

## The Christmas Challenge

By Corynn H.

Hi! My name is Nicole Evelyn Chapman. My friends call me Cole, or sometimes jokingly Cool but my younger twin brothers call me Coal, as in the lumpy black rock, because they say it is all I will get in my stocking for Christmas. Christmas is a pretty important time of the year for my family because we have our famous family tradition, "The Chapman Christmas Challenge".

You might not have ever heard of this Christmas Challenge before because it is only famous to the Chapman family. This is the story of our Christmas Challenge the year I was 8. My twin brothers were 6 and my little sister was 4. This particular year Great Grandpa Joey selected "Meaningful" as our theme. All I wanted that year was NOT to be on my siblings' team for our Christmas Challenge, especially not my little sister, Lucy. She was a whiney 4-year-old who always got her way! You see for three years before I had been put with one of my siblings for our Challenge, but I just knew that this one was going to be my year. I just knew I would get drawn to be with my cousin and best friend Emily or anyone besides one of my siblings. To my great disappointment I again got put on the same team with Lucy. I thought it was going to be the worst Christmas Challenge ever, however I was in for a great surprise.

This year Great Grandpa Joey picked the theme "Meaningful" and we all had to build something for the family that fit this description in the category that was drawn for us. Our team received the category "Christmas as Decoration." The day after teams were picked, I was discussing with my mother what we would want to build or make when Lucy came into the kitchen, talking, crying and whining about her favorite Christmas Dress that no longer fit. She was having a true Lucy Meltdown, like she always had. I was completely annoyed, however. I got an idea! What if we used Lucy's dress and a sentimental clothing or cloth piece from each of our family members to make a Christmas Family Christmas Quilt?!

This idea calmed down Lucy and Mom loved it! Lucy and I spent the next couple of weeks going to all our family's' houses and gathering interesting sentimental pieces and helping our mom make the quilt. Together we learned a lot of funny and interesting stories about our family and along the way laughed and learned to love each other.

That year we won the best use of theme and everyone loved our quilt! Maybe we had just gotten old enough that year to appreciate one another or possibly this quilt brought us closer. Either way, I will never forget all the fun we had and how our friendship and sister bond grew helping each other through that Christmas Challenge! That was the biggest win for the year in my book!