

Fun!

How many gifts would you receive if you received ALL of the gifts in the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas?" Hint: The WHOLE song! (364)

Fun!

Whose patron saint is St. Nicholas?

- a. children and scholars*
- b. merchants and sailors*
- c. women without dowries*
- d. all of the above (answer: d. all of the above!)*

Fun!

If you could be any character in a play about the Nativity, who would you be and why?

Fun!

*What is your favorite Christmas smell?
...favorite Christmas sound?*

Fun!

Who was president of the United States when the tradition of lighting the White House Christmas Tree was started? (Calvin Coolidge)

Fun!

See if you can name these famous toys::

- a. 1931, unemployed architect creates a word game originally called the Criss Cross Game*
 - b. 1932, 6 of these plastic building bricks can be put together in 102, 981,500 different ways!*
 - c. 1949, created in a search for a synthetic substitute for rubber*
 - d. 1951, 2 art students discover that vinyl sticks to semi-gloss paint*
 - e. 1974, 4 engineers create a dustless chalkboard that becomes a famous toy*
- (a. Scrabble, b. Legos, c. Silly Putty, d. Colorforms, e. Magna Doodle)*

When Martin Luther began to decorate a tree inside his home at Christmas, he used candles to represent Christ, the light of the world. Find an ornament on your tree or something in your home that symbolizes Christ or an important family value and explain what it means to you.

What is your favorite Christmas carol and why?

How must life have been difficult for Mary after she heard from Gabriel? What about for Joseph after his messenger came?

If you were suddenly unable to speak like Zacharias, how would you let people know what you wanted? How would you tell people how you feel or that you love them?

There are many examples in the Bible where God makes people wait! Why do you think He does this? What is good about waiting? (Have you thought about it in that way before?)

In "The Gift of the Magi," the main characters each sacrifice something important so that they can give to the one they love. Is it harder to give away your money, your stuff, or your time? Why and what would make it easier?

Finish this simple prayer: "Lord, bless our family with..."

*Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy kingly crown
When Thou camest to earth for me;
But in Bethlehem's home was there found no room
For Thy holy nativity.*

O come to my heart, Lord Jesus—

There is room in my heart for Thee. -Emily Elliot

What is in your heart that could move out to make a little more room for Jesus? (anger? sadness? envy? laziness?) Don't dwell, but encourage one another in your responses!

Think of a "homemade coupon" (you know, "one free hug!" or "do your chore for one week!" type of thing) that you could give to the person on your right. (What do they need or want most? What service would be of most use to him or her?) After everyone has thought of an idea, go around the group and share!

Mary and Joseph made a difficult trip to Bethlehem and were also on a spiritual journey of faith. Being a Christian is like being on a lifelong journey! Is there anything you'd like to do that would be a next step in your journey of faith?

What does your family do to prepare for special guests? If you knew that Jesus was one of your guests would you do anything differently? Would you do more or less? How could we prepare for unexpected guests?

Jesus is known as the Prince of Peace. What does peace mean to you? Can you share a time when you experienced peace? How can we bring peace to others, especially our family?

In Isaiah 42, God says, "I am the Lord; that is My name! I will not give my glory to another or my praises to idols. (Explain idols to younger children if necessary.) What are some ways that we can give glory or praise to other things at Christmas? How can we change that?"

During Advent, we saw how many prophecies about Jesus were fulfilled. On a less serious note, what kinds of "predictions" do parents give to their children? (Example: If you cross your eyes, they'll stick that way! Don't eat the watermelon seeds—you'll grow a watermelon in your tummy!) Kids, did you believe your parents? Have they predicted anything that you weren't sure would happen but did?

Fun!

*What should you go tell on a mountain according to the song?
That Jesus Christ is born!*

Fun!

The poem, " 'Twas the Night Before Christmas" by Clement Moore was originally known as:

- a. "Sleigh Bells in the Distance"*
- b. "Visions of Sugar Plums"*
- c. "A Visit From St. Nicholas"*
- d. "Footsteps on My Roof-top" (answer: c.)*

Fun!

Boxing Day, December 26th, is the holy day of which saint? (St. Stephen)

Fun!

In Tchaikovsky's ballet, "The Nutcracker," who is the Nutcracker's enemy? (The Rat or Mouse King)

Fun!

If you could make up a new Advent or Christmas tradition for your family to start, what would it be? (This can be fun or serious...maybe brainstorm together!)

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What is your favorite Christmas activity? Decorating a tree or the house...drinking hot chocolate...shoveling snow or building snowmen...singing carols?

As we read about the birth of Jesus, we see 3 examples of how people might respond to what God wants to do in their lives. (All 3 heard from angels!) Zacharias couldn't believe it...Joseph didn't recognize the miracle but God's angel showed him...and Mary accepted God's will right away. Who are you most like and why? How are the circumstances of these 3 people alike and different?

If you lived in the time of Jesus' birth and heard about him, what gift would you bring to the manger? Why?

After Jesus is born, Herod got very angry when the wise men didn't return and he wanted to get rid of Jesus for good! An angel warned Mary and Joseph and told them to escape to Egypt. If your family had to leave for a new home in ONE hour, what 3 things would you take with you?

All together, describe what it's like to have to wait for something you really want. Then, share some words that describe how you feel when that moment or thing finally arrives.

In "A Charlie Brown Christmas," Linus, as always, can be seen with his blue security blanket. But do you notice that when he recites "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy" from Luke 2:10, he lets it go? What is your "security blanket"? Share about a time when it was hard to trust God to feel safe or strong.

Which are you best at, the gift of compassion, the gift of courage, the gift of service, the gift of creativity, or the gift of cheer? Why do you think so? Is there another "gift" that describes your abilities better?

What is the most favorite gift you've ever GIVEN? And why? How about the best one you've received?

Fun!

If you could have any meal for Christmas every year, what would it be? The same that you usually have or something new/different?

Fun!

What is your favorite Christmas story? Did you read a new favorite this year?

Fun!

Take turns humming a Christmas carol and see if everyone else can guess which one it is!

Fun!

Jesus has many names, some we've learned this Advent. One is "Emmanuel", which means "God with us." Do you know what your name means? If you don't, or if the meaning of your name isn't very exciting or descriptive, make up a meaning that fits you better! Have everyone help as you think of how you describe yourself.

How do you feel when someone breaks a promise? Do you make promises easily? Why, and do you think you should make promises less or more often?

