

# House Season 5 episode 11

## Joy to the World

Synopsis: This Christmas episode refers back to last Season's Christmas episode with its emphasis on gift-giving and the meaning(s) of Christmas.

The episode opens with a school Christmas show and a choir singing 'Joy to the World'. The next act, a teenage singing group, comprises a number of bullies who trick one of their number, Natalie, into singing something rude. Natalie vomits and collapses and thus becomes Dr House's patient.

Dr House, as last Christmas, is still hung up about gift giving. He flouts a present in front of his team and then bins it. They rescue it and discover that it is rare medical textbook from someone who was 'thinking of' House. They think House has an admirer, but it turns out that it was a gift from his best friend, Dr Wilson, who really cared about giving House a gift he would like. It turns out that House never opened it, perhaps because he wanted to continue to believe that present buying only shows how little you know a person. Wilson in fact gave House the perfect gift for him.

Dr Wilson then tries to impress on Dr House that he should be nice to his patients, especially as it's Christmas. House tries, but finds it extremely difficult. His interpretation of being nice is to pretend to a couple where the wife cheated on the husband, that the baby is the result of parthenogenesis (virgin birth). It's Christmas after all, and the wife at first tried to insist she was a virgin and the couple did not have sex, so why shouldn't there be a virgin birth? He explains the science, and that the baby will have to be a daughter and have all the mother's genes. Dr Cuddy says that the virgin birth story is incredible and it has never happened.....

Meanwhile, Natalie is dying. It turns out that her illness is caused by having secretly given birth to a baby several weeks before and, believing it dead, abandoned it. Dr Cuddy, who longs for a baby of her own, goes in search of the baby's body and discovers that the baby has been found and cared for by a homeless couple living in a poverty-stricken building. Although Dr Cuddy fears the baby may be seriously ill and perhaps brain damaged, she brings the baby to the hospital and makes an application to foster and adopt her herself. House looks at the baby and says 'Merry Christmas': the baby is Cuddy's special gift.

Two other storylines in this episode are also important. Dr 13 is on a drug trial for her fatal Huntington's disease. She is upset by some of her fellow patients who are more ill than her, which her colleague and leader of the trial, Dr Foreman calls 'the ghost of your Christmas future'. Dr 13 befriends and helps a fellow sufferer who is worried about the best use of her remaining time and is finally seen growing close to Dr Foreman, as love triumphs over death.

In another part of the story, one of Dr House's team, Dr Kutner, is upset about the bullies who hurt Natalie. His colleague Dr Taub assumes it was because Dr Kutner, as an adopted Indian boy whose parents were murdered, was bullied himself. However at the end of the story we see Dr Kutner go to

a house and say to the person who answers the door that he is sorry for being a bully at school and apologises for his behaviour. At Christmas, he tries to seek forgiveness and to put things right.

**Some excerpts to watch:**

Dr House explaining about parthenogenesis

Dr Cuddy finding the baby in the abandoned building

Dr Cuddy looking at the baby in the NICU

Dr 13 talking to Janice

Dr Kutner apologising for being a bully

**Some scripture passages to think about in relation to this episode:**

*parthenogenesis*

Isaiah 7.14

Matthew 1.18-end

*The childless woman rejoices*

I Samuel 2.1-10

*A child is born into poverty*

Luke 2.1-7

*Forgiveness*

Colossians 3.12-13

**Some questions for discussion:**

*How would you discuss Christian belief about the birth of Jesus with Dr Cuddy when she says a virgin birth has never happened?*

*How did you feel about the scene with the homeless people who took care of the abandoned baby?*

*Why do you think Dr House never opened his gift and why did he try to throw it away?*

*Why do you think Dr Kutner might have been a bully and why is he asking forgiveness from his victim?*

*What does this episode tell us about children as gifts from God?*