

Celebrating the Twelve Days of Christmas



Prepared by the Lay Committee of Cluster 29

What you need to celebrate this holiday and how to do it!

What you need.

A table in your kitchen, living room or den around which everyone can sit,

A candle (to be lit at the beginning of your session),

A small religious Christmas object (manger, statue of the baby Jesus, or a Christmas card with a Manger scene on it), laid flat so that all can see,

Mom and/ or Dad will have to do some pre-reading to set up for each day's activity. We have tried to give you sources ready at hand or on the internet to help enrich your celebration and make it easier for you.

How to do it.

All gather and sing the 12 Days of Christmas up to the day which we celebrate. The song will grow longer and longer each day. Follow the activity sheet and suggested items for each day. If there is more than one activity, choose the one that best works for your family. You might find some to be hard to do. Don't avoid them. You might be surprised at what you and your children are capable of.

When you finished with the activity, keep a moment of silence as prayer and then recite the Our Father or Hail Mary or both.

Daily Activities for the 12 Days of Christmas

Here are the daily activity suggestions for each of the 12 days.

Try to follow them and keep at it until the end.

Then celebrate big time!

[There are references to a Resource Guide you will find on the Parish Websites listed on the Internet Sources page.](#)

The 12 Days of Christmas

Day # 1: Partridge in a pear tree.

Day #1 of the 12 days of Christmas focuses upon Jesus. Jesus the special gift of this season. What are the gifts Jesus has brought us by His birth? What are the gifts that you have that you can share this season with your family? Can you share one of your Christmas gifts with your brother or sister? Can you find a picture, statue or representation of Jesus in the manger? Can you draw a picture of Jesus as a baby?

Day #2 Two Turtle Doves:

The second day of Christmas is special because of the two turtle doves. These doves represent the Old and New testaments. This is God's word to us. This is how we know God. Use your bible to show the children what the Old and New Testaments are?

Tell a story about Jesus other than His birth story.

Tell a story about the Old Testament:

Moses and the rushes(Exodus, 2:1-10)

Hannah and Samuel story (I Samuel: 1:1-28. Story of Samuel's birth)

Story of Ruth and faithfulness (Ruth, Chapters 1 to 4. Check the internet, click site for the Story of Ruth.)

Day #3: Three French Hens:

Today the Church celebrates the Feast of the Holy Family. Celebrate your family by going to Mass together. Bake a cake (or buy one) and celebrate your family in a special way at your main meal. Find a picture album of old photos. Remember the people and tell stories about them.

The three French hens represent the three major virtues: Faith, Hope and Love. (Corinthians 13:13)Talk about these virtues. Who in your family shows the greatest Faith, Hope or Love? Why? Can you find in your Christmas card collection the virtues of Faith, Hope and Love? How does the baby Jesus bring us Hope at Christmas?

#4 Four Calling Birds: The Four Gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Use your family bible and show the children where the gospels are located. Point out the difference in the size of the Old Testament and the New Testament. Read one of the Nativity stories from Luke or Matthew. What is your fav about the story? Put yourself in it (Scene it) and describe what you think you might feel. Rent a video of the Nativity story. See if you can find the Nativity story on the internet and watch it. Do a good deed today for someone not in your family.

#5 Here comes Five Golden Rings: This is a reference to the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. The Jews held them in great regard. So much so that they called them the Law. Find the first five books of the Old Testament and read their names. (Try to use a Bible for this. The names will be found in the religious fact section of our Resource Guide.*)

Remember, Jesus, Joseph and Mary kept the Law and revered it. They, like our Jewish brothers, celebrated the feast of Hanukah. (Read the reference in 1 Maccabees , 4:56-59, to find out what the celebration was all about. Check out the Wikipedia site for Hanukah and learn even more. Very interesting) What was the miracle? How is it that Jesus brings us light at this time of year? What is the Hope that He brings us as well?

#6 Six Geese a Laying: This refers to the six days of creation. Find the creation story at the beginning of the bible in Genesis (Genesis 1) and read it. Pick one day and draw it. What is it that you have to thank God for in His Creation? Why do you think that at the end of each day the bible says "He thought it was good?" What do you think that means? Why was it so?

7 Seven Lords a Leaping: Depending on the interpretation, these could be the seven Sacraments or the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. We have two activities for you to choose from here.

