



The CHRISTMAS Tree

By Harriet R. Uchtdorf

World War II had just ended, and most people in Germany had very little food or money. My birthday was coming up just a few weeks before Christmas. I did not expect to receive any Christmas or birthday presents, knowing quite well—even as a young girl—that our parents were struggling to meet our basic needs. In our big city, hunger was always present. It was a sad and dark time.

On the day of my birthday, to my surprise and delight, a wonderful present—just for me—was placed on the kitchen table. It

was the most beautiful present I could have imagined: a tiny little *Weihnachtsbaum*, a Christmas tree, just one foot (30 cm) tall, covered with delicate handmade ornaments of tinfoil. The tinfoil reflected the light of our living room in an enchanting way. As I inspected the tinfoil ornaments, I realized with amazement that they were filled with small pieces of caramelized sugar. It was like a miracle. Where did my mother get the tiny ever-green tree, the tinfoil, and the rarity of sugar?

To this day, I do not know how she made this miracle happen at a time when none of those precious things was available. It remains in

my heart as a symbol of my parents' deep love for me, as a symbol of hope, love, and the true meaning of Christmas.

During the Christmas season, we still have in our home a Christmas tree, now decorated with electrical lights and ornaments of every variety. When we are together with our children and grandchildren, the beauty of the tree and the sparkling lights warm my heart and bring back sweet memories of a happy family moment that came from a tiny tree with shiny tinfoil ornaments. ■

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From Harriet R. Uchtdorf, "Der Weihnachtsbaum": Memories Linger of Small Tree," Church News, Dec. 12, 2009, 11.

Handmade Ornaments

Surprise your family by creating some handmade ornaments of your own! Here's what you need:

- a holiday-shaped cookie cutter or a small drinking glass
- stiff paper such as card stock or poster board
- pencil
- scissors
- aluminum foil (optional)
- white liquid glue
- markers (or crayons or colored pencils)
- yarn, ribbon, or string

1. Trace the cookie cutter or glass on the stiff paper.
2. Have a parent help you cut out the shape.
3. Tear off a piece of foil and use it to cover the paper shape. Glue down the edges of the foil on the back of the ornament. (If you are not using foil, skip this step and follow the rest of the steps.)
4. Drizzle lines of glue on the front of the ornament. Let the glue dry completely.
5. Use markers to color in between the lines of glue. (If you are not using foil, you can also use crayons or colored pencils.)
6. Have a parent help you poke a hole in the top of the ornament. Put a small piece of yarn, ribbon, or string through the hole and tie it at the top.
7. Hang your ornament on your family's *Weihnachtsbaum* or give it as a gift.

