



The Christmas Pledge

The pledge is from the book
Unplug the Christmas Machine
by Jo Robinson and Jean Staghzi

Believing in the beauty and simplicity of Christmas, I commit myself to the following:

- ❖ To remember people who truly need my gifts
- ❖ To express my love for family and friends in more direct ways than presents.
- ❖ To rededicate myself to the spiritual growth of my family.
- ❖ To examine my holiday activities in light of the true spirit of Christmas
- ❖ To initiate one act of peacemaking within my circle of family and friends.

Other ideas (feel free to share these with others!!):

1. Determine your true, core values about Christmas. Is it Christ? Is it family? Is it the celebration? Put Christ back in the center and see how the other things fall into perspective.
2. Emphasize family time during the holidays.
3. Anticipate the miracle of birth.
4. Don't let culture trap you; let Jesus set you free.
5. Ask yourself: "What did Jesus do on Christmas?"
6. Take minute vacations.
7. Share one joy each day around your dinner table.
8. Place an Advent wreath at the center of your dinner table or coffee table and light it every day. Buy extra candles, but light it every day!
9. Be mindful of other faith traditions.
10. Bring Advent to work with you. Have a small tree or wreath as a reminder, or perhaps pin up a small picture of the Holy Family on your bulletin board.
11. Always have a tree and try to be sure people around you have one as well.
12. Send your Christmas cards after Dec. 25th—you have until Jan. 6th until Christmas is officially over!
13. Resolve to give up guilt for Advent.

14. Celebrate all 12 days of Christmas, from Dec 25th through January 6th (Epiphany).
15. Have a family meeting and determine what traditions need to stay and which ones can be added. Do something new like putting out Luminarias to welcome Jesus on Christmas Eve.
16. Save a branch of your tree after the holidays and fashion it into a rustic cross that can be displayed until Easter, virtually connecting the seasons of Christmas and Easter.
17. Re-read the Christmas story over and over to see what Christmas was really all about.
18. Drive around to look at Christmas lights one evening and pray for all the families whose houses are brightly lit. Walk around your neighborhood to do the same thing, whether people have decorations or not—in fact, we probably need to pray harder for the people who don't have decorations!!
19. Be intentional—plan your holiday schedule so that you are including worship and time for spiritual celebrations as well as 'holiday' celebrations.
20. Try to leave Christmas Eve open for enjoyment, wrapping and family. Promise that you won't shop on Christmas Eve or the day after Christmas.
21. Make your own Advent calendar by putting one family member's name on each day of Advent. Pray for that person on their day.
22. Give religious Advent calendars to kids you know and love so they can mix anticipation with Scripture.
23. Give alternative, charitable gifts, or ask others to do this for you in lieu of other gifts. (Heifer International, Samaritan's Purse, UNICEF, etc.)
24. Have your church host a Fathers and Kids wrapping session the week before Christmas. It'll help Dads and kids have fun together, it'll get the wrapping done, and it'll give Mom the gift of time.
25. Schedule a family movie night and watch one of many Christmas classics together.
26. At the end of a long day, turn on the Christmas tree lights, turn off all the other lights in the room, put on some Christmas music and spend time snuggled up on the couch with your spouse, telling stories of your childhood Christmas celebrations.

27. Teach children to help others by modeling the behavior for them. Volunteer at a local soup kitchen or food bank, donate clothing or toys to the needy and drive them to the collection site so they can see the hard work behind the gift giving.
27. Adopt a needy foreign child as a church and send money and letters on a monthly basis for the next year. Put up a bulletin board with the child's country of origin, photo and other information.
28. Treat store personnel with respect and gentleness, even if they're frazzled and rude. Would you want their job?
29. Turn off the talk radio and play Christmas carols in your car and sing along.
30. Adopt a grandparent for the holidays. Find out what kids of charity work that is needed at local nursing homes or hospitals and help fill these needs.
31. Volunteer to be a bell ringer for the Salvation Army.
32. Be mindful of taking care of your body. Eat and drink healthy, keep exercising.
33. Subscribe to a Bible-verse-a-day on your computer, or bookmark a virtual Advent wreath.
34. Tell your children (or your parents) or write them a letter, which describes why they are the best 'gift' you will ever receive on Earth.
35. Hang a stocking or have a present for Jesus beginning with the first day of Advent. Each day put something in the box or stocking that you saw or did that glorified God or brought you closer to Him. On Christmas Day, pull out all the slips and read what each one said. These are your gifts for Jesus.
36. Realize that the two greatest gifts you have are love and time—and use them wisely and generously as you become the only Christ some people will ever see during this season.

Blessed Advent and a
Holy, Happy Christmas!!

