

advent

Drive around to see Christmas lights.

Make Christmas Cookies and bring them to neighbors you haven't met yet.

Plan a holiday dinner and invite international guests or people who don't have family close by.

Pick someone you wouldn't normally give a gift to and make them something homemade or write them a note about how you appreciate them.

Tell stories of childhood Christmas around the fire.

Spend 10 minutes in silence thinking and praying for those who are lonely and hurting. Try praying visually by picturing different situations and God being present.

Donate to a charity that has significance to you or your family.

Listen to a religious Christmas song and meditate on what meaning it has for you.

For unto us a child is born ... and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Christmas is a time for many things ... time to celebrate the birth of a tiny baby who would give his life to complete our lives. Time to appreciate family and friends, and the many blessings of life.

Christmas is also an opportunity to take time to think of others, remember we are dependent on the love and support of the people in our lives, and we're often meant to be that love and support to people God's waiting for us to meet.

Below are ideas for each day between Nov. 28 and Dec. 25 to help celebrate the spirit of Christmas. They aren't necessarily meant to be consecutive, so feel free to cut them out and put them in a jar or use make your own advent calendar display. We hope that each day will be a surprising encounter with the living God.

Make a full traditional breakfast while listening to Christmas music.

Make hot chocolate and roast Marshmallows in the fire or the stove.

Light a candle. Talk or think about how Christ is illuminated in your life this season.

Make 7-Minute Fudge

2 c sugar
3 tbsp butter or margarine
1/2 tsp salt
1 c evaporated milk
1/2 c mini marshmallows
1 1/2 c chocolate chips
1 tsp vanilla
2/3 c nuts (optional)
Mix sugar, butter, salt, and milk in a pan. Heat over medium heat, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Continue stirring and allow to boil for 7 minutes. Turn the burner off and add marshmallows, chocolate chips, and vanilla and stir until they dissolve. Place in buttered 8-inch pan. Cool. Cut.

Sign up to serve at a soup kitchen/homeless shelter.



Write a letter to your sponsor child, a missionary, someone in the military, or someone who just needs some encouragement.

Do something special for someone else and don't tell anyone.

Volunteer to wrap Christmas presents for free (at a mall or store—sometimes churches do this, too).

Set up a Christmas tree, lights and nativity in your home.

Add canned goods to your shopping list and donate them to a local feeding program.

Use recycled Christmas cards to make thank you notes, new Christmas cards, ornaments, decorations, etc.

Pay it forward—bless someone by buying them lunch or coffee.

Learn about another country or place of need and how their culture celebrates Christmas. Pray for them and see if there is another way you can help.

Talk about your favorite memories from this past year. Record them on your computer or in your notebook or video tape it.

Make your own wrapping paper by stamping butcher paper, painting tissue paper, or whatever you can come up with.

Write your state representative or congressman about an issue relating to hunger/poverty.

Come up with one thing you want to accomplish next year – something that's always intimidated you, something close to your heart or something you want to work at being better at. Share your idea with family or a close friend. Make sure to ask others about their wish throughout the year! Put your family's goals in a spare stocking and pack away with the Christmas decorations so you can rediscover them next year.

Eat snowman pancakes for dinner.

Gifts for Jesus—hang a stocking for Jesus and have each person in the family wrap something to contribute. Ideas: Purchase an animal through Heiffer, Sponsor a child through World Vision or donate to another Charity in Jesus' honor; Have children make a gift that can be given to someone else.

Read the Christmas story, Luke 2:1-20.

