



WWE'RE



KKEEPING



CCHRISTMAS



CCOZY



# Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas!

We're looking forward to a cozy Christmas season! The lovely thing about creating a memorable Christmas is that you don't need lots of money or elaborate activities to enjoy a connection filled holiday. You'll find easy activities and imaginative conversation starters in this printable packet that you can use to create your own cozy Christmas.

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# Introduction:



At the beginning of December we're surrounded by ideas of holiday activities.  
And we're not doing them all.

We're surrounded by all of the gorgeous toys, beautiful clothes and perfect PJ's.  
And we won't be buying them all.

We read about clever and beautiful family traditions to start.  
And we won't be starting them all.

*And all of this not doing is good.*

**When we do less, plan less, even purchase less, we make more room in our life to enjoy what we do choose to include.** When it comes down to it - no matter the amount of planning and organizing, at some point things will go awry. When we have space to laugh a little and readjust, we have the ability to make our holidays joyful.

What we do, what we give, where we are - none of that is as important as the attitude and expectation we bring to the holidays.

**Not every moment has to be perfect** - You can have a good day that still includes a screaming tantrum from your toddler. You can have a good dinner that includes that moment that Grandma starts crying because she misses Grandpa. You can still have a good Christmas morning when someone has to go to work in the afternoon.

It's called life. It's messy and jumbled and surprising and it doesn't pause conveniently at the holidays. Life in all its richness includes the relative you can hardly stand but have to invite anyway, the tree that falls over, and the kids squabbling during dinner.

**We can't pause the messy parts of life in order to make our holiday wishes come true, but we can control how we handle the bumps along the way.**

## **This year we're keeping Christmas cozy, right?**

- So we're going to relax a little bit.
- We're going to concentrate on doing the thing that work well for our family at this season in our lives - which may be different than our friends and neighbors.
- We're going to, perhaps, scale back our expectations a wee bit - we have all year to make special memories with our kids, this is not the ONLY time we have a chance to delight them.
- And we're going to roll with the punches. Because they still happen during the holidays, but smiling and staying committed to enjoying the little moments of wonder, even if they happen in an unexpected way, will make it a cozy Christmas.

Tap into your children's bubbling joy about celebrating with their family. Your kids don't want perfection. They want connection with you. They want to feel valued. And hey, they're kids – they want to have FUN. If we let go of our vision of how things *should be* so we can loosen up and enjoy ourselves, we will make holiday memories that our kids will treasure the rest of their lives.



Joyfully,  
Alissa & Lorien

## Suggestions for use:

We've divided our suggestions for Keeping Christmas Cozy into five sections for easy use. We suggest printing the packet, though you could just print select pages

- **The calendar and activities are first** in case you'd like to do an activity based advent calendar - you can print these right away and put your ideas on the editable activity calendar for December.
- **The editable calendar** is at: [bit.ly/XmasActivityAdvent](http://bit.ly/XmasActivityAdvent). It's a great place to rough out your ideas, just remember that it's ok to change the plan. We think of it as a "plan to deviate from" and it gives a framework for our holidays.
- **Next you have four weekly blocks for the four weeks in December.** You can follow this loose schedule or read through all of it and use the packet as it feels right for you.
- **In each week you'll find** a one more step in your cozy holiday season –things like the conversation starters and ideas for how to keep your focus on what matters most to you. These are not the nuts and bolts of shopping, wrapping and events, but rather the kinds of things that help you keep your spirit happy.
- **In each week on the cover page for the week you will find a "One Cozy"** - this is your easy to remember, easy to implement idea to tuck in your back pocket for that week; we think that if you do nothing else these simple ideas will help you feel cozy.
- **You'll receive weekly Cozy Christmas emails during December** – look for those in your inbox! These brief emails will provide additional inspiration and support for keeping Christmas cozy that you don't want to miss.
- **You may wish to hang up** the "We're Keeping Christmas Cozy" or the "Joyful Christmas" pages somewhere to give yourself a visual reminder of your aims for this holiday season.
- **When using each piece of the packet only choose the activities and ideas that work best for your family!** Be inspired by what you like and simply leave what doesn't work for you.

*"Never worry about the size of your Christmas tree.  
In the eyes of children, they are all 30 feet tall" — Larry Wilde*

## Editable Calendar

- You may find an **editable Christmas Activity calendar** at: [bit.ly/XmasActivityAdvent](https://bit.ly/XmasActivityAdvent). If you save a copy for yourself you will be able to edit the activities listed and make it your own.

