
CHRISTMAS
PLAYLIST

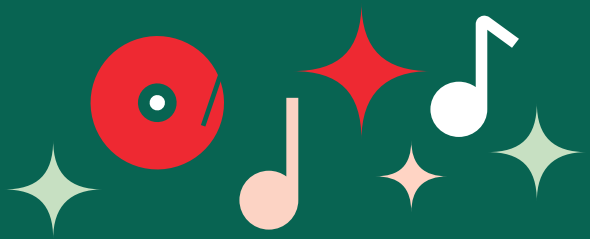




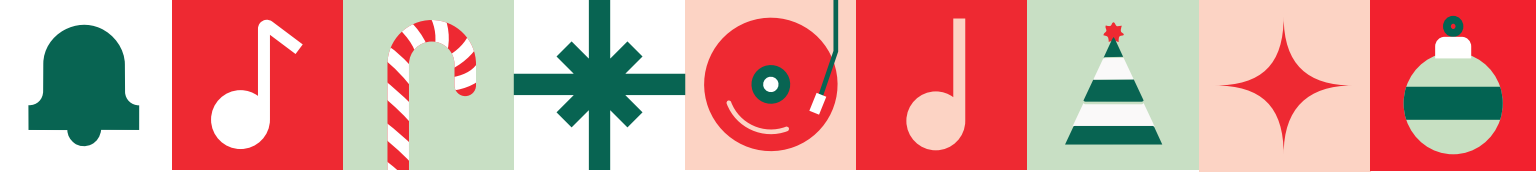
Merry Christmas

There is a fun song that seems to be on everyone's Christmas playlist year in and year out: "All I Want for Christmas." Have you ever given that any thought? What do you want for Christmas? What is the most important wish-list item for you and your family during this wonderful time of year? Is it the traditional recipes for fudge, sugar cookies, stuffing, or that glazed ham you rave about? Maybe it is those perfect gifts for the children. Or is it simply having friends and family over for a time of great joy? Those are all good.

But have you considered what Jesus might want for you and your family this Christmas? He wants you to seek Him, know Him and love Him. As followers of Jesus, Christmas is a special time of year. Our playlist will always include "Joy to the World", "Hark the Herald Angels Sing", and "It Came upon a Midnight Clear." This year, offer up a heartfelt playlist of worship to Jesus, by spreading His word and His love to all your family and friends, and most of all, thank Jesus for coming to earth to give us all a wonderful relationship with our Father in Heaven.



Week One



Where Are You Christmas?

Scripture

Read together as a household:

"In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs."

– Hebrews 1:1-4

Discuss

Ask these questions:

What makes Christmas special for you? Why? What is something you like about Christmas, that if it were gone, you would feel like Christmas just wasn't the same?

In the song, "Where Are You Christmas?" by Faith Hill, the song starts with the idea that

Christmas can't be found and has gone away. (For 10 bonus points, what movie is the song "Where Are You Christmas" in?)
Some of the lyrics are "Where Are You Christmas? Why can't I find you? Why have you gone away? Where is the laughter you used to bring me?"

The Grinch struggled with Christmas because it wasn't the same for him as it had been when he was a kid. He felt like the good part of Christmas was lost. What is the meaning of Christmas for you, and when did you start believing in that part of Christmas? (*If you guessed the movie, The Grinch, you now have 10 points.)

How did God speak to people before Jesus? (verse 1)
At what time did God speak to people through His Son? (verse 2)
What was the message through His Son? (Read John 3:16, Romans 3:23 & 6:23)
Why did God send Jesus to the earth?
What was God's motivation for Jesus coming to the earth? (Read John 3:16 & Romans 5:8)

If Christmas is truly about Jesus being born as our Savior, then He is the meaning of Christmas. The Grinch, you, and I need to understand and appreciate the true meaning of Christmas. If Jesus was God's final plan to speak to His people, why do you think so many people reject Him? The answer to "Where are you Christmas" has always been found in the Bible story we know as the nativity (birth) of Jesus Christ.

If God's motivation for Christmas, the birth of Jesus, was done in love, imagine this next part of the song relating to God's love and it never going away, instead of the Grinch's feelings.

"If there is love in your heart and your mind

You will feel like Christmas all the time, oh,

I feel you Christmas I know I've found you

You never fade away, oh,

The joy of Christmas

Stays here inside us

Fills each and every heart with love."

It should remind us of another passage in the Bible that talks about this love. Read Ephesians 3:17-19 together as a household.

