

Introduction

(Show the children the gift-wrapped present.) I'm sure you like to get presents, don't you? Do you like it just at Christmastime or throughout the year? Gifts make us feel happy and loved. People who give us presents care about us. They take time in choosing a gift they hope we'll like. They wrap the presents so we'll be surprised. Seeing a present and discovering that it has our name on it is exciting!

Getting to the Heart

Can you imagine looking under the Christmas tree and finding presents with no name tags on them? If that happened, you might have to choose a gift and hope you like it. But it wouldn't be much fun if you opened the gift and found a set of jumper cables meant for your uncle or a toaster that Grandmother was supposed to open. What if your mom opened a present and found something you'd asked for on *your* Christmas list? That's just not right! It's important to know who gets which gift!

Look at the name tag on this present. *(Reading card:)* "To: The World; From: Jesus!" It's to everyone in the world! Are you part of the world? Of course, you are, and so am I. This gift is for you and me! It's for all of us, from Jesus. Let's open it and see what Jesus gave us. *(Encourage a child to unwrap and open the box. Choose other children to take out the letters and read them.)* It's joy! Jesus gave joy to the world! Joy for you and me!

How does Jesus make us happy? How does Jesus bring us joy? Look at the letters that spell *JOY*. Do you see lots of other words, too? Those words tell about the joy Jesus gives to the world. *(Read the words, and briefly explain how each brings us joy. For instance,)*

- *Forgiveness: Jesus died on the cross for us and rose on Easter so that we can know Jesus loves us and forgives all our sins—those things we do or think that God doesn't want us to do. And he wants to help us in all we do, say, and think. Does that fill us with joy? Yes!*
- *Perfect Promises: Jesus makes promises to us. And Jesus can't lie. He won't ever promise something and then not keep that promise. He can't, because he's perfect. So when he promises to always be with us, he will! When he promises to always love us, he will. Does that make us joyful? Yes!*
- *Help: Jesus loves to help us. It brings us joy—makes us happy—to know Jesus cares about us. He will help us when we are afraid. He will help us when we're playing or praying, when we're at home or at school. Does that make us joyful? Yes!*

Jesus brings joy for the world! He brought the world joy when he was born in Bethlehem. He brings joy to us today as we celebrate his birth. He was born for you and for me. What a gift of joy!

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, an angel told the shepherds about his birth. The angel said to them, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10). Did you hear this news of great joy is for *all* people?

Since Jesus brings this joy for *all* the world, we can share this gift with others. Maybe someone you know doesn't have Jesus' joy. You can give Jesus' joy to them by telling them Jesus was born for them and loves them. Jesus would love for you to share his gift of joy with someone, who would then share it with someone else, who could share it with someone, too, and pretty soon everyone would know that Jesus brings joy for the world—for everyone, everywhere!

Taking It Home

How can we celebrate God's indescribable gift? We can say to God, "Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!" in our prayers. We can sing praise in our songs and hymns of joy, just like the angels. We can treasure Jesus in our hearts, like Mary did. We can think, and think, and think about how good God has been to us! And we can do what the shepherds did as we share the indescribable gift with other people.

To help you do just that, I have something to give you! *(Hand out the Celebrate the Gift of Jesus items. Be sure to give each child two items. Encourage the children to keep one item and to give the second one to someone else to help them celebrate the best Christmas gift of all: Jesus the Savior, God's indescribable gift, born for us!)*

Pray: Dear heavenly Father, thank You for sending an indescribable Christmas gift to us, the very best gift of all—Jesus! Help us share this gift with others, so that everyone can celebrate Christmas with true joy. In His name we pray. Amen.

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Kids

CTA MINISTRY
MESSAGE



Expanding the Impact of Your
Gifts of Encouragement

Celebrate the Gift of Jesus

Getting Started

You will need a very large box. At the bottom of the box, place the Celebrate the Gift of Jesus items you plan to give to the children. Be sure every child will receive at least two of each item. Use a bookmark to mark 2 Corinthians 9:15 in a Bible and place it inside the box, too. Finally, wrap the box in bright Christmas paper. Attach a large bow to the box, along with an exceptionally large gift tag. It should read: "For You!"