Name the seven Sacraments of the Church. We would like to concentrate on Reconciliation for this activity. Jesus brings the gift of Peace this Christmas time. Pick one person in your family that you need to ask forgiveness of or whom you need to forgive. (Take the time for this activity. Allow people in your family to ask and give forgiveness.) Try to make this reconciliation stick. Bring Peace to your family today. Now consider making your peace with God...perhaps by going to confession!

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are found in the Resource Guide.*You will find it on the parish websites. Listed in this packet.

Read them. Pick one that is unknown or seems unknown. Look it up in the Wikipedia and see if you can imagine what it would look like if you did it in your life.

After you have finished, gather your family. Today is January 1, New Year's Day. We have brought "peace" to our family and have learned a new gift we have from the Holy Spirit. In the French Canadian tradition, today is the day for a family blessing. We would ask an adult (Usually the Dad) to give the family a blessing. If you don't have a blessing of your own you may use this one:

Heavenly Father, bless our family and keep us safe from worry, harm and evil. Help us to keep the gift of unity that we share. Help us to get beyond the little things that get in our way each day. Help us to bring "Light, Love and Peace" to our family. Amen.

#8 Eight Maids a Milking: This is the reference to the eight BE-ATTITUDES. Find the sermon on the mount in Mathew (5:3-10). Read it. It has been said that these have been given to us. We have them from Jesus already. We just need to "be" them. Think about the one that you need to "BE" the most. Try to carry it out today. Tell what your fav is and why?

#9 Nine Ladies Dancing: These ladies are said to represent the fruits of the Holy Spirit. You will find them in Galatians (5:22). Read the passage. Find the works sheet entitled 9th Day of Christmas and do the word scrambles. Look for them on the parish websites found in the Internet Resource Guide*Can you choose one and share an example of what it would look like in action?

#10 Ten Lords a Leaping: These are the ten Commandments. Find them in Exodus 20:1-7. Read them aloud. Discuss the ones that are unclear. How does Jesus summarize them and connect the 10 Commandments with His two commands to Love God and Love your neighbor? See the story of the Good young man in Luke's Gospel. (Lk. 10:25-37) Today is an opportunity to do a good deed for someone outside your family. Bring a canned good to Mass and place it in the St. Vincent de Paul box, for food for the poor.

#11 Eleven Pipers Piping: They are the eleven faithful Apostles. Who were they? (Lk .6:14-16) There were twelve. Who is missing and why?

#12: Twelve Drummers Drumming: These are the doctrines of the Apostle's Creed. The Apostle's creed is a condensed version of the Creed we say at Mass. Find it in the Resource Guide* and read it aloud with your family. Can you break the Creed into its two parts? The part that talks about the Trinity and the part that talks about the Church? See if you can separate the Creed into its parts. What does the word CREED mean?

Today is the Epiphany in actual time. Please take time to make a Jesus cake to Celebrate the Magi's visit. Offer very small gifts for the little ones to open. Give the gift of your love and faith and hope to your family today in a special way.

Possible sources to help the family celebrate this long holiday:

[Internet sources/ Resource Guide](#)

There are so many sources you could get lost in the search. We have listed some sites that we have checked out before hand and they have served us well.

Google: 12 Days of Christmas/lyrics; **Great site with many resources:**

Mahalo:

12 Days of Christmas/lyrics/ Muppets sing the song

Wikipedia.org taken off the Mahalo site; **Good site about the history/ many aspects of the song**

Christmas Carnivals.com/12days of Christmas/coloring pages; **See our resource section for a few pages (consult St. Mary's Website)**

Webcrawler.com scroll down to 12 days of Christmas/more coloring pages

dltk-holidays.com/xmas/12/twelve: more for young children; great source for further expansion of activities.