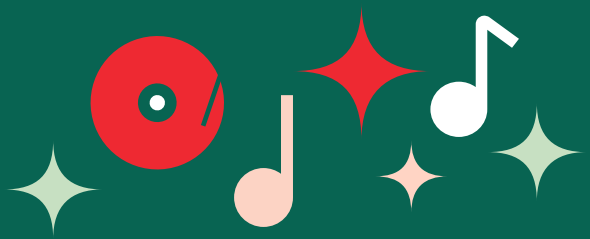
Prayer

Spend time thanking God for different aspects of Christmas that your family loves.

Pray that your family may all know the true meaning of Christmas and that it will never "go away."

Pray for someone in your life that does not know the true meaning of Christmas and does not have a relationship with Jesus. Pray that you might have the chance to tell them about Him this Christmas season.





Week Two



It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year

Scripture

Read together as a household:

"Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice of one calling: 'In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'" – Isaiah 40:1-5

Discuss

When I was just a kid "jingle belling" through the Christmas season, our family's favorite song was "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year." My mom loved Andy Williams, and we all came

to love that song and Andy's crooner voice. The phonograph would drop the album (remember, this was in the early '60s when music was played on vinyl,) and Andy would sing:

"It's the most wonderful time of the year
With the kids jingle belling
And everyone telling you be of good cheer
It's the most wonderful time of the year"

Of course, as kids, the good cheer comes from the promise that Santa Claus would soon be coming down the chimney with care. But as followers of Jesus, the "good cheer" and the "most wonderful time of the year" are all because of the promise of a Savior, Jesus Christ. The joy of Christmas, the good cheer, is so much more when Jesus is the reason for the season.

Isaiah the prophet knew how important Christmas, the birth of our Savior, would be to the whole world. He knew that Jesus would be coming soon, and that He would give the world a reason for good cheer. Isaiah 40:1 assured the Israelites of the comfort that awaited Jerusalem, and promised that her hard work would soon be completed, and that her sins would be paid for. Christ is the fulfillment of this incredible prophecy from Isaiah; our sins are forgiven, and we will "dwell in the house of the Lord forever." - Psalm 23:6

It all started with the birth of Jesus as foretold in Isaiah 7:14 – "Behold, a virgin shall bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." Did you know that Immanuel means "God with us?"

Isaiah 40:5 explains that the “glory of the Lord will be revealed” in Jesus, and “all people will see it together.” Jesus did come, just as Isaiah said He would; He did conquer sin and death; He is “God with us”; we can celebrate Christmas knowing we will “dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

Indeed, Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year. All who follow Jesus know what it means to be of “good cheer.” Jesus promised that He would go and “prepare a place” and will come back and “take us to be with Him.” John 14:2-3

This Christmas let’s be of good cheer because we know Jesus came to bring us comfort. He was born as a baby, grew up and did wonderful things, taught us incredible lessons, died on the cross, and because of that the sins of the world “have been paid for.” Then, in all God’s glory, Jesus rose from that grave to conquer sin and death once and for all.

Be of good cheer, it’s Christmas. Shout out loud and clear for all to hear, “joy to the world, the Lord has come.”

Prayer

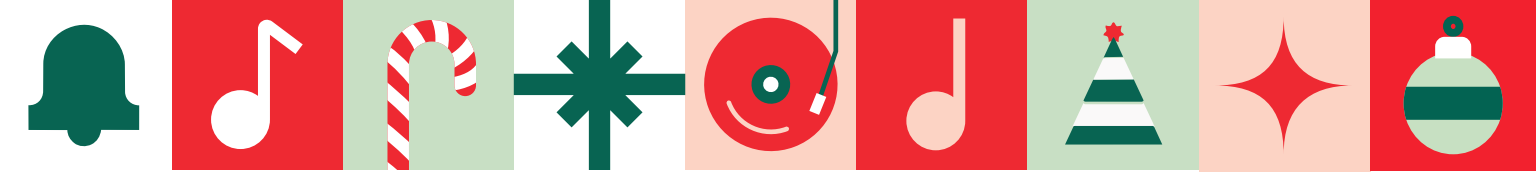
Ask God to speak tenderly to your heart today, replacing anxiety and weariness with the deep assurance of His forgiveness and peace.

Thank God for the assurance of Jesus and the joy we have in Him.





Week Three



I'll Be Home for Christmas

Scripture

Read together as a household:

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." - John 14:3-4

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." - John 14:1-4

"Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring

everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body." - Philippians 3:17-21

While it's always been a favorite of mine, the lyrics to the Christmas classic "I'll Be Home for Christmas" never hit deeply until the first time I wasn't home for Christmas. In the rush of Christmas Eve services, food preparation, gift-giving, and adjusting to becoming a new parent, all I longed for was the coziness of being back in the house where I grew up, surrounded by all my family. Sure, I had my own house now, and I was blessed with friends who so generously included us in their own family celebrations, but it still wasn't "home" home. Besides, to make things worse, there was still no snow on the ground! Even though the calendar said it was December 25th, it didn't really *feel* like Christmas.

