maids a-milking" were the eight beatitudes.

The "nine ladies dancing" were nine fruits of the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23)

The "ten lords a-leaping" were the Ten Commandments.

The "eleven pipers piping" were the eleven faithful disciples.

The "twelve drummers drumming" were the twelve points of the Apostles Creed.

So the next time you hear "The Twelve Days of Christmas," consider how this otherwise non-religious sounding song had its origins in the Christian faith.