## Christmas Activities

- We have included a printable with 44 simple Christmas Activities to give you ideas for Christmas fun. **You can cut them apart and use 24 of them in an advent calendar, or simply use the list as inspiration.** Remember, you don't have to do everything! Keep Christmas cozy by choosing activities that are low stress for you. We also included four blanks for you to write your own ideas.

## Christmas Craft Recipes

- If you enjoy making crafts with your kids during the holidays, **these four recipes give you options for easy and festive crafty fun.** You could choose to do one each week. Get on those aprons, put on some holiday music and create some Christmas cheer.

Sing a Christmas song together	Bake a Christmas treat.
Have Hot Cocoa for a Treat. * **	Make pancakes in the shape of candy canes.
Look through toy catalogs and circle everything that looks exciting.	Do a puzzle together. *
* Listen to Christmas Music.	Color a big piece of paper to make wrapping paper.
* Play a card game together	Decorate Pinecones to make mini "Christmas Trees"
Lay down on a blanket under the Christmas tree to look at the lights.	Decorate the tree. **
Read a Christmas story while you snuggle under a blanket.	Hang lights outside. * ** *
Go look at Christmas lights.	* ** Cut out paper snowflakes.

<p style="text-align: center;">❄️❄️</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Make Christmas Cards.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Go outside to look for Santa's sleigh in the sky.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Look through the Christmas cards you've received; read them and talk about who sent them.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Drink apple cider with cinnamon sticks.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Go to a store and browse the Christmas decorations.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Draw a picture of Santa's workshop, sleigh or house. ❄️</p> <p style="text-align: center;">❄️❄️</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">❄️❄️</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Write a note to Santa.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Take a photo of kids in front of the tree.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Make Thank You Cards.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">❄️ ❄️</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Make cinnamon dough ornaments.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Make a Pandora Christmas Station.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">❄️❄️</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Go to a Christmas party.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Decorate the kids' rooms.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">❄️❄️❄️❄️</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Use decorations, toys and imagination to set up a "Christmas Village" display.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Watch a Christmas movie together.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Go and get the Christmas Tree.</p>

Get down the Christmas Decorations.



String a Popcorn Garland.

Make an Orange Pomander ball.



Make Ornaments with Christmas Clay.

Look at family photos from the year.

Bring Christmas Cards to a Nursing home.

Buy gifts for a family in need.



Donate to a charity the children choose.



Bring treats to an animal shelter.

Clean out/donate toys no longer in use.



Put drops of peppermint oil in play dough for Christmas sensory play.



Make a Holiday Wreath to hang.



## Cinnamon Dough Ornaments

These ornaments smell like the holidays and are so simple to make. Once they are hardened they look pretty on their own or decorated with glitter or paint.

- 1 Cup Applesauce
  - 1 Cup Cinnamon
1. Mix applesauce and cinnamon together, adding more of one ingredient if dough is too wet or dry.
  2. On parchment paper or a cinnamon sprinkled countertop, roll dough out to 1/4 inch thick. Cut with cookie cutters, using a straw to make holes for hanging and place ornaments on a baking sheet. Reroll scraps to make more ornaments.
  3. Let ornaments dry on baking sheets for several days, flipping occasionally. Alternatively, bake in 200°F oven for 2 hours, checking for dryness.
  4. Optionally: decorate with glitter or paint. White puffy paint can look like frosting.

## Orange Pomander Balls

Pomanders are wonderfully fragrant, natural room fresheners. They make great gifts or festive tree and package decorations.

- Fresh Orange
- Whole Cloves
- Optional: ribbon for hanging



Push cloves into the orange in whatever pattern you desire – you may cover it completely or space the cloves wide.

If you'd like to be able to keep cloves in straight lines you may use a rubber band or ribbon wrapped around the orange for a guide.

Tie a ribbon around the pomander to hang.

## Popcorn Garland

This is the perfect activity for listening to Christmas music and chatting while you work. These can be hung outside to attract birds, or inside for a festive decoration.

- Plain Air-Popped Popcorn
- Needle
- Thread
- Optional: fresh cranberries, dried orange slices



### Hint for air popping:

Put 1/4 cup of kernels in a paper bag. Fold over the top of the bag two times. Put in the microwave for approximately 1 minute 30 seconds or until popping slows to 2-3 seconds between pops.

Thread the needle with 3 to 4' thread – thinner thread will be more durable if you double it. Tie a knot at the end and string your garland!