Introduction

Christmas is a time when we receive gifts. What do you want for Christmas? (*Let several children share their answers.*)

Look! Here is a huge Christmas gift! What do you think might be inside this big box? (*Suggest that the children look at the gift tag before they answer. Read the tag or have one of the children do so. Then let several children guess.*)

Suppose I told you that what you're wishing for is inside this box. Show me what your face would look like then. Show me what your hands or your feet would do. (*Demonstrate to get the group started. Clap your hands or jump up and down in excitement. Shout, "Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!"*)

How else might you respond? Would you ask someone to come to your house to play with you? Would you share the gift with them? Or would you treasure the gift? Would you put it in a special place and take very good care of it? Some of us might do some of these things. Others of us would do other things. Maybe some of us would do all these things and more! People react to gifts in different ways.

Getting to the Heart

The gift inside this box is better than any other gift we could ever wish for. Ever! It will never break. It will always fit us just right. It will never fade. It won't wear out. No one will ever be able to replace it with a better gift. In fact, this gift is the best gift in the whole world! It's indescribable—much too good for words! Words can't tell us how good it really is! (*Let a few children help you unwrap the box and remove the Bible.*)

The Bible is a wonderful gift from God. But it's not the gift I'm thinking about. The Bible tells us about the indescribable gift, the best gift ever! (*Read 2 Corinthians 9:15 aloud.*)

The "indescribable gift" in this verse is Jesus and everything else we receive from God because of all that Jesus did for us! God gave us this very special gift long ago on the very first Christmas night. Jesus is God's indescribable gift, God's very own Son.

When Jesus was born, some people were surprised. They were wishing for something bigger or better. They thought what they needed most was an earthly king who would chase all their enemies away.

But God knew better. He knew our biggest problem was our sin—all those mean things we say and all those hurtful, disobedient things we do. Jesus, God's indescribable Christmas gift, came to obey all God's laws in our place. He was always kind, good, and gentle. He always said helpful words. He always did helpful things. But that wasn't all. One day, He took all of our sins to His cross. He died on the cross. He let Himself be punished so we wouldn't have to be!

Jesus, the indescribable Christmas gift, died on the cross for us. But He didn't stay dead. On Easter, God raised Him from the dead. Now we can be sure all of our sins are gone. We can know that one day, when our life here on earth ends, we will live with Jesus in heaven.

Do you know how the first people to know about God's indescribable gift celebrated it? The shepherds heard the angels sing about the indescribable gift, and they ran off to tell everyone about the newborn Savior. Mary treasured God's promises about Jesus in her heart. She just kept thinking about all that God had done and would do through His indescribable gift of Jesus. The Wise Men brought Jesus gifts and worshiped Him.

One night in Bethlehem a baby was born to Mary and Joseph.

One night in Bethlehem a baby named Jesus was born.

*One very special night in Bethlehem the world changed
because Jesus was born for you and me!*

One night.

One night in Bethlehem.

One Savior.

One Jesus.

One like no other.

*(One suggested closing is to read the account of Jesus birth in Luke 2:1-20.
Or you may consider showing/reading the book One Night in Bethlehem,
followed by the reading of the Christmas Gospel from Luke 2. As everyone
leaves the worship service, give each family or child a copy of the book or
another One Night in Bethlehem gift.)*

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of MESSAGE

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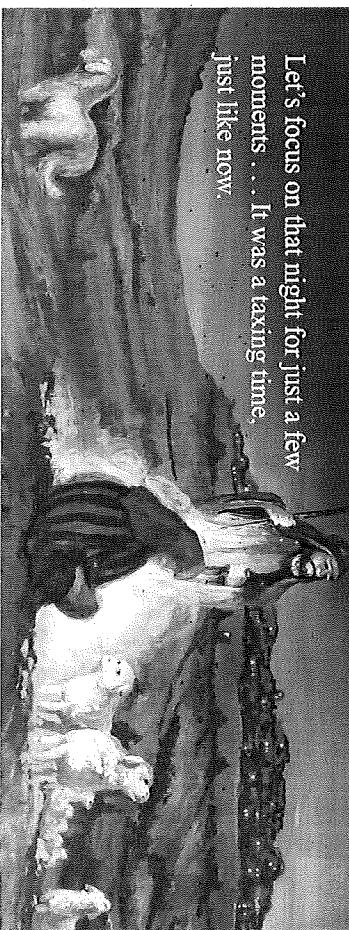
One Night in Bethlehem

Introduction

The nights seem different this time of the year. Do you feel it too? Christmas is moving into the neighborhood. Yes! That's the difference! Christmas is a holy season; a season set apart from the ordinary days of the year; a season that's more than busy, often stressful, and almost always expensive. But I pray it's also a very meaningful season as we allow one very special night in Bethlehem to change not just December 24 and 25 this year, but all our days and nights . . . forever!

