

# Santa's Magic Elves

Anita Miles has found a magical way to entertain her children as well as rekindle Christmas excitement year after year. Of course, she does have help from some 10-inch friends, elfin guests who usher in the season and stay until Christmas Day.

The idea is for children to write or dictate a letter to Santa, asking him to please dispatch their personal Elf from his North Pole home.

Anita says, "Some families write the letter in early December, but we start Thanksgiving Day; for us that's when Christmas really begins. Everyone is gathered together at home, and we're all getting in the holiday spirit. I really like the month-long build-up of anticipation."

The morning after the letters are sent, the Elves appear in the home, hiding under a bed, propped up in a plant, or peering down from a fan. Each child looks for his own Elf and makes a game of trying to spot him. And part of the fun in finding the friend is discovering hidden gifts.

"I collect little things I see all during the year and store them in a special box," Anita says. "When it comes time for the Elves to return, I've got lots of goodies ready." Sometimes an Elf delivers large gifts, like holiday clothes to wear before Christmas Day. Other



*In many households,  
these Elves restore  
mirth and magic to  
the season.*

times he brings a note or a verse, telling the child he's special and how much he's loved.

"We do lots of fun things with the Elves in the mornings," Anita says. "Once we crushed Oreos around the cookie jar to make-believe they made a midnight raid. My husband pretended to blame the Elves and had the kids write letters asking them to

behave. When the Elves reappeared they carried a note in response, promising to clean up their act."

Once the children find their friends, they play together all day; at night the Elves are returned to the kitchen with a sprinkle of Magic Dust. Come morning, they've found a new hiding place in the home.

The idea began in Atlanta with Anita's sister Piper. Last November, Anita hosted a party to introduce Trussville, Alabama, friends to their creations, and the concept took off, well, like magic.

She recalls, "One day last Christmas I had 60 messages from desperate moms saying they had to have Elves. I was driving all over town trying to fill the orders. But it's such a great tradition to start that I'll do whatever I can, even if it means delivering to the homes."

The jolliest Elf, Santa himself, would sure be proud. ✨