## Bright White Christmas Clay

- 2 Cups Baking Soda
- 1 Cup Cornstarch
- 1 Cup Water

1. Combine baking soda, corn starch and water in medium pot and stir over medium heat until all ingredients are dissolved.
2. Continue to stir over medium low heat until mixture thickens.
3. Once thick, immediately remove mixture from heat and transfer into a mixing bowl. Careful! It will be hot!
4. Cover with a cold damp cloth until cool enough to knead.
5. Knead dough until soft and smooth. If mixture is too dry, add a few drops of water at a time and knead until workable.
6. Roll out dough to 1/4" and cut into shapes as desired.
7. Bake finished creations on parchment paper covered cookie sheet in a warm oven (approx. 175° F for about two hours, flip them mid-way through baking.) Allow to cool completely in oven.
8. Once completely dry, finished creations can be painted with acrylics and sealed with craft sealant if desired.

# Week 1 - Setting Your Intentions

As we head into December, let's think about how we want this month to feel, and how we want to act. What is your intention for this month?

Examples:

- I will notice small joys and laugh easily.
- I will take time talk with people who might not be here in years to come.
- I will talk about and live our family traditions and beliefs with my children.

**One Cozy** If you do nothing else, here is one cozy thing to do this week:

Start learning a Christmas Carol with your kids. It's so much fun to get everyone singing together. Maybe learn two or three to ensure a pleasant rotation...

**My Cozy Christmas:** This next page is included to help you find out what your kids really look forward to and to get you thinking about what is most important to you as well. You may wish to print one for each person.

What do your kids think is cozy at Christmastime? Print out this page for each child and encourage them to write or draw things that make them think of a Cozy Christmas – you can take dictation for reluctant writers. Or your family may enjoy leafing through a pile of magazines and cutting out images for a collage. It may surprise you to learn which traditions your kids look forward to most.

*"When we recall Christmas past, we usually find that the simplest things - not the great occasions - give off the greatest glow of happiness." — Bob Hope*

# My Cozy Christmas

What makes Christmas Cozy for You? Draw a picture, make a collage or write a list of all the things you love about this time of year. 

## Week 2 - Your Christmas Stories

It's easy to feel a lot of pressure to make it SPECIAL during the holidays. Make it sparkle and shine. While special events can be wonderful, sometimes they feel overwhelming when the day-to-day tasks of living don't easily allow for extra planning and prep work. **This week is about your stories and conversation for this reason.** We can chat while making dinner. We can start a fun conversation topic while driving in the car. This is an easy way to build family closeness, and sharing together can feel special and bring a sparkle and shine to any ordinary day.

**One Cozy** *If you do nothing else, here is one cozy thing to do this week:*

Tell a family story. It needn't be a grand tale; your children will love it because it's about you or members of their family, even if they have never met them. There is a certain allure to being connected to the characters in a story, and the holidays make a perfect foil for telling the story of your childhood or family histories.

**Conversation Starters** : *On the next pages are your printable conversation starters.*

**We've had many a fun chat by putting these out in a bowl on the dining room table.** You can use these conversation starters in an advent calendar or simply as inspiration for a topic during your next car drive. Keep Christmas Cozy by sparking conversation and imagination in your family.

Would you rather have a snowy Christmas or a sunny Christmas? Why?



What Christmas surprise do you wish you could give to someone?



What is your favorite Christmas story?



What was the best present you've ever received?

What is your favorite holiday dessert?



If you could invite anyone to spend Christmas with us who would it be?

What is better, the days leading up to Christmas or Christmas Day?

What is your favorite holiday?



What is better, finding out what your present is before Christmas, or being surprised?



How could you help someone else feel cozy this Christmas?

What is one of your favorite memories from Christmas past?

What is the best present you have ever given someone else?

If you could only have one Christmas present what would it be?

What is your favorite Christmas song?



What Christmas activity are you looking forward to this year?



What is your favorite Christmas decoration?

<p>What do you think would happen if you stayed up late to meet Santa?</p>	<p>If you built a snowman and it came to life what would you do?</p> <p>❄️ ❄️ ❄️</p>
<p>What do you think Santa Claus is doing right now?</p>	<p>What is one naughty thing you have done and one nice thing you have done this year?</p>
<p>Who do you think trains the reindeer?</p> <p>❄️ ❄️ ❄️</p>	<p>What is a present you have always wanted but never gotten?</p>
<p>What do you think Santa Claus eats for dinner?</p>	<p>If you could go with Santa to deliver presents but would have to give up your present would you go?</p>
<p>How do think Santa really gets into houses?</p>	<p>If you could plan Christmas dinner what would we eat?</p>
<p>If you could make one wish on Christmas day what would it be?</p> <p>❄️ ❄️ ❄️ ❄️</p>	<p>Do you think Santa Claus gets Christmas presents?</p>
<p>If you could be magically transported to the north pole for five minutes what is the one thing you would want to see (besides your present)?</p>	<p>Who feeds the reindeer? What do you think they eat? ❄️ ❄️</p>
<p>Do you think Santa gets sick of cookies?</p>	<p>What is Santa's favorite thing to eat for Breakfast?</p>

## Week 3 - Have a Laugh

Here's the thing, no matter how much we try to keep things simple and cozy, sometimes we get all stressed out anyways. This week we encourage you to laugh a little. The stressful moments of today might make for the best Christmas stories in the future.