Still, even for those of us who know all about that one special night in Bethlehem, those of us who have staked our life on that night—our eternal life—it's easy to grow negative during the days and nights of Christmas. It's easy to allow selfishness to flourish, worries to control, and a lack of faith to distract us. It's a taxing time . . . just as it was on that night Christ was born.

Let's focus on that night for just a few moments . . . It was a taxing time, just like now.



Getting to the Heart

Read Luke 2:1-5.

A government decree—a decree no one could ignore. A census, and, for many, a long, difficult trip back to the family's hometown. Need I say it?

A taxing time.

A time to travel. That can stress anyone out. How long will it take? When will we return? What will we eat along the way? Who might go with us? Where will we stay? Will it be safe? Who will take care of the business while we're gone? The questions went on and on. Yes, it was a taxing time.

And after traveling for approximately three days and covering some seventy miles, Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem to find they should have left a late-arrival deposit on their charge card at the hotel; there was no room for them in the inn. And Mary at the very end of her third trimester! Can you even imagine this happening to you and your family? Just a wee bit of tension, don't you think? A taxing time? Well, that's something of an understatement.

And yet, it's also the setting for one very special night, the night the world changed right under the noses of the people residing in the little town of Bethlehem. God's time had come! No more delay! After that particular night in Bethlehem, that particularly taxing night in Bethlehem, the world would never be the same.

And yet, despite Bethlehem's upheaval over the census, the taxation, and the huge influx of people, in many ways the night was also routine. The same usual, mundane things happened:

- Animals ate and children went to bed.
- Visitors crunched their suppers, while tax men crunched their numbers.
- Shepherds watched their sheep in the fields outside of town.
- Bethlehem's babies cried, slept, nursed, and spit up.
- And families, as they routinely did, prayed for a Savior.

But while some saw that night in Bethlehem as taxing and others saw it as routine, that night in that town was anything but usual. That was the night Jesus was born!

What a difference a day makes. We say it over and over, perhaps overusing it at times. But it certainly fits Bethlehem's 24 hours the night Jesus was born. That holy night has changed all our nights . . . and all our days, bringing the stability of forgiveness from our heavenly Father and the peace, joy, and hope that flow from that forgiveness.

- This Jesus, a gift from the heavenly Father, born one night in Bethlehem, was born to die one day in Jerusalem.
- This Jesus, born one night in Bethlehem, did die one day—for us—on Calvary's cross.
- This Jesus, born one night in Bethlehem, was not born to stay dead. He was born to rise to life one early Easter morning!

And so we celebrate one special night in Bethlehem, the night Jesus was born for you and me . . . born to live, born to die, born to rise—born so we can be reborn by faith in him as our Savior. And oh, what a difference a Savior makes in all our lives!

Taking It Home

What difference does this child make? Consider the gifts that accompany the Gift, named Jesus:

- Forgiveness of sins
- Eternal life in heaven
- Hope for every situation
- Help in times of need
- Joy in our Savior and through his salvation
- Peace that none of us can fully comprehend
- Relationships with others who now belong to God's family with us
- An abundant and abundantly meaningful life
- Resurrection through his resurrection
- Healing in our struggles
- His life-giving Word
- A myriad of other blessings for all who place their faith in this one named Jesus

Jesus Christ. He's the one born one night in Bethlehem. He's the one born to die so we can live. He's the perfect, life-giving gift born one night in Bethlehem.

Taking It Home

If possible, stop at this point to read the book One Night in Bethlehem to the children. Then pray a prayer like this with them:

Dear Jesus, one very special night in Bethlehem you were born. You were born for me! Thank you for coming to earth for me. Thank you for forgiving me, for loving me, and for promising me the gift of heaven you have waiting for me.

