

Christmas

Around the World

Christmas is the most celebrated and universally recognized holiday worldwide. It is December 25th in most countries. Traditions vary from country to country

In Brazil, Christmas is less about presents and more about food. Many start the celebration Christmas Eve, and go to Midnight Mass

Christmas, like Easter, can be celebrated as a Christian holiday or a secular holiday, or a mixture of both. Many people celebrate Advent to prepare for the time of Christmas

In Haiti, many people go to a Christmas Eve service that starts about 11pm. At midnight they sing the traditional song "Minuit Chrétien"

Also like Easter, Orthodox Christmas is normally on January 7 instead of December 25 because they use a different calendar. The 12 days of Christmas (after Christmas) lead to January 6th: Epiphany or Kings day

In Kenya, many churches hold night vigils, or 'Kesha', on Christmas Eve. They often sing Christmas hymns and carols, and some have nativity plays

In some persecuted countries, specially Muslim majority countries, they do not celebrate Christmas, as it is a Christian holiday

In Tanzania, families will fatten up a cow or goat to eat for Christmas, and many kids hope for new clothes, rather than toys, for Christmas

In India, Nativity scenes are called "Christmas cribs", and Kerala plum cake is served in place of fruitcake. Many Hindu's don't celebrate, but the holiday has become secularized enough that many do

In Uganda, Sekukkulu, the birth of Jesus Christ, begins on 24 December with a "watch night" service. They normally have a lunch feast with family

Christmas

A Basic History

1

Around
0AD

Jesus was born in Bethlehem

You can read the accounts in Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2. The early church celebrated Christ's death and resurrection more than His birth, but many cultures celebrated a winter solstice, or a time of light during the coldest, darkest part of winter.

2

400s



Pope Julius 1 choose December 25 to celebrate Jesus' birth

It was first called the Feast of the Nativity, and worked well since most cultures already had some kind of celebration in place. By the middle ages, Christmas had been embraced, but was more of a drunken revelry of the solstice than the Christian holiday we think of today. In fact, many Christians stopped celebrating it by the 1600-1700s.

3

1870



Christmas officially becomes a US federal holiday

With Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" and a new focus on caring for children in the 1800s, decorating trees, sending holiday cards, gift-giving (and Santa) quickly became new traditions for Christmas, brought to the USA by different European immigrants.

4

Now



Christmas is a Big Deal

Christmas is the most celebrated and universally recognized holiday worldwide. The most money of any holiday is spent on Christmas (about 900 billion dollars). Most people connect it as a Christian holiday, but celebrate it as a time of gift-giving and family time, often leaving the whole "Jesus part" out.

Christmas

Connected to Missions

1



Send Christmas cards to your missionaries and sponsored children!

Ask them how they celebrate Christmas and what it means to them. Tell them how you celebrate, and what it means to you!

2



Use Christmas Gift Catalogs from missions organizations to give presents around the World

Some of your missionaries may be able to receive packages in the mail as well, but it is important to check first, before sending it!

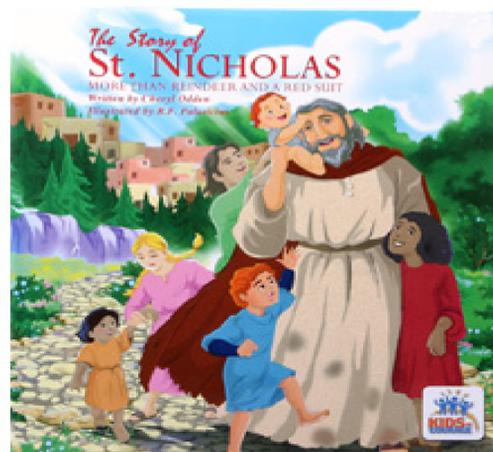
3



Use the 10 Activities from KidsEnjoyingJesus.com

This website has great Christmas ideas, with videos, Bible Verses, songs, and printable resources. They also have Advent for Kids ideas. WorldRenewal.org/kids-holidays also has an Advent/Lent free PDF

4



Learn more about St. Nicholas, the man who became Santa Claus

"The Story of St. Nicholas: More than Reindeer and a Red Suit" by Voice of the Martyrs is an easy and great way to share about someone who was persecuted for his faith.