One of the simplest ways to combat stress: smile. That, or delete things off your to-do list.

**One Cozy** If you do nothing else, here is one cozy thing to do this week:

Have a cozy hot cocoa, warm apple cider or tea with your kids. This doesn't have to be a preplanned event with special cups and home-made treats; it can be an impromptu cup of cocoa in the only clean cups you have left. Just invite your kids to hold the warm cup with two hands and take a moment to inhale the aroma and smile.

**Christmas Jokes:** The next page is your printable page of Christmas jokes.

You can print them and hide them in an advent calendar, put them in kids' lunches or include them in the bowl of conversation starters you might have out on the dining room table.

*"Our hearts grow tender with childhood memories and love of kindred, and we are better throughout the year for having, in spirit, become a child again at Christmas-time."*

— *Laura Ingalls Wilder*

<p>What do you call people who are afraid of Santa Claus?</p> <p>Claustrophobic. * ❄️❄️</p>	<p>Why does Santa have 3 gardens?</p> <p>So he can ho-ho-ho. ❄️❄️</p>
<p>What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?</p> <p>Frostbite</p>	<p>What do snowmen eat for breakfast?</p> <p>Ice Crispies.</p>
<p>What do you get if you cross mistletoe and a duck?</p> <p>A Christmas Quacker. ❄️ ❄️❄️</p>	<p>What do call Santa when he stops moving?</p> <p>Santa Pause!</p>
<p>Why was Santa's little helper depressed?</p> <p>Because he had low elf esteem.</p>	<p>Why do mummies love Christmas?</p> <p>Because of all the wrapping! ❄️</p>
<p>Where does a snowman keep his money?</p> <p>In a snow bank. ❄️❄️</p>	<p>Where do reindeer go to dance?</p> <p>Christmas balls! ❄️❄️</p>
<p>What do you call Frosty the Snowman in May?</p> <p>A puddle!</p>	<p>What do you get if you cross an apple and a Christmas tree?</p> <p>A Pineapple.</p>
<p>Which elf was the best singer?</p> <p>ELFis Presley.</p>	<p>What did Mrs. Claus say to Santa when she looked in the sky?</p> <p>"Looks like rain, dear." ❄️❄️</p>
<p>What do elves learn in school?</p> <p>The elf-abet. ❄️❄️</p>	<p>Who gives presents to baby sharks?</p> <p>Santa Jaws.</p>

## Week 4 - Being Present

Let go of the list and find a way to be present this week. Try one of these ideas:

- Breathe deeply for a moment and enjoy the sights and sounds around you, whatever they are.
- Look at your children and love ones in the eyes and hold their gaze for a moment.
- Set aside one of your tasks to be silly with your children for a few moments.

**One Cozy** *If you do nothing else, here is one cozy thing to do this week:*

Pause to look up, breathe deeply and take a mental picture of the moment, not the moment of your fantasies but this moment in all its imperfection and all its beauty.

**Sights and Sounds of Christmas:** *The next page is like a Christmas fill-in-the-blank for the senses. You may wish to print one for each person.*

Print multiple sheets and each person can fill out the page. These may even make for a nice poem. Your child might like to decorate the finished sheets and you can put your family's responses together to keep in the Christmas box and enjoy again next year.

This is not meant to be a forced poetry lesson, just a way to wake up to the present moment. Even if it's just you who reads through and notices these things it will help you become more present for the holiday, which benefits everyone.

# Sights, Sounds and Senses of Christmas

I see:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

I hear:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

I smell:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

I taste:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

I feel:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## A JOYFUL CHRISTMAS REMINDER

We are creating **Connection not Perfection**.  
When we look through our Children's eyes,  
instead of seeing a long to-do list, we can see  
the **Magic** of this season in the simple Joys  
that surround us. A bit of **Laughter** and a  
**Cheerful voice** is the perfect way to deck the  
halls. And the biggest **Present** we can give is  
our **Presence**.

Years from now our Children will look back  
and **Remember** the times we put worry and  
perfection aside, and **let them show us how to**  
**be Joyful**.