This is a special night for me, because you are in my life. Jesus, this is a special night, because one night in Bethlehem you were born for me! I love celebrating your birth. I love sharing this news with my friends and family.

It's almost Christmas, and that's a very special day—but you make every day and night special. I love you, Jesus! Amen.

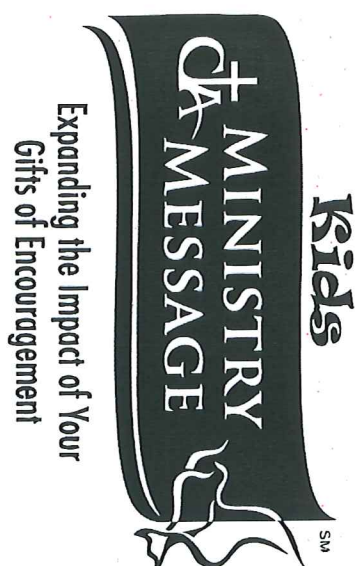
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One Night in Bethlehem...

Introduction

Share some things you do almost every night before you go to bed. (*Let children respond.*) Do you ever do anything special at bedtime—like having a great snack or reading a story you really enjoy? (*Let children respond.*) Is the night before Christmas—Christmas Eve—special? What makes that night special? (*Let children respond.*) What makes it hard to sleep on that night? (*Let children respond.*)

Getting to the Heart

Most nights you probably do pretty much the same things at the same time and in the same way. You may read a book, play a game, watch TV, or do something with the other people in your family. (If you have homework, you'll probably want to do *that* first, right?)

At bedtime, you probably put on your pajamas, brush your teeth, go to the bathroom, and climb into bed. You say goodnight to your family and then snuggle under the covers with a stuffed animal or two.

Wait a minute! Did we forget something? Let's think. You brushed your teeth (and you did an extra super-duper good job!). You washed your hands. (This time you even used soap!) You said goodnight and shared some hugs and kisses. And . . . wait! You haven't stopped for any special "Jesus time" yet! Christmas—Jesus' birthday—is almost here. This is a great time to talk to each other about him coming to earth to be our Savior and to talk to him in prayer—at bedtime and at many other times, too.

That's what I want to do right now; I want to talk about the most special night in all of history! Try to picture the special night long ago when Jesus was born in a town far, far away. Imagine we're in the town of Bethlehem.

For most people it was just another night in Bethlehem. Do you suppose the children there slept with stuffed animals—maybe a stuffed donkey or perhaps a stuffed chicken? How do you think they brushed their teeth? Toothbrushes and toothpaste hadn't been invented yet! What do you imagine their pajamas looked like? Or their beds? Or their room?

That night—and all that day and for many days and nights before that, a lot of extra people had come to Bethlehem so the government could count them. Hardly any of these people knew that something special was going to happen. Even after it happened, hardly anyone knew it. Hardly anyone had seen it or heard about it. But even so, that night that seemed just like every other night turned out to be a super-special, incredible night for the whole world.

On that one night in Bethlehem, God forever changed the lives of Mary and Joseph—and the lives of everyone else who had ever lived or who would ever live on earth.

Mary and Joseph came to Bethlehem to be counted. Because of all the visitors in town, no one had a place where they could stay. Mary was pregnant, and she was ready to have her baby at any minute! Who would help Joseph find a place that was dry and safe and warm so the Baby Jesus could be born?

Finally, they found an innkeeper who offered to let them stay in the place where his animals lived. This place was called a stable. It might have been a small cave in the back yard of the inn. It might even have been in a room built onto the inn where the innkeeper fed and sheltered his animals.