Cresourcei.org/12days: **Religious fact sheet, found in our resources section (consult St. Mary's Website)**



If you would like the Resource Guide and a view to the full program go to:

www.stmarysbge.com

www.notredeamesbge.4lpi.com

The Twelve Days of Christmas

The items that follow are answers to the questions you have in the 12 Day of Christmas Activity pages

- #1 On the 1st day of Christmas...a partridge in a pear tree.** The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus the Christ, Son of God, whose birthday we celebrate on Dec. 25, the first day of Christmas. In the song, Christ is symbolically represented as a mother partridge that feigns injury to decoy predators from her young. This recalls to mind Jesus' sadness of the fate of Jerusalem: "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! How often I would have sheltered you under my wings, as a hen does her chicks, but you would not...."(Luke 13:34)
- #2 On the 2nd day of Christmas.....two turtle doves.** The Old and New Testaments, which give witness to God's self revelation in history and in creation and of His love for a people that makes this celebration possible.
- #3 On the 3rd day of Christmas...Three French hens** are the three theological virtues: 1) Faith, 2) Hope and 3) Love (1 Corinthians 13:13)
- #4 On the 4th day of Christmas...Four Calling Birds** are the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which proclaim the Good News of God's reconciliation with the world to Himself through His Son, Jesus the Christ. God never gives up.
- #5 On the 5th th day of Christmas...Five Gold Rings.** These are the first five books of the Old Testament. Known as the Torah in Hebrew and the Pentateuch in Greek:1) Genesis, 2) Exodus, 3) Leviticus, 4) Numbers, and 5) Deuteronomy .The story here is of humanity's sinful failure and God's response of grace and love in the creation of a people to be the light of the world.
- #6 On the 6th day of Christmas...Six Geese A-laying.** These are the six days of Creation that testifies to God's handiwork as Creator and Sustainer of the World.
- #7 On the 7th day of Christmas...Seven Swans A-swimming.** Depending on your interpretation these seven swans could be the seven sacraments or the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. The seven sacraments are: Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Marriage, Holy Orders and Sacraments of the Sick and Dying. The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are: 1) Wisdom, 2) Understanding, 3) Knowledge, 4) Right Judgment, 5) Reverence, 6) Counsel, and 7) Wonder and Awe in the presence of God. (Romans 12: 6-8; also 1 Corinthians 12:8-11.) See also CCC 1831, 1845
- #8 On the 8th day of Christmas...Eight Maids a-milking.** These are the eight beatitudes that Jesus mentions in the Sermon on the mount. 1) Blessed are the poor in spirit, 2) those who mourn, 3) the meek, 4) those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (holiness), 5) the merciful, 6) the pure of heart, 7) the peacemakers, and 8) those who are persecuted for righteousness's sake (Matthew 5:3-10)
- #9 On the 9th day of Christmas...Nine Ladies Dancing.** These nine ladies are the fruits of the Holy Spirit: 1) love, 2) joy, 3) peace, 4) patience, 5) kindness, 6) generosity, 7) faithfulness, 8) gentleness, and 9) self-control. (Galatians 5:22)
- #10 On the 10th day of Christmas... Ten Lords A-leaping** The ten commandments: 1) I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods before me; 2) Do not take the Lord's name in vain; 3) Remember the Sabbath Day; 4) Honor your father and mother; 5) Do not murder; 6) Do not commit adultery; 7) Do not steal; 8) Do not bear false witness; 9) Do not covet your neighbor's wife; 10) Do not covet your neighbor's goods. (Exodus 20:1-17) (Deut. 5:1-21)
- #11 On the 11th day of Christmas... Eleven Pipers Piping** The eleven Faithful Apostles: 1) Simon Peter, 2) Andrew, 3) James, 4) John, 5) Philip, 6) Bartholomew, 7) Matthew, 8) Thomas, 9) James bar Alphaeus, 10) Simon the Zealot, 11) Judas bar James. (Luke 6:14-16). The list does not include the twelfth disciple, Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus to the religious leaders and the Roman authorities.
- #12 On the 12th day of Christmas... Twelve Drummers Drumming** The twelve points of doctrine in the Apostle's Creed: 1) I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. 2) I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. 3) He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. 4) He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. 5) He descended into hell [the grave] and on the third day he rose again. 6) He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. 7) He will come again to judge the living and the dead. 8) I believe in the Holy Spirit, 9) the holy catholic Church, 10) the forgiveness of sins, 11) the resurrection of the body, 12) and life everlasting. (Cf. CCC iv-vi Part I: The Apostles' Creed)

CCC is a reference to the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The numbers reference paragraph numbers.

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<http://www.criveice.org/cy12days.html>