



LIVE JESUS

MINISTRIES

Teen Requested Topic - Submitted on Dec 16th, 2024 by Freshmen/Sophomore Boys

“When parents tell their children about the myth of Santa Claus, they're lying to them. Is this lie sinful? Why or why not?”

CONTENT REFERENCES

CCC 2483: “To lie is to speak or act against the truth in order to lead someone into error.”

CCC 2488-2489: “*No one is bound to reveal the truth to someone who does not have the right to know it.*” (cf. Sir 27:16, Prov 25:9-10)

As a framework for our discussion, we would like to approach this topic via the following question: Are there situations in which it is not sinful to tell a lie? Some people believe telling their children about the myth of Santa Claus constitutes a lie and others don't. The Church has never taken a definitive stance on this.

Question #1: Is it ever okay to lie? (Encourage dialogue here beyond Yes or No)

- No, it is not.
- CCC 2485 “*By its very nature, lying is to be condemned.*”

Question #2: How would you define a lie?

- **What is a lie?:** CCC defines a lie as “speaking or acting against the truth in order to lead someone into error”. The point of the definition is that lying is done *with the intention of leading someone into error*. This implies that it's possible to refrain from telling the truth, but not with the intention of leading someone into error.
- **Mentor note:** The point is to arrive at the conclusion that there is a difference between telling a lie and simply not telling the truth. We often use this philosophy with children: For example, we don't tell them exactly “where babies come from” until a certain age. (Another example: murder vs. killing – they're not always the same thing. Killing an enemy in war or self-defense does not count as murder).

Question #3: Why do you think parents tell their children about Santa Claus?

- Possible answers... (entertain, teach virtue, promote good behavior, story of St. Nicholas, etc.)
- Santa Claus is used as a teaching tool, similar to how other fictional stories are used to teach a lesson.

Cornerstone Statement:

The morality of an act is determined by three factors: action, intention, and circumstances. In this case, there are genuinely good lessons that can come from parents utilizing the myth of Santa Claus. Some of the issue comes down to intention. This doesn't mean that the ends justify the means, but that intention is an important factor when weighing the morality of an action. With all this said, it is possible to make the case that telling kids about Santa is not sinful.