

Ten ways to keep Christ in Christmas

At Thanksgiving we thank God for many blessings and gifts. At Christmas, we try to imitate God's generosity by giving gifts ourselves. Adults find much pleasure in giving Christmas gifts to young children. Their awards are not in receiving equally expensive gifts in return, but in the joyful smiles on the faces of children! However, keeping the emphasis on the birth of Jesus during the remaining days before Christmas is equally as difficult for both adults and children, especially as the secular and commercial side of Christmas actually begins even before Thanksgiving Day. Many people are already frantically shopping for those last minute gifts, the stores and schools are decorated to the fullest and sign of Christmas are everywhere!

Here are Ten Ways to help keep Christ in Christmas. The activities cost very little and the rewards are priceless! With a thin red or black marker, list the first five activities on a large white poster board. Tape it to a wall in the home. When the family has completed the activities, turn the poster over and list the remaining five activities. When completed, everybody will take pleasure and pride in keeping Christ in Christmas!

1. Gather around the nativity set.

Read the story of the Birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-20). Discuss the people and animals that were in the story and the environment in which Jesus was born.

2. Put some molding clay on a table.

Ask the children to mold some of the animals that may have been present at Jesus' birth, such as donkeys and sheep. Display for family and friends to enjoy.

3. Make some Christmas wrapping paper.

Cut out thin pieces of sponges in Christmas symbols, such as stars, ever green trees and bells. Dip the sponges in paint, and press them on white wrapping paper.

4. Go to a grocery store.

Ask the children to pick out some can goods to buy for needy children. Drop the bag of food off at the Catholic Social Services or St. Vincent DePaul Society.

5. Create some Greeting cards.

Fold small pieces of red, green or gold construction paper in half. Use store bought small Christmas stickers to decorate the front of the cards. With a thin black marker print name and message inside.

6. Go Christmas caroling with neighbors.

Visit churches who are presenting special Christmas musicals.

7. Make a Sweet Tree.

Place red gumdrops or small white marshmallows on toothpicks. Stick them in a green Styrofoam cone. Give it to an elderly neighbor who lives alone.

8. Visit a library.

Look up information on Christmas customs in various countries, such as Ireland and Poland. Try a craft or recipe at home.

9. Make Holiday sandwiches for lunch.

Cut bread in Christmas symbols. Put your favorite sandwich spread on the bread. Serve on a tray, placing lettuce under the sandwiches.

10. On Christmas Eve, make a "Happy Birthday Jesus" cake.

Use your favorite sheet cake mix. Invite the children to cover

the cake in white icing and use a small black tub of icing to printed the words, "Happy Birthday Jesus." Serve the cake after Christmas dinner!

HAVE A PEACEFUL & JOYFUL CHRISTMAS DAY!