

RICK WARREN'S BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS

My sister recently found a picture of me as a three-year-old, standing next to a birthday cake for Jesus, complete with candles. The cake was my idea. As a toddler, I asked my mother, "Why do we have Christmas?" Mom patiently explained that Christmas is a celebration of Jesus' birthday. In a burst of preschooler inspiration, I concluded with a child's logic, "Well then, we should have a birthday party! We can have cake and Kool-Aid and sing happy birthday to Jesus!" My mom said, "Okay, we will!"

Thus began a five-decade Warren family tradition, our Birthday Party for Jesus every Christmas Eve, complete with angel food cake and candles that the youngest child (and now grandchild) gets to blow out. Four generations now participate in the sharing.

Besides singing carols and reading the Christmas story from the Bible, each family member takes a turn sharing his or her answers to two personal questions: "What, from the past year, are you thankful to God for?" and, "Since it's Jesus' birthday, what gift will you give him this next year?" These two simple questions have prompted some of the most profound and moving moments in our family's history.

Rick Warren, The Purpose of Christmas (Howard Books, 2008), pp. 34–36