In a different yet similar sense, the deeper we grow in our relationship with Jesus, the less "at home" we start to feel on earth. Every year that passes brings unforeseen challenges, hurts, and hardships that sometimes make it hard to recognize the people and places we once found comforting, no matter how hard we try to bring back the feelings of childhood happiness we once knew. In Philippians, Paul reminds us that those who are focused only on the things of this world are headed for destruction. He continues with this convicting reminder: *"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ."* (Philippians 3:20)

At Christmas, we celebrate Jesus leaving His heavenly home to dwell with us here in our broken world. He experienced what we experience as people – growing pains, hardships, loneliness, and the hurting people all around us. In the midst of life's difficulties, Jesus lived a perfect life

that was full of purpose. Though he walked and talked like us, He was not an ordinary person. He was Immanuel: God with us. As He established His earthly ministry, He taught incredible truths, performed amazing miracles, served the lonely and forgotten, and made His mission from God clear to everyone: He was here to save us. All of us!

In John 14, Jesus comforts His disciples with the truth that His plan to save everyone includes a home in heaven where we will one day live with Him forever. Jesus says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going."

At the time, His disciple Thomas was confused and concerned by what Jesus meant. How could Thomas possibly know the way to where Jesus was going? Jesus then declared the truth that changes everything: *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* Jesus was preparing His disciples for the events that would happen soon. When the time came, Jesus was killed like a criminal even though He was innocent. His family and friends were devastated, but it was all part of God's plan. And Jesus always keeps His promises. After He died, God raised Him from the dead, proving that He alone is strong enough to save us from all the sin, hurt, and evil of this world!

When Jesus came back to life and saw His family and friends again, it was not quite time for them to join Him in the rooms He was preparing for them in heaven. In fact, there were still some very difficult days ahead of them. Many years have passed since that time, and the days still feel long and tiring for us as we face the reality of the world while we wait for Jesus' promise in

John 14 to come true. We may feel overwhelmed and hopeless at times, but remember: Jesus always keeps His promises. One day, when the time is right, He will come back for all of His followers and take us to our "home" home where we will be with Him forever. This is the eternal hope we hold onto this Christmas.

If you find yourself reading Jesus' words in John 14 for the first time this season, or if you've never believed that He is the way, the truth, and the life, today is the day to come to Jesus. In Him, you will find the home that you've always longed for and the peace that nothing in this world can give. This Christmas, it's time to come home.

Discuss

Ask these questions:

What is the best part about gathering with family and friends to celebrate Christmas?

How can the hope of eternity give us comfort even if Christmas feels lonely or difficult this year?

Who is one person in your life that needs to hear the hope of Jesus this Christmas?

Prayer

Choose one person to pray over your household. Take time to thank God for sending Jesus and for the eternity we have to look forward to in Him.

Take turns praying for anyone you know who needs the hope of Jesus.



Week Four

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Scripture

Read together as a household:

"So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told." - Luke 2:16-20

Discuss

The Christmas season is full of excitement. We get excited about Christmas morning, presents, music, decorations, and being with family. But in Luke 2:16–20, we see a different kind of excitement—the excitement of people who have just witnessed God keeping His promise.

In these verses, the shepherds hurry to Bethlehem and find Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus lying in the manger. After seeing Jesus, they begin telling others about everything they had seen. The people who heard the shepherds were amazed, and then the shepherds

returned, “glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen.”

After the shepherds heard the good news from the angels, they went to see Jesus, and they couldn’t keep the good news to themselves! They shared it with others and praised God for what He had done.

That is what makes “Hark the Herald Angels Sing” such a meaningful Christmas song. The song is a celebration of the announcement that Jesus has come. The angels were declaring the good news, and the shepherds responded with excitement, sharing, glorifying, and praising God.

And that gives us a challenge this Christmas: How are we responding to the good news of Jesus?

It can be easy for Christmas to become something we do every year without really thinking about what we are celebrating. But Luke 2 reminds us that this isn’t just another story. God made a promise, and He kept it – Jesus came into the world.

The shepherds didn’t walk away from Jesus and go back to life as usual. They were changed by what they had heard and seen. They responded by glorifying God and praising Him.

We can have that same response. We can be excited about Jesus, we can share the good news with others, and we can glorify God through our words, our actions, and the way we live.

