



A GREEN-BEAN Christmas

By Heidi Poelman
(Based on a true story)

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me"
(Matthew 25:40).

Vroom! Peter's new remote-controlled car seemed to roar to life. It zigzagged through crumpled wrapping paper. It zoomed under the Christmas tree, its blue paint reflecting the lights.

When Peter had unwrapped his present that morning, he just knew it would be the fastest race car around. He was planning to make a race track for it.



But first Peter had to go to the homeless shelter with his family. Last week they had decided to help serve dinner to people there on Christmas night. Peter had liked the idea then. But now he just wanted to keep playing with his car.

Peter slowly put his boots on. “Why can’t I stay home?” he grumbled.

Dad ruffled Peter’s hair. “Getting toys for Christmas is fun. But Christmas is really about Jesus. That’s why we wanted to celebrate His birth by doing something He would do—helping others.”

Peter still didn’t feel like going. But he trudged out the door anyway.

Once they got to the shelter, a lady led them to the kitchen. Peter followed her to his spot, and she handed him a spoon. His job was to serve green beans. *Yuck!* he thought.

People started coming in the cafeteria. One by one, they moved through the line. Peter dumped a spoonful of green beans on each plate. Scoop, plop. Scoop, plop. He couldn’t think of anything more boring. His mind kept going back to the race track he wanted to build.

Peter scooped another spoonful of green beans. When he looked up he saw a boy sliding his tray closer. Peter spooned the beans onto the boy’s plate. He looked up again, and their eyes met. The boy smiled. “Thank you!” he said. Peter watched him sit down by a tall woman. They looked happy. That made Peter happy too.

Maybe Dad was right, Peter thought. He could play with his toys anytime. But coming here was special. He thought

about how Jesus spent His life helping people. And wasn’t Christmas about celebrating Jesus’s birthday?

When the next person came through the line, Peter smiled as he scooped beans onto her plate.

“Merry Christmas,” Peter said.

He tried to smile at everyone who came through the line. Not everyone smiled back, and that was OK.

On the ride home, Peter looked at Dad. “I think I understand what you said earlier, about what Christmas is really about.”

“Oh yeah?”

“It’s not about getting stuff,” Peter said. “Helping people is more important.”

“I think you’re right,” said Dad. “And maybe we can come back soon to help again.”

Peter grinned as he looked out the window. He was glad he’d spent Christmas night helping others, like Jesus would. ●

The author lives in Utah, USA.



“Christmas is the season to give service.”

Sister Cristina B. Franco, Second Counselor in the Primary General Presidency

“Christmas—a Season to Love, Serve, and Forgive One Another,”
2017 First Presidency Christmas Devotional.