We don't know exactly what it was like, but we do know that Baby Jesus was born there that night, that one very special night in Bethlehem. God's holy angels came down to earth to tell some shepherds about that birth. One of the angels told about that. The angel said, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

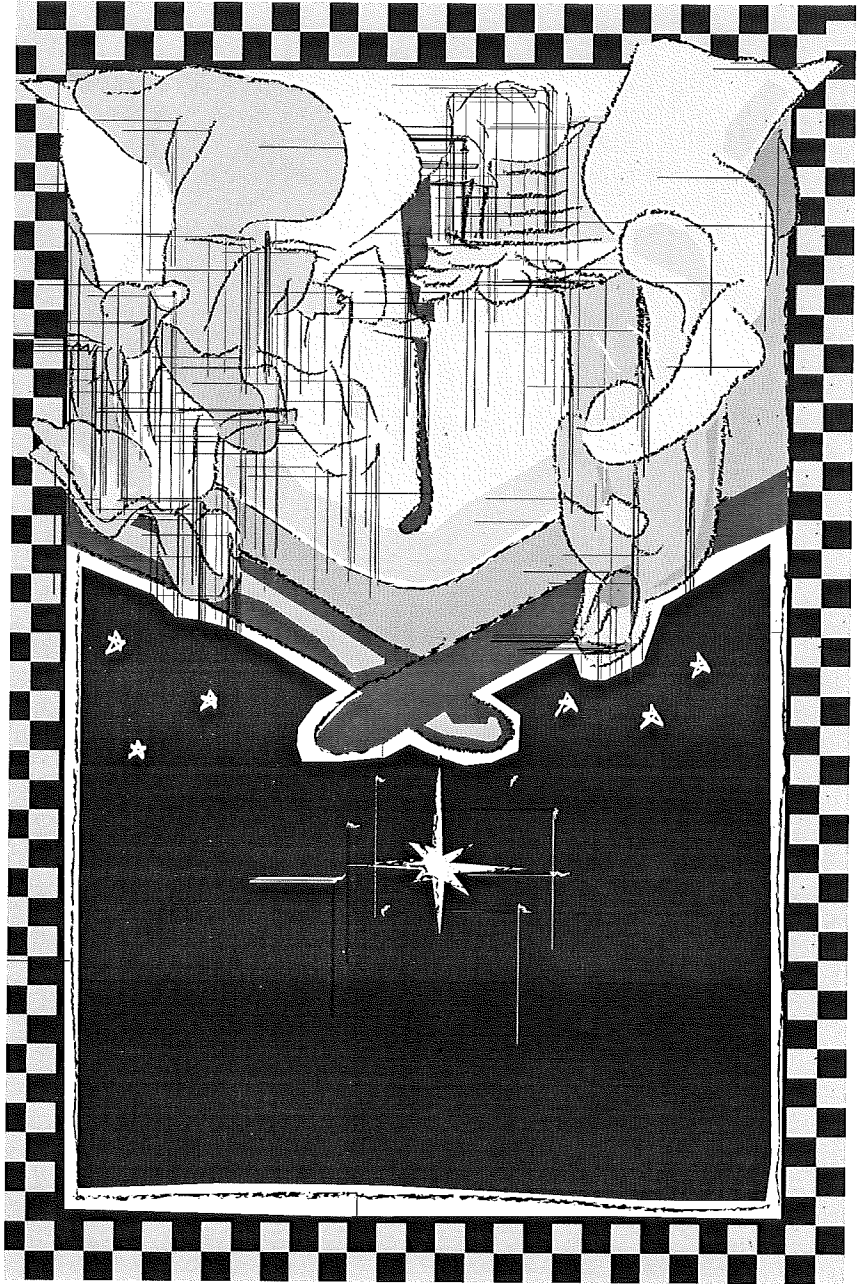
Did you hear those words clearly? "For unto you . . ." the angel said. **You!** Baby Jesus was born for you and you and you and you (*point to individual children*) and me and for everyone in the whole world. Does the birth of Jesus really make a difference in your life? It does!

Jesus came to earth from heaven to live *for* you and *with* you. He's here to love you, forgive you, help you when you're sad or upset, and place in you the love that makes it possible for you to love others. One day, Jesus will take you to live with him forever in heaven—the most perfect, wonderful place ever! This good news isn't just for you—it's for everyone in the world, and especially for everyone who believes in Jesus as the one who came to be their Savior!

Build a Memory Manger Scene

Party Game

This is a fun memory game that can be adapted for children of all ages. Build a manger scene in the minds of the children. The leader starts by saying, "In the stable I see . . . [name an animal, person, or object in the stable, such as a manger, but tell the children to save Jesus for the end]." The next child repeats the leader's sentence and adds another item. For example, "In the stable I see a manger and some hay." Stop the game before the list gets so long that children can't remember the items. Then, all together, make one last sentence, repeating all the items and adding JESUS.



