



25 NURTURING WAYS TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

1. At some point in your day today (set your phone alarm if you need to) stop whatever you're doing, take three deep breaths, and be present in the moment. What do you smell? Hear? See? Feel? Where are you emotionally? Appreciate being alive.
2. Name one thing that you love about Christmas. Be specific, for example, don't just say "the music," name the song. Think carefully about your choice.
3. Every time you hear bells (in any form, like music, the Salvation Army representative, or in the mall) stop and notice where Jesus is and what he's doing. Give him a smile.
4. Imagine you're talking to a five-year-old, and tell them the Christmas story in a way that is exciting and fun but simple enough that they can understand it.
5. Stop what you're doing and be still, then ask Holy Spirit who he'd like you to pray for right now. Whoever he brings to mind pray for them, and even better, (if possible) send them a quick email. We're all blessed by knowing others are holding us up.
6. Eat something today that delights your heart. It doesn't have to be a lot, even one bite can be savored. As you eat it be present to the flavor, the pleasure, and the season it currently represents.
7. Pick your favorite Christmas Carol and sing it to yourself. Loudly, if possible.
8. Wrap (at least) one present for yourself, something that delights your heart. Open it Christmas morning and act surprised.

9. When no one is looking, close your eyes and reach up and gently massage your temples for a moment. Then massage your jaw. Spiritually reach out to Jesus beside you and smile.
10. Even though we celebrate Jesus as a baby this season, take a moment to appreciate that the baby has grown up and he relates to us as an adult now. And that's a wonderful thing!
11. Watch for the first snow, and when it comes remove your gloves and dip your fingers into it. Feel it, taste it. If you don't have snow by Christmas then Google some snow pictures and enjoy looking at them as you remember (or imagine) feeling and tasting it in the past.
12. Enjoy a hot drink today as you relax and remember past Christmases.
13. Christmas is about Jesus, yes, but it's also fun to enjoy the secular aspect of the season. The next time you're out, stop a moment to enjoy the Christmas music, to look around and see the tinsel and decorations, and feel the magic. And if you get a chance, give Santa a big smile.
14. Tell someone a few of your favorite Christmas memories. If you don't have someone to tell then email it to a friend and tell them this is your homework so they must humor you.
15. Sit somewhere quiet for a moment and imagine Jesus's arms around you as he whispers in your ear, "You are my best gift!"
16. List the smells of Christmas you're familiar with, both pleasant and unpleasant. How many have you experienced so far? Be conscious of them as you move through this season.
17. What are three of your childhood Christmas memories related to food?
18. As a Christmas gift for Jesus, give someone a compliment.
19. Think about the gifts you're giving this season, which is your favorite one? What makes it your favorite? If you've not gotten that far yet wait and do this one later once you've done your shopping.

20. What was the best Christmas present you ever received?
21. Stand somewhere alone for a moment (you can hide in the bathroom if need be). Close your eyes, take a deep breath and let Jesus hold you. Lean your head against his chest and feel his arms around your back. Feel his strength, his love, and his joy in you. Then, as you turn back to what you were doing before this tiny respite, take his joy with you.
22. Wish someone a Merry Christmas today.
23. Find somewhere private (the bathroom is always a good place, no one questions your being there). Now loosen up. Wiggle your shoulders, shake out your arms, and jiggle your legs like spaghetti. Bend over a bit and give your back a break. Think about how, even though life is going on as usual, inside you're celebrating Jesus. Give him a big smile (whether you feel like it or not) and silently mouth, "I LOVE YOU!"
24. You don't have to tell them but give someone a hug from Jesus today. As you put your arms around them pretend that it's his arms hugging them.
25. Merry Christmas! Stop 3 different times today (set your phone alarm if necessary) to spiritually give Jesus a hug and say thank you.