



Finding Baby Jesus

Gather as a family and read the Christmas story in Luke 2. Go through your nativity set and talk about each piece as described in the Bible, ending with Baby Jesus. Let your family know that you want to remember to “find” the true meaning of Christmas during this season, so every day Baby Jesus will be hidden somewhere around the house. Each day, the children can search and find Christ to put him in the manger. This reminds us to seek to find Him throughout the season.



Christmas Card Prayers

The Christmas season is filled with wonderful wishes from family and friends. Each time you receive a special Christmas card or annual Christmas letter, take a couple of minutes to talk about the blessing that God has given you in those friends or family. Then, thank the Lord for those individuals and pray for them. Instead of throwing these beautiful pictures and thoughtful cards in the trash, put them in a special box or basket. Place the box/basket near your table. Throughout the year, pick a card as your family prays before a meal, and spend some time praying for the family that sent the card.



Jesus is the Christmas Light

Get a strand of lights. Turn out the lights to show the darkness and then plug in the lights to show its glow. In John 8:12, Jesus says, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” Read this passage together and briefly discuss ways in which we can follow Christ. Then have everyone get in their pajamas, load up on hot cocoa/apple cider and drive around to look at Christmas lights. Play some traditional Christmas music as you drive and sing Christmas carols together. Notice how beautiful and brightly lit the homes with lights are. Point out the homes that don’t have any lights at all and how dark it is. Have everyone vote on which house with lights was his or her favorite; then pray for the family that lives in that home and pray that those who see that house will remember that Jesus is the light of the world. Before you head home, thank God for sending His Son to shine His light for us.



Tree Decorating Tradition

Turn on Christmas worship music. Decorate the Christmas tree. Take turns putting on the star or topper. Sit and read *The Legend of the Christmas Tree*. Children ages 4 to 8 will discover the wonderful story of how the evergreen tree first became a symbol of Christmas and a way to tell people about God.



Celebrating with the Saints

Try these family night activities to help children learn about the lives of these saints and their love for Jesus.

- St. Nicholas Day, December 6th: Read *The Legend of Saint Nicolas* by Dandi Daley Makall. Have your children leave a pair of shoes outside their bedroom door and fill with chocolate gold coins.
- Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8th: read *Mary, Mother of Jesus* by Tomie dePaola and serve “white” food at dinner to symbolize Mary’s purity.
- Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, December 12th: Read *The Lady of Guadalupe* by Tomie dePaola and celebrate with a Mexican dinner.
- St. Lucia of Sweden, Patron Saint of Light, December 13th: Commemorates the longest night of the year. Traditionally the eldest daughter serves a breakfast of coffee and ginger biscuits or cinnamon buns to the family.
- Feast of the Holy Family, December 27th: Plan a delicious family meal and fun activity such as a new board game or family movie. Prominently display a picture of the Holy Family (a Christmas card will do) as a reminder of who our families are called to model.

A Christmas Carol - Movie Night

Everyone loves *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. Rent your favorite version of the film for a family movie night discussion with your older children. After watching the film together, discuss key scenes and themes from a Christian perspective. Take turns asking one another the following questions...

- Question: Was Scrooge made in the image of God?
Answer: Yes, but he certainly didn't live like it!
- Question: In what ways did Scrooge show he had a sinful heart?
Answer: He was selfish, stingy, mean, etc. - all of which show the dark side of people.
- Question: After he realized he was wrong, what did Scrooge do?
Answer: He turned away from the wrong toward the right. He repented – and showed it by changing his ways!

Go further by downloading a free discussion guide at movienightchat.com



Legend of the Candy Cane

Share the Christmas message with others. Purchase some candy canes and attach a tag to each with the following text...



A Gift for You...

I hope you enjoy this candy cane. As you take it in your hand turn it upside down and you will see the “J” that reminds us of Jesus who was born on Christmas day. Turn it back upright and you will see the crook of the Good Shepherd. The stripes are a reminder that He was beaten for us and the red color reminds us that He shed His blood for us on Calvary. The white tells us how He can wash our sins white as snow. As you taste this candy cane be reminded that fellowship with Christ is ever so sweet.

I am glad you accepted this candy cane gift from me but even more I hope that you have accepted God’s gift of eternal life found only through His son Jesus.

Read the legend on the tag together or get a copy of the book, *The Legend of the Candy Cane*. Then spend time together tying the tags on individual candy canes using ribbon or string. You can put them in a basket and give one to those that visit your home during the holidays, or take them to neighbors with an invite to attend Christmas Eve service with you at church. You can also use them to bless others at places like the nursing home.

Other “Faith@Home” Christmas Ideas...

- Bake some Christmas cookies, decorate and take to a neighbor or friend with an invite card to the Christmas Eve service at church.
- Have everyone in the family give a gift of time/service to someone else by wrapping it as a gift to give away. This could be a date night for your spouse or helping your child work on a project they have wanted to do together.
- Go shopping in a different kind of catalog this year. Check out programs like Samaritan’s purse (samaritanaspurse.com) for “gifts” your family can request to change someone else’s life.
- Make your own garland using strips of paper. Write or draw the things that you are thankful for on each strip. Staple or tape the strip of paper together to create your garland. Use it to decorate your tree or put over a door as a reminder of God’s many blessings.
- Adopt a struggling family for the Christmas holidays. Try to choose children that are similar ages to your kids. Shop together to find the gift. Pray specifically for their family. Ask about needy families to adopt at the church or through the Saint Vincent DePaul Society.