- Do you see your relatives at Christmas time?
- Do you think Christmas is depressing? (There is a high suicide rate at this time of year.)
- Do you think we will have a white Christmas this year?
- Do you usually put up Christmas decorations in your house? (Do you usually decorate your home?)
 - How about at your school of the place where you work?
- Does your school have a Christmas play?
- Does your family have any special Christmas traditions?
- Does your town get decorated at Christmas?
 - What kind of decorations?
- Have you already finished your Christmas shopping?
- Have you ever celebrated Christmas in a foreign country?
- Have you ever made your own Christmas cards?
 - If so, how did you make them?
- How do you usually spend New Year's Eve? How about New Year's Day?
- How long do you keep your Christmas tree up after Christmas?
- How long is your Christmas vacation?
- How many Christmas cards did you receive last year?
- How many Christmas cards do you send?
- How many presents do you usually give?
- If you are not a Christian, does the intense focus on Christmas in the U.S. make you feel bad in any way (e.g., ignored, dismissed, angry, etc.)?
- If you could go anywhere during Christmas vacation, where would you go?
- In how many languages did you write Christmas cards?
- Is there a holiday similar to Christmas in your home country?
- Is your Christmas tree a real tree or an artificial tree?
- What are some popular foods for the Christmas season?
- What are you going to buy your boyfriend/girlfriend for their Christmas present?
- What did you do last year on Christmas Day?
- How did you celebrate Christmas last year?
- What do you eat on Christmas Day?
- What do you usually do for Christmas?
- What do you want Santa to bring you for Christmas?
- What does your family eat for Christmas dinner?
- What is Christmas like in your hometown?
 - What is Christmas like in your country?
- What is the best Christmas present you have ever gotten?
- What is the most expensive Christmas present you plan to buy?

- What was the best TV show for you this year?
- What was the best place you visited this year?
- What was the best food you had this year?
- What was the best restaurant you went to this year?
- What was the most useful thing you bought this year?
- What was the most expensive thing you bought this year?
- What was the best item of clothing you bought this year?
- What was the biggest waste of money this year?
- What was something you lost this year?
- Do you have any regrets about this year?
- Did you make a New Year's Resolution this year?
- Do people in your country usually make New Year's Resolutions?

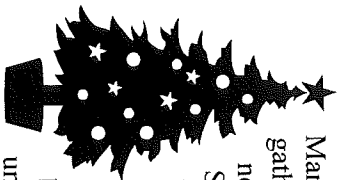
If you can think of another good question for this list, please [add it](#).

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Ten Questions to Ask at a Christmas Gathering

Many of us struggle to make conversation at Christmas gatherings, whether church events, work-related parties, neighborhood drop-ins, or annual family occasions.



Sometimes our difficulty lies in having to chat with people we rarely see or have never met. At other times we simply don't know what to say to those with whom we feel little in common. Moreover, as Christians we want to take advantage of the special opportunities provided by the Christmas season to share our faith, but are often unsure how to begin. Here's a list of questions designed not only to kindle a conversation in almost any Christmas situation, but also to take the dialogue gradually to a deeper level. Use them in a private conversation or as a group exercise, with believers or unbelievers, with strangers or with family.

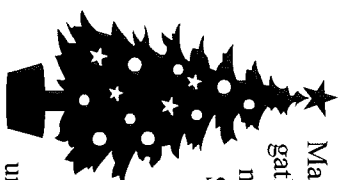
1. *What's the best thing that's happened to you since last Christmas?*
2. *What was your best Christmas ever? Why?*
3. *What's the most meaningful Christmas gift you've ever received?*
4. *What was the most appreciated Christmas gift you've ever given?*
5. *What was your favorite Christmas tradition as a child?*
6. *What is your favorite Christmas tradition now?*
7. *What do you do to try to keep Christ in Christmas?*
8. *Why do you think people started celebrating the birth of Jesus?*
9. *Do you think the birth of Jesus deserves such a nearly worldwide celebration?*
10. *Why do you think Jesus came to earth?*

Of course, remember to pray before your Christmas gatherings. Ask the Lord to grant you "divine appointments," to guide your conversations, and to open doors for the gospel. May He use you to bring glory to Christ this Christmas.