So as we sing “Hark the Herald Angels Sing,” let’s remember what we’re celebrating. Let’s remember the shepherds who heard the good news, hurried to see Jesus, shared what they had seen, and returned glorifying and praising God.

God kept His promise: Jesus came. And that is the greatest reason to celebrate this Christmas.

Ask these questions:

Have someone ask, "Why is God's promise of Jesus so exciting?" Let everyone answer.

How are you called to share the Good News of Jesus this Christmas?

Prayer

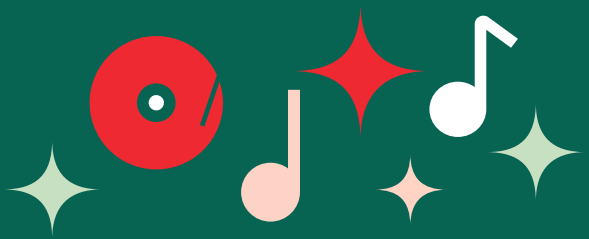
Choose one person to lead your family in this guided prayer:

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the greatest gift of all—Your Son, Jesus. Thank You for keeping Your promise and sending our Savior into the world.
Just like the shepherds, help us to be excited about the good news of Jesus. Help us not to keep the good news to ourselves, but to share it with others through our words and the way we live.
As we celebrate Christmas and sing "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," help us remember that Jesus is the reason we celebrate. May our hearts be filled with the same joy and wonder the shepherds experienced when they saw Jesus.
And just as the shepherds returned glorifying and praising You, may our lives bring glory and praise to You—not just at Christmas, but every day.
Thank You for Your promise. Thank You for Jesus. And thank You for the hope, joy, and salvation we have because of Him.

In Jesus' name, amen.





Week Five

Silent Night

Scripture

Read together as a household:

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this." - Isaiah 9:6-7

"And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.' Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.' When the angels had left them and gone

into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.'" - Luke 2:8-15

Discuss

Take a moment to put yourself in the shoes of a lowly shepherd 2000 years ago. Consider the fact that you are awaiting the promises of God to liberate His creation by sending the Messiah. You've heard Isaiah's prophecy told throughout your life, and you're tired of waiting. Still, you reflect back on that promise, and all you can do is wait... Until one day, an angel of the Lord appears to you and says, "The Savior has come as a humble baby, wrapped in cloths, lying in a manger." A manger, as in the feeding trough used for farm animals! How crazy is that?! That's probably the last way anyone expected the Messiah to arrive.

The reality is, this humble baby that was lying in a manger would eventually grow up. He would live a perfect life, unlike us. He would teach about the kingdom of heaven, extending an invitation to all who would believe and put their faith in Him. This baby would eventually grow up to become the victor over sin and death, giving His followers the opportunity to receive peace with God. See, Jesus didn't come to fight a political battle or to resolve an earthly conflict, but rather He came to do so much more! Jesus came to save us from our sin so that we could spend eternity with Him — the Creator and Sustainer of all life.

In 1816, a priest named Joseph Mohr wrote the timeless Christmas carol, "Silent Night." In verse 2, we sing the words "Silent night, holy night. Shepherds quake at the sight. Glories stream from heaven afar. Heavenly hosts sing alleluia. Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born."

This song declares one of the most important truths in all of history: When Jesus was born, God's promise to send a Savior was fulfilled. Jesus was ALWAYS God's plan for salvation. Let's rejoice in that truth together!

Ask these questions:

The prophecy in Isaiah 9 was written around 700 years before Jesus' birth. What does this tell us about God's timing and faithfulness?

How does knowing that God always keeps His promises affect the way you trust Him?

What's something you're waiting on right now that you can surrender to the Lord and His timing?

Prayer

Take a moment to surrender to God the things you're not wholeheartedly entrusting to His timing.

Pray a prayer of gratitude for God keeping His promise by sending Jesus to save us.





Week Six



Joy to the World

Scripture

Read together as a household:

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, 'This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.') Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known." - John 1:14-18

"Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The Lord has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations. He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music;" - Psalms 98:1-4

