

Today is the 7th Day of Christmas, or more properly, the Christmas Season. The celebration of the Incarnation of our God is just too big to be contained in a single day, hence the Church celebrates for a whole 12 days, and has from early days.

The origins of the popular Christmas carol—The Twelve Days of Christmas—have been debated and hashed over many times.

Some speculation has it that each day's symbol is related to scripture or Christian meanings, e.g., A partridge is a symbol for Jesus, two turtledoves is for the testaments (Old and New), three French hens either for the trinity or Faith, Hope and Charity, four collie (not calling) birds for the Four Gospels, Five Golden Rings for the Five Books of the Torah, six Geese for the six days of Creation, 7 Swans for the gifts of the Spirit or the 7 sacraments, eight maids for the Beatitudes, nine ladies for the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit, 10 Lords for the 10 commandments, 11 Pipers for the 11 faithful disciples (minus Judas), and 12 drummers for the 12 points of doctrine in the Apostles' Creed.

Another possible point of origin could be in the rhyme, it is possible that “The Twelve Days of Christmas” has been confused with (or is a transformation of) a song called “A New Dial” (also known as “In Those Twelve Days”), which dated to at least 1625 and assigns religious meanings to each of the twelve days of Christmas (but not for the purposes of teaching a catechism). In a manner somewhat similar to the memory-and-forfeits performance of “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” the song “A New Dial” was recited in a question-and-answer format:

What are they that are but one?

We have one God alone. In heaven above sits on His throne.

What are they which are but two?

Two testaments, the old and new,

We do acknowledge to be true.

What are they which are but three?

Three persons in the Trinity which make one God in unity.

What are they which are but four?

Four sweet Evangelists there are, Christ's birth, life, death which do declare.

What are they which are but five? Five senses, like five kings, maintain

In every man a several reign.

What are they which are but six?

Six days to labor is not wrong.

For God himself did work so long.

What are they which are but seven?

Seven liberal arts hath God sent down with divine skill man's soul to crown.

What are they which are but eight?

Eight Beatitudes are there given. Use them right and go to heaven.

What are they which are but nine?

Nine Muses, like the heaven's nine spheres, with sacred tunes entice our ears.

What are they which are but ten?

Ten statutes God to Moses gave

Which, kept or broke, do spill or save.

What are they which are but eleven?

Eleven thousand virgins did partake and suffered death for Jesus' sake.

What are they which are but twelve? Twelve are attending on God's son;

Twelve make our creed. The Dial's done.