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Ten Questions to Ask at the Start of a New Year or On Your Birthday

Once, when the people of God had become careless in their relationship with Him, the Lord rebuked them through the prophet Haggai. "Consider your ways!" (Haggai 1:5) he declared, urging them to reflect on some of the things happening to them, and to evaluate their slipshod spirituality in light of what God had told them.

Even those most faithful to God occasionally need to pause and think about the direction of their lives. It's so easy to bump along from one busy week to another without ever stopping to ponder where we're going and where we should be going.

The beginning of a new year is an ideal time to stop, look up, and get our bearings. To that end, here are some questions to ask prayerfully in the presence of God.

1. *What's one thing you could do this year to increase your enjoyment of God?*
2. *What's the most humanly impossible thing you will ask God to do this year?*
3. *What's the single most important thing you could do to improve the quality of your family life this year?*
4. *In which spiritual discipline do you most want to make progress this year, and what will you do about it?*
5. *What is the single biggest time-waster in your life, and what will you do about it this year?*
6. *What is the most helpful new way you could strengthen your church?*
7. *For whose salvation will you pray most fervently this year?*
8. *What's the most important way you will, by God's grace, try to make this year different from last year?*
9. *What one thing could you do to improve your prayer life this year?*
10. *What single thing that you plan to do this year will matter most in ten years? In eternity?*

In addition to these ten questions, here are twenty-one more to help you "Consider your ways." Think on the entire list at one sitting, or answer one question each day for a month.

11. *What's the most important decision you need to make this year?*
12. *What area of your life most needs simplifying, and what's one way you could simplify in that area?*
13. *What's the most important need you feel burdened to meet this year?*
14. *What habit would you most like to establish this year?*
15. *Who do you most want to encourage this year?*
16. *What is your most important financial goal this year, and what is the most important step you can take toward achieving it?*

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12. *What area of your life most needs simplifying, and what's one way you could simplify in that area?*
13. *What's the most important need you feel burdened to meet this year?*
14. *What habit would you most like to establish this year?*
15. *Who do you most want to encourage this year?*
16. *What is your most important financial goal this year, and what is the most important step you can take toward achieving it?*

Conversation Questions Christmas

A Part of [Conversation Questions for the ESL Classroom](#).

- Did it snow last year at Christmas?
- Did you believe in Santa Claus when you were a child?
- Did you enjoy last Christmas?
- Do people behave differently during Christmas?
 - Do they try to be better?
 - Do you donate something (money, clothes...) to charities?
 - Do you give something to homeless people?
- Do you attend any special religious ceremonies during the Christmas season?
- Do you celebrate Christmas in your country?
- Do you celebrate Christmas in a special way?
- Do you celebrate Christmas in a traditional way?
 - Do you have a traditional Christmas?
- Do you decorate the outside of your house for Christmas?
- Do you eat a turkey dinner for your Christmas dinner?
- Do you enjoy Christmas time?
- Do you enjoy singing Christmas songs?
- Do you exchange presents with your friends at school?
- Do you go to church on Christmas day?
- Do you hang up a stocking?
- Do you have a Christmas party at school?
- Do you have a Christmas tree?
 - If so, how do you decorate it?
 - When do you put it up?
 - When do you take it down?
 - Is it real or artificial?
- Do you have a part-time job during Christmas vacation?
- Do you have any plans to go to a Christmas party?
- Do you know why Christmas is celebrated around the world?
- Do you know the history of Christmas?
- Do you remember when you found out that Santa Claus wasn't real/ or when your children found out? What was your/their reaction like?

