

# John Lewis ad triggers tears and joy

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*It must be Christmas: John Lewis has launched its festive message into UK homes. The advert, released yesterday (above), is a whimsical journey through one woman's memories as she tries to find the perfect Christmas gift for her sister.*

**Is Christmas shopping a virtue? Some commentators think Christmas should be about faith and family. But others point out that gift-giving has long been its heart.**

## What's happening?

It is Christmas Eve. A woman takes a tumble through a clothes rack and enters her own private *Narnia*.

She skips back and forth through time, seeing the highs and lows of her life with her sister. When she returns to the shop, she is able to buy the perfect present.

This is the plot of *The Gifting Hour*, John Lewis's Christmas shopping advert.

For almost two decades, the department store's Christmas adverts have been the subject of a national conversation.

## Find out more

The commercialisation of Christmas is controversial. Every year, commentators bemoan that a once-religious festival has instead become focused on buying gluttonous heaps of food and expensive presents.

Yet others note that the Christmas we celebrate now has evolved hand in hand with **consumerism**. Historian Ruth McClelland-Nugent says: "The popularisation of Christmas in the United States begins with advertising."

It is a difficult time for shops though. John Lewis has lost money three years in a row. A bumper year of Christmas shopping could save the high street — and stop town centres becoming empty wastelands.

## Is Christmas shopping a virtue?

### Some say

Yes! Most people like giving and receiving gifts and all acts of giving stem from buying and selling. We should stop pretending otherwise.

### Others think

No! A virtuous act is one we choose to do. But society has forced us to shop at Christmas.

## Six steps to discovery

### 1. Connect

**How do you feel about this story?** - What do you want for Christmas this year? Do you enjoy buying presents for others?

### 2. Wonder

**What questions do you have?** - For example: When did the bearded, red-coated Santa Claus first appear? How many

## Some people say

*"If God gives us the gift of Christmas, it is because we all have the ability to understand and receive it."*

**Pope Francis (1936 – ), leader of the Roman Catholic Church**

**Empty heading**

*What do you think?*

people celebrate Christmas around the world?

**3. Investigate**

**What are the facts?** - This year the John Lewis group reported a loss of £30m. How do businesses function after making losses?

**4. Construct**

**What is your point of view?** - You have £100 to spend on Christmas presents for your family. What do you buy?

**5. Express**

**What do others believe?** - In small groups, discuss your favourite day of the year.

**6. Reflect**

**What might happen next?** - Write an account of your perfect Christmas.

**Glossary**

**Narnia** - The imaginary land of magic people and animals invented by author CS Lewis.

**Consumerism** - Society's obsession with acquiring consumer goods.