

How You Can Point Your Family to Jesus as You Celebrate Christmas

Oh, the familiar swirl of the season ...

Tiny bodies, mouths open and eyes wide, marveling at myriad dazzling lights. Preschoolers to teens explaining their every “need” on an ever-increasing wish list. Moms and dads scrambling for the best prices on this year’s must-have items. Parties. Recitals. Church programs and special events.

A towering evergreen, begging to be dressed in glittering apparel. Trips to visit beloved grandparents and extended family. Holiday tunes blaring from every radio and television. Apple-cinnamon scented candles. Chocolate-oatmeal cookies and a dizzying array of pies fresh from the oven.

But somewhere in the rush of activity, there’s an undercurrent of *knowing* and of realizing there’s more to these days—that there is meaning, value and purpose to this season. As parents, we inhale deeply because we know if we’re not careful, we’ll let it slip away. Moments of depth and meaning could dissipate like swirling, twirling snow flurries that never linger long enough to cover the frozen ground.

Emmanuel—God with us. We read, write and sing about it. We teach our children that God sent His only Son—as a baby—to grow; live a perfect, holy life and bear the weight of our sins on the cross.

The beginning of God’s plan of redemption for a broken world includes the shadow of a cross over a hay-filled manger, and the startling vision makes our hearts clench in shame and anguish.

So, why do we *rejoice* at Christmas? Why do we call Jesus a hope-filled gift from God the Father?

Three days after His death, Jesus rose again, defeating the sin and brokenness that held us captive. *God with us* means that the one who created us not only rescued us from sin and death, but He desires *relationship* with us. Through Jesus, we can walk with God in our moments, seeking His heart and wisdom in every circumstance and every storm. We can find strength for each day's journey and take joy in knowing we are never alone.

This is cause for true wonder and joy, and this is the *heart* of the Christmas message to live and breathe with our families.

Oh, the beautiful, magnificent gospel of Jesus Christ! "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16, NIV).

This holy season, we can be intentional about pointing our children to Jesus. We can set aside family time to pore over Scripture, detailing the story of Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection. We can encourage older children to dig deeper and to discover Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah.

And we can encourage our children to reach beyond themselves and be givers—to share the wonder and joy by making cards, baking cookies or caroling for a neighbor or shut-in. We can lead by example and engrave priceless memories on our children's lives.

Christmas is a celebration of the birth of Christ. But this birthday of miracles is part of an intricate tapestry, a master plan—originating in the very heart of our Creator God.

Come! Let us adore Him! {eoa}

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