- What is the typical menu for a Christmas meal in your family? (... in your country?)
- What is the weather like in your country around Christmas time?
- What is your attitude toward the commercialization of the Christmas season?
 - Is Christmas becoming too commercialized?
- What is your favorite Christmas carol?
- What is your favorite Christmas song?
 - Are there any special songs in your country that you don't hear here?
- What kind of interesting things do you do for Christmas in your home country?
- What kind of presents do you expect to get this Christmas?
- What time do you wake up on Christmas day?
- What time does your family open the presents?
- What traditions do you have during the Christmas season?
- What was the best present you received last Christmas?
- What will you buy your parents?
- What will you do on Christmas day?
- What will you eat on Christmas Day?
- What would you like to get for your Christmas present?
- What's your favorite Christmas song?
- When do you do your Christmas shopping?
 - What kind of presents do you buy?
 - Who do you buy them for?
 - About how much do you spend per person?
- When do you give Christmas presents? (On what day? At what time?)
- When do you open Christmas presents? (On what day? At what time?)
- When do you put up a Christmas tree?
 - If you don't put up a Christmas tree, do you put up other decorations?
- When does your family decorate the Christmas tree?
- Where are you going for Christmas vacation?
- Where do you think Santa Claus is from?
- Where will you go on Christmas Day?
- Who do you expect to receive presents from?
- Who is Santa Claus?
 - Do you know the history of Santa Claus?
 - At what age did you begin not believing in Santa Claus?
- Who was at your house last Christmas?
- Who will you give presents to this year?
- Who would you like to be with on Christmas?

17. *What's the single most important thing you could do to improve the quality of your work life this year?*
18. *What's one new way you could be a blessing to your pastor (or to another who ministers to you) this year?*
19. *What's one thing you could do this year to enrich the spiritual legacy you will leave to your children and grandchildren?*
20. *What book, in addition to the Bible, do you most want to read this year?*
21. *What one thing do you most regret about last year, and what will you do about it this year?*
22. *What single blessing from God do you want to seek most earnestly this year?*
23. *In what area of your life do you most need growth, and what will you do about it this year?*
24. *What's the most important trip you want to take this year?*
25. *What skill do you most want to learn or improve this year?*
26. *To what need or ministry will you try to give an unprecedented amount this year?*
27. *What's the single most important thing you could do to improve the quality of your commute this year?*
28. *What one biblical doctrine do you most want to understand better this year, and what will you do about it?*
29. *If those who know you best gave you one piece of advice, what would they say? Would they be right? What will you do about it?*
30. *What's the most important new item you want to buy this year?*
31. *In what area of your life do you most need change, and what will you do about it this year?*

The value of many of these questions is not in their profundity, but in the simple fact that they bring an issue or commitment into focus. For example, just by articulating which person you most want to encourage this year is more likely to help you remember to encourage that person than if you hadn't considered the question.

If you've found these questions helpful, you might want to put them someplace—in a day planner, PDA, calendar, bulletin board, etc.—where you can review them more frequently than once a year.

So let's evaluate our lives, make plans and goals, and live this new year with biblical diligence, remembering that, "The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage" (Proverbs 21:5). But in all things let's also remember our dependence on our King who said, "Apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

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- Will you go skiing during the Christmas vacation?
- Will you have a Christmas party at your home?
- Will you spend Christmas vacation with your family or your friends?
- Will you travel abroad during the Christmas vacation?
- Would you like to go skating during Christmas vacation?
- Why do people give out Christmas cards with gifts and presents at Christmas time?
- Why some people do not like Christmas?
- Do people behave differently during Christmas? Do they try to be better?
- Do you donate something (money, clothes...) to charities?
- Do you give something to homeless people?
- How long do Christmas trees last?
 - Do you use an artificial tree?
- What do you usually do on Christmas day?
- What people usually do on Christmas day?
- Why do people sometimes write "Christmas" with an "X"? (Xmas)
- Do you have a big and delicious dinner on Christmas day?
- Does it break your heart knowing that your children have grown up and this year will be their last Christmas at home?
- If you had a million dollars, what would you do during Christmas time?
- If you could change something about Christmas time, what would it be?
- When do you put up your Christmas tree?
- Trivia: In what 1942 movie was the song "White Christmas" first sung?
- Do you ever think about the real meaning of Christmas?
- Do you go skiing at Christmas time?
- Whose birthday is celebrated on Christmas?
- Which comes first, Christmas or New Year's Day?
- What is the significance of a Christmas tree?
 - What does it represent for you?

End of the Year

- How was this year?
- Was this year better or worse than last year? How come?
- What was the happiest thing for you this year?
- What was the saddest thing for you this year?
- What was the toughest thing for you this year?
- What was the best movie for you this year?
- What was the best music for you this year?