

Lyceum 122, December 4, 2025 – – a forum to Think, Discuss, Share, and Learn from one another. Your input is welcomed - Iron sharpens iron.

Neighborhood “The 1826, in Connecticut, a farmer named Josiah Holbrook started a school for ‘the general diffusion of knowledge and raising the moral and intellectual taste’ of Americans. In those days, the opportunities for higher education were limited to those venerable old universities that had long served the upper crust. Holbrook’s vision was to make learning – practical, liberal, and humane – available to working people of all kinds. He named his school the Lyceum, after the garden where Aristotle once taught his students philosophy.... We need to go deeper than the superficial fights that characterize public life. We need to return to the first principles and meet each other there as human beings.”– Nathan Beacom, Plough Magazine, Autumn 2023, p. 9.

-Roger J. Vanden Busch.

We continue with Advent Potpourri of Ethics guidelines, principles, and applications garnished with quotations, and tickled with humorous riddles. If there is no laughter in heaven,” says Martin Luther, the reformer, “I do not want to go there.”

During this Advent, Christmas, and Christmastide as Jesus fills us with his Spirit, blessings, and love, be present by thought, word, and deed to the moment; increase your ethics vocabulary, immerse yourself in quotations of a moral caliber, enhance your pursuit of living the virtuous life, and become acquainted with some shakers and movers of ethics. In addition, be tickled by seasonal riddles along the way.

Friday – December 5 – Find pockets of quiet.

Ethical word – natural law - it is sometimes referred to as individual human autonomy. It refers to the notion that your heart, mind, soul, thoughts, feelings, and behavior are capable of individual direction toward goodness or evil.

“A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both.”

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Where do Santa and the elves go to swim?

Answer: The North Pool

Saturday - December 6 – St. Nicholas.

Ethical word- ethical striving - is one who is aware that there is a difference between ethics and law, and strives to demonstrate higher, more noble, and virtuous principles in one's daily life.

“The Dutch took the tradition of St. Nicholas to now New York City in the American colonies where he was transformed into Santa Clause by the English-speaking majority. His legend of a kindly old man was united with old Nordic folktales of a magician who punished naughty children and rewarded good children with presents. The resulting image of Santa Claus in the United States crystallized in the 19th century, and he has ever since remained the patron of the gift-giving festival of Christmas and is no longer associated with December 6. In Britain he was replaced with Father Christmas.” -Internet.

Why didn't the stocking eat Christmas dinner?

Answer: It was stuffed!

Sunday - December 7 (Second Sunday of Advent) - Remember your grandma's and grandpa's values.

Ethical word- Aristotle - “The way I think determines what I say, and what I say becomes my behavior, and my behavior becomes my habit, and my habit becomes my character, and my character becomes my destiny.”

“Relativity applies to physics, not ethics.” - Albert Einstein

Why do mummies like Christmas so much?

Answer: Because of all the wrapping!

Monday - December 8 – Treasure your family-Immaculate Conception.

Ethical word – character - is the result of one’s thoughts and feelings, tempered by one’s conscious choices (the exercise of free will), and manifested, revealed, and demonstrated by one’s personal conduct and behavior.

“Dangerous consequences will follow when politicians and rulers forget moral principles. Whether we believe in God or karma, ethics is the foundation of every religion.” -Dalai Lama

What kind of bug hates Christmas?

Answer: A humbug

Tuesday - December 9 – Appreciate ordinary days.

Ethical word- Existentialism - when confronted with an ethical dilemma, you should look within yourself for the right moral path to follow, and that you should make a conscious choice to follow your deeper, inner sense of right and wrong – Soren Kierkegaard, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Albert Camus.

“Nothing that is morally wrong can be politically right.” -William E. Gladstone

What is the name of the best elf singer?

Answer: ELFiS Presley

Wednesday - December 10 – Do not delay giving compliments.

Ethical word- principle of double effect - It claims that one may perform actions that could kill, but the acts are permissible only if the person does not intend the killing.

“Without ethics, everything happens as if we were all five billion passengers on a big machinery and nobody is driving the machinery. And it is going faster, but we do not know where.” -Gandhi

What do you call Santa when he goes down a chimney with a fire at the bottom?

Answer: Krisp Kringle

Thursday – December 11 - Focus on the love you can give.

Ethical word – cynicism - A Greek philosophy school of thought that espoused that one arrives at true happiness by renouncing all external desires and extolling the self-sufficiency of the desire to be a good person.

“In matters of style, swim with the current; in matters of principle, stand like a rock.”
– Thomas Jefferson

How does a snow globe feel?

Answer: A little shaken!

Friday - December 12 - Find something to be thankful for.

Ethical word – emotivism - The view usually associated with logical positivism claiming that ethical statements are mere expressions of emotion and, as such, have no basis in truth or falsehood.

“Integrity is telling myself the truth. And honesty is telling the truth to other people.” - Spencer Johnson

What did Adam say the day before Christmas?

Answer: "It's Christmas, Eve."

Saturday - December 13 – Count your freckles, moles, age spots, or wrinkles.

Ethical duty - That which ought to be done, either legally or morally.

“Do not be too moral. You may cheat yourself out of much life so. Aim above morality. Be not simply good; be good for something.” -Henry David Thoreau

Which one of Santa's reindeer can be seen on Valentine's Day?

Answer: Cupid

Sunday - December 14- (Third Sunday of Advent) - Be happy for no reason all – be full of smiles.

Ethical word- ethical egoism - An ethical theory claiming that the pursuit of self-interest is morally correct and rational; see Ayn Rand.

“Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.” -Immanuel Kant

Where do the three wise men go to get their robes tailored?

Answer: Bethle-hem.

Monday - December 15 – You get another chance each morning.

Ethical word- ethical relativism - The ethical theory that denies the existence of universal moral truths and proposes that right and wrong must be defined based on differences in cultural norms and mores.

“Have the courage to say no. Have the courage to face the truth. Do the right thing because it is right. These are the magic keys to living your life with integrity.” -W. Clement Stone

Why couldn't the teacher find anyone to help her wrap gifts?

Answer: No one was present.

Tuesday - December 16- Be honest.

Ethical word – ethical realism - Any view that acknowledges that our knowledge of the real, objective nature of the world is influenced by the mind, on which sensory experience is necessarily dependent.

“Moralties, ethics, laws, customs, beliefs, doctrines - these are of trifling import. All that matters is that the miraculous becomes the norm.” -Henry Miller

What did the snowman do when he got upset?

Answer: He had a meltdown.

Wednesday - December 17 – Written words are lasting treasures.

Ethical word- hard determinism - All behavior is invariably and without exception determined by causal factors beyond the control and responsibility of any individual, so that, in effect, free will and moral choice do not exist.

“If ethics are poor at the top, that behavior is copied down through the organization.” - Robert Noyce

Why is Santa so good at karate?

Answer: Because he has a black belt.

Thursday - December 18- Listening is essential.

Ethical word- Cogito ergo sum - “I think, therefore I am.” From Descartes’ “Meditations” referring to his certain, indubitable knowledge of his own existence as a thinking, conscious being.

“We don’t set out to save the world; we set out to wonder how other people are doing and to reflect on how our actions affect other people’s hearts.” -Pema Chodron

Which one of Santa's reindeer is the fastest?

Answer: Dasher

Amen. To be continued from December 19 to January 4, 2026 – Epiphany.

Blessings upon you and your loved ones.

Roger J. Vanden Busch

