

Welcome to Mrs. Ballone's web page

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A Note from Mrs. Ballone

Christmas has blessed us with much anticipation of the birth of the infant savior, Jesus. We have busied ourselves with much preparation, with many trips to the malls, and supermarkets. We have listened to many a Christmas Carol, but have we really listened to the words. For instance, the song The Twelve Days of Christmas has many of us smiling upon hearing it and laughing in some of the presentations of the song. Giving the holiday presents of a French Hen, a milking maid, a leaping lord or even a partridge in a pear tree is rather unlikely in this day and age. But the gifts from the favorite holiday carol "The 12 Days of Christmas" are lighthearted clues to how the economy is faring. In the year 2011 the cost of everything mentioned in the song would be \$ 101,000.00.

Have you ever wondered what in the world do leaping lords, French hens, swimming swans, and especially the partridge that won't come out of the pear tree have to do with Christmas? From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of their church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember.

- The partridge in a pear tree was Jesus Christ.
- Two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments.
- Three French hens stood for faith, hope and love.
- The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
- The five golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.
- The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.
- Seven Swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit- Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.
- The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.
- Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit—Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control.
- The ten lords a-leaping were the ten commandments.
- The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful disciples.
- The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed.

I hope you found this history of the song interesting and enlightening.

As we return to our lessons in school you will note that there will be lessons on two instruments for some of the students. The students in grades three and four will shortly begin learning the recorder. It is an easier beginners instrument for them in both the fingering of the

instrument and breathing into the instrument. Students in grade 5 will begin on the recorder. Please encourage your child/children to practice their assigned page in the method book. I know that in the beginning there will be squeaks and times when you really do not want to hear it. But for the 15 minutes each night that is requested of them to practice, please be patient with them. Also, remind them to bring the instrument to school, so we have it in class for the next learning period. It probably would be best if, after the lesson is practiced each night, the instrument and method book were put into the backpack/or book bag.