Discuss

As Christmas finally arrives, we feel the height of our holiday joy. All the moments we've been eagerly waiting for line up before us. Sharing delicious food with those near and far. Tearing into presents with shiny wrapping you've been waiting to give or get. The twinkle of the tree seems extra bright and the atmosphere especially cozy. But here together, we take a quiet moment. Joy to the World indeed! English minister and hymn writer Isaac Watts wrote this song in response to Psalm 98. Reading the whole of Psalm 98, you can almost audibly hear the happiness in the Psalmist's tone. We rejoice in the King that has come. He is the answer to all our prayers and hopes. He is here to rule both now and forevermore. A lesser known verse sticks out in this song: "Let no more sin and sorrow grow, or thorns infest the ground. He comes to make his blessings flow, far as the curse is found." Christ gives us access to a type of joy that is more hearty than that brought by the small glimmers of joy we find this season. This joy says - we're free, chosen, and forever loved - praise God! We don't have to stay in our sorrow or our old ways. He has forgiven and redeemed his people, "far as, far as the curse is found." This week you will maybe find yourself confronted with your sin or your sorrow. Maybe a family member says something around the table that is hurtful, or maybe your brother or sister gets the present that you really wanted. The kids will complain, some delicious treat might get burnt, or grief will hit you sideways as you go through the Christmas motions. This season you may have taken the time to let ev'ry heart prepare him room, or you may need to be reminded of his grace anew. In these moments, take the time to choose to remember him. "The Lord has made his salvation known...he has remembered his love and his faithfulness...all the ends of the earth (that's us!) have seen the salvation of our God." Psalms 98:2-3. Does his glory, his sacrifice, and

His love compel you to joy? You may not always feel like bursting into song, but thanks be to God that Jesus has freely gifted you an eternal joy.

Ask these questions:

When is it the most difficult for you to choose joy?

How can you show joy and love to someone this week?

What can we do as a family to spend time with God going into the New Year?

Prayer

-Pray as a family for strength to reflect Christ's love to others this week.

-Pray for those who may be hurting or lost this Christmas, that they would know God's joy.



Resources + Rhythms

Here are a few ways to help your home feel more connected, cozy, and welcoming this season.

Christmas Kindness Mission

Set a 20-minute timer and see how many acts of kindness your family can do:

- Leave a kind note for someone.
- Take a treat to a neighbor.
- Pick up trash in the neighborhood.
- Text someone you're thankful for.
- Put a few dollars in a giving envelope.
- Pray for someone together.

Drive & Look at Christmas Lights

Pile in the car with Christmas music and cocoa. Everyone gets to pick one house or display as their favorite.

Secret Christmas Encouragement

Everyone secretly draws another family member's name. Spend 10-15 minutes making them a card or writing 3 things you appreciate about them. Reveal them at the end.

"Jesus, Thank You For..."

Sit around the Christmas tree. Go around the circle and each person says:

- One thing they're thankful for.
- One person they're thankful for.
- One thing they're asking God for this Christmas.
- Finish by praying together.

"Bless Someone for $5"

Give each person $5 (or whatever amount works) and 20 minutes to decide how to use it to bless someone else. You can do this at home by preparing something or take a quick trip to purchase something.

Family Christmas Service Sprint

Choose ONE quick project:

- Make snack bags for people who may need them.
- Put together care packages.
- Gather canned goods.
- Write Christmas cards for nursing-home residents.
- Make thank-you cards for firefighters, police, teachers, etc.

Christmas Baking Challenge

Give everyone the same basic ingredients and 15 minutes to decorate cookies. Then have a ridiculous family judging ceremony. Categories could be:

- Most Christmas-y
- Funniest
- Most Creative
- Most Likely to Be on Pinterest

Christmas Story Challenge

Read Luke 2:1–20 together but give everyone a character to act out. You can have: Mary, Joseph, Angel, Shepherds, Sheep, Innkeeper, Narrator

Keep it silly but let the ending turn serious: "What do you think God wanted people to know when Jesus was born?"

Family Christmas Bucket of Questions

Put questions in a bowl and take turns drawing. Examples:

- What's your favorite Christmas memory?
- What's your favorite Christmas food?
- If you could give anyone in the world a gift, what would it be?
- What's something you're thankful for this year?
- What makes Christmas special to you?
- What's one thing you'd like our family to do together next year?

Christmas Family Photo Challenge Take 10–15 ridiculous Christmas pictures:

Everyone wearing something red, Best Christmas face, Christmas tree pose, Recreate a nativity
Worst Christmas sweater, Everyone pretending to be an ornament

Then pick your favorite.



CALENDAR
of events

Dec 2nd	Student Ministry Christmas Caroling (5:00-8:00PM)
Dec 13th	A Christmas Playlist - Christmas in Heaven (8:00 | 9:30 | 11AM)
Dec 16th	Student Ministry Christmas Parties (6:30-8:00PM)
Dec 20th	A Christmas Playlist - All I really want (8:00 | 9:30 | 11AM)
Dec 20th	No Youth Service
Dec 21st	Blue Christmas (7:00PM)
Dec 24th	A Christmas Playlist - Light of the World (1:30 | 3:00 | 4:30 | 6:00PM)
Dec 25th	Christmas Day
Dec 27th	No Youth Service





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