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Christmas Blessings Felt Around the World



When Venkaiamma first set foot on the IREF campus in August 2013, she was the little girl with the big eyes and long ponytails. She came to IREF with the help

of three IREF students who were from her same village about eight hours away from Repalle. Venkaiamma's parents had recently divorced and IREF girls heard she was left abandoned in the village. So they made the arrangements to bring Venkaiamma to Repalle and introduce her to IREF. Venkaiamma found refuge at IREF and has been living at the Vermillion dormitory, attending the John's Elementary School and she even received a medical examination that revealed cigarette burns on her back, along with a treatable skin deficiency. God truly had a plan to provide for Venkaiamma even when her own parents failed to.

Being a very timid girl, Venkaiamma needed love and to know that someone truly cared for her. Little did she know, her loving Heavenly Father had a plan to care for her through compassionate Christians - Irvin and Catherine (Kay) Beardslee from Lakeview, Michigan. When Irv and Kay inquired on how they could help IREF, they were referred to help provide a Christmas gift to an unsponsored child. Kay said, "we knew we wanted to help and I was sure IREF would find the best place to use the money." God knew exactly where the money was to be spent. He allowed Venkaiamma's first Christmas at IREF to be a joyous one when she received her very

first Christmas gift from the Beardslees. Irv and Kay got to see just what joy Venkaiamma experienced from their generosity.

They later got to see pictures of how Venkaiamma looked in her new dress and have a picture of her on their fridge, which they keep right next to the pictures of the rest of their 30+ grand- and great-grandchildren. Kay said, "I now have a new grandchild and she's beautiful."



Venkaiamma's Christmas was followed in more joy when she received a full time sponsor in February 2014. John and Patricia Calhoun from Kalamazoo, Michigan - traveled to IREF as members of the mission team and became partners to provide the monthly fees necessary to provide her with an education, food, clothing and shelter. Isaiah 41:10, "Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen and help you." Don't you just love the promises that God fulfills! They become more and more evident each year in the way He is connecting sponsors to help children at IREF. Praise be to God!



Teaching Christmas to Hindu Children by Dee Rebba

The term Christmas is often times heard but not understood by children who have been raised in India from a Hindu background. From the very first moment the children come to IREF, they start learning about Jesus and His love for them. However, Christmas time is normally when so many children start to appreciate and truly understand God's love. The attention surrounding this holiday helps children grasp the reason for all the celebration and they become so excited to receive a gift that they ask many questions to what reason these events are happening. This is really the best time of the year to be at IREF - to see God using Christmas as a way to their hearts.

Emmanuel's message last year during the Christmas celebration focused on understanding that Jesus needed to be born into a humble environment such as a stable; so that even commoners would come to see and worship him. If He had asked for the royal birth that He deserved then many people would not have had the chance to worship Him on that day. The children that attend IREF understand they are from very poor backgrounds and it is inspiring for them to understand that Jesus Christ is a God who values them enough to sacrifice the royalty He deserved to be closer with them. It is when the children accept and believe this truth about God that they start to live out his principles and I can see that God is at the center of their lives. He is so perfect in His ways.

Christmas for India

We are now collecting Christmas gifts for children, evangelists and their families. A considerable amount of planning by the IREF board and staff is required to arrange gifts and we thank you in advance for your stewardship.

Any support received now will ensure that Christmas will arrive on time. Please consider:

- \$25 for children's Christmas Gift (new clothes)
- \$45 for Evangelists and Bible Ladies Christmas Gift (new clothing and food for their family)

To deliver your Christmas gift to India sooner, donate online at irefusa.org and simply click "How to Help" and "Make a Donation".

We extend our warmest thanks to you, the faithful supporters of IREF who make Christmas in Repalle possible each year!

