

## Christian Education Bulletin Insert

January 2003



**January 3, Gladys Aylward**  
Gladys Aylward (1909-1970) was a modern missionary. When she was a teenager she read a magazine article about China and knew that God was calling her to teach Chinese people about Jesus. She went to a missionary training

school in England run by the China Inland Mission, but failed the exams so they would not send her to China. Gladys was so certain that God was calling her to go there that she worked for many years as a housemaid and saved all she could so she could pay for a train ticket. At last she had enough money for a third class ticket on the Trans-Siberian Railway. The journey took her through Russia which was at war with Japan, and she had many narrow escapes. She eventually ended up in Northern China working with an elderly Scottish woman missionary, Jeannie Lawson. They shared the gospel in the surrounding villages and also took in a number of abandoned children as well as many wounded soldiers. The area was often bombed by the Japanese and the number of children grew to 100. When Gladys was forced to leave China, she took all the children with her, escaping across the mountains and the Yellow River to Xian. The journey took 27 days and when they arrived in Xian, Gladys collapsed from typhus, pneumonia, relapsing fever, malnutrition, and exhaustion. She was delirious for many days. At the end of her life, Gladys wrote, "My heart is full of praise that one so insignificant, uneducated, and ordinary in every way could be used to His glory for the blessing of his people in poor persecuted China,"

A movie, 'The Inn of the Sixth Happiness,' was made about Gladys' life. It is now an old movie but some video stores may carry it. The public library is almost sure to have one of the many books about her, probably 'The Small Woman.' Although written for adults, I think teens and older children would enjoy this. It could be read as a family story.

## January 6, Epiphany

This is the feast day when we celebrate the manifestation, or showing, of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, who are represented by the magi or kings. Ask your family a few 'skill testing questions. E.g. How many kings were there? What gifts did they bring to the Baby Jesus? Where was the baby when they visited him? How did the kings return home? Read Matthew 2:1-12 to check the answers. Some of the questions are tricky. We usually think of three kings, but in the reading you will see that no number is mentioned. Since there were three gifts, people have assumed there were three kings. You will also see that by the time the kings visited, Jesus and his parents were living in a house. When you go to church on January 5, you might leave the building by a different door than usual and go home a different way, if this is possible. This would symbolize the kings going home by a different route after they had seen Jesus, to avoid meeting King Herod again and having to tell him where they found the baby.

Have an **Epiphany celebration at home**. It will be a nice conclusion to the Christmas season, before everyone gets back into their routines. Make a 'Three Kings Cake.' These are often made to a special recipe, but an ordinary cake will do. When it is baked and cooled push one or more beans into it. The person who gets the bean in their piece of cake is crowned the king or queen of twelfth night. You might also make star shaped cookies and/or sandwiches. Hide some gold-foil covered chocolate coins around the room, like you might hide little Easter eggs, and have the children search for them.

## January 15, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

This is the great civil rights leader, Martin Luther King, Jr's birthday. He was born in Atlanta, Georgia in 1929 and assassinated in 1968. His birthday is a national holiday in the United States. In August, 1963, he gave his famous "I have a dream" speech in Washington in front of 300,000 people. He spoke of the day when all God's children would live together as brothers and sisters. Read the last part of his speech to older children and talk about freedom and what it means today. How far has Martin's dream been fulfilled? Find the speech at

<http://web66.coled.umn.edu/new/MLK/MLK/html>