




International Christmas Party



Choose several activity options to learn how children in other countries celebrate.
Discover how Jesus is God's unearned gift to us.



Customs

Carols. Go outside and sing with candles as they do in Australia. Or for an African twist, parade through the church shouting, "Christ is coming!" and singing carols. Stop and sing for other groups, if some are meeting at the same time. Or maybe you'd like to sing around a bonfire, as people do in Lebanon. If it's too cold outside, make a fake fire with pieces of wood, tissue paper for flames and a flashlight underneath.

Love letters. Let the kids write letters of love to their parents, as children do in Italy at Christmas. If you're making Swedish hearts (see below), have children put the letters in them. Option: Bring supplies to make Christmas cards, and let children write love notes in the cards.

Shoes in the hall. Explain that in France, some children leave their shoes out on Christmas Eve so the baby Jesus can fill them with gifts. After games and activities, have children put their shoes in the hall so a club leader can fill them with treats in bags.

Projects

Swedish heart baskets. See directions in this pdf. Bring little treats or candies for kids to fill the baskets with. Suggest they give them to their family or hang them on their tree.

English Christmas crackers. See directions in this pdf. English kids love to snap these party favors open with a pop and watch the treats spill out.

Chinese red paper chains. (For your youngest club members.) Chinese Christians put red paper chains on their Christmas trees. Provide strips of red construction paper so kids can make chains to take home and put on their tree.

Matching Game

Print out copies of the Matching Game in this pdf. Hand them out to do during Snack. Let children make choices and practice the greetings. After snacking, read answers from the answer key in this pdf.

Snacks

Explain that in Ukraine on Christmas Eve, families have the Holy Supper, or Sviata Vechera. First they pray. Then the father says, 'Khris-tos rodyvsya!' ("Christ is born"). The others answer with 'Slavite Yoho!' (Let us glorify him"). Do these things together before snacking.

Choose a few sweet or savory snacks popular at Christmas, or mix and match. Some foods are available online. Or look for recipes.

Sweet choices:

Rice pudding with an almond hidden inside (Denmark, Sweden)

Stollen (German bread)

Marzipan pigs (German, Norwegian, Danish candy)

Dates (France)

Strawberries (New Zealand)

Pfeffernusse (German cookie)

Panettone (Italian Christmas bread)

"Wassail." Serve spiced apple cider in place of the spiced wine that the English enjoy at Christmas.

Savory choices (provide tiny paper cups to scoop samples into):

Pozole (Mexican stew)

Tamales (Mexico). Chicken soup. (Vietnam)

Sausages (Germany)

Potato salad (Czech Republic, Germany)

Macaroni salad (Germany). Tabouleh (Lebanon)



Games

Explain that in Greenland, Christmas dinner is followed by games.

Kangaroo, Skippyroo (Australia). (For your youngest club members.) Everyone sits in a circle. The kangaroo is in the center with eyes closed or blindfolded. Everyone claps and chants: Kangaroo, Skippyroo, / Dozing in the midday sun. Comes a hunter, / Run, run, run.

The club leader points to a child in the circle, who touches the kangaroo's shoulder and says, "Guess who caught you just for fun!" The kangaroo guesses who it is. Then they switch places.

El Reloj (El Salvador). This game is called the Clock. To add a Christmas theme to the regular game, figure out how many days there are until Christmas.

Players form a circle to make the clock face. One stands in the center with a long jump rope. The center player swings the rope in a circle along the ground. Players jump over it while counting in turn in Spanish (or another language of your choice): uno, dos, tres, cuatro, and so on, until they reach the number of days there are left 'til Christmas. This jumper says, "Feliz Navidad!" (fay-leess nah-vee-dahd). Then he or she becomes the rope turner. Anyone who misses also becomes the rope turner.

Korebe (Turkey). Play like tag, but IT is blindfolded. Children will enjoy seeing how close they can get to IT without getting caught. When someone is caught, blindfold him or her to be the new IT and start again.

Ram, Ram, Rip (Malaysia). Form pairs. One partner holds out a hand, palm up. The other partner puts an index finger on the palm. They say together, "Ram, ram, rip!" On "rip," the first partner tries to grab the second partner's finger before it can be snatched away.

Chasikelen (Ghana). For a Christmas spin on this game, draw a Christmas tree on large cardboard with a star-shaped hole cut in the top. One player tries to toss a ball into the hole while another player guards the hole and tries to bat the ball away with a stick. If you don't want to make a target, try using a hula hoop or a garbage can.

Devotional

In Lebanon at midnight on Christmas Eve, church bells ring out to call everyone to church. Ring a bell to gather everyone for Bible Exploration.

Object talk

In Germany and Austria, many children believe their gifts are brought by the "Christkind" or Christ Child. Even though she's called the "Christ Child," the Christkind (or Christkindl) looks like a young girl angel. She's got wings, white robes and a golden crown. Show a picture you've printed from the Internet.

In the city of Nuremburg, Germany, every year they pick a teenage girl to play the Christkind. She has lots of tasks each year. She visits kindergartens, nursing homes and children's hospitals. Children see her at Christmas markets. She even gives interviews on TV.

Children believe that the "Christ Child" puts gifts under their Christmas tree as a reward for good behavior.

Bible Talk

Show a picture of a nativity scene. (If your group will be too large to ask questions, simply turn the questions into statements.)

• **Who is the real Christ Child?** (Baby Jesus.)

We celebrate the real Christ Child, baby Jesus, at Christmas-time! Let's hear the story of his birth. Read Luke 2:4-7 (or 1-20).



Let's think about the differences between baby Jesus (show picture) and the Christkind (show picture).

The Christkind is said to put gifts under our tree. Listen for what gift Jesus came to earth to bring us. Read John 3:16.

- What gift did Jesus come to earth to bring us? (Life forever.)

The Christkind is said to give gifts for good behavior. Listen for what kind of good behavior it would take to get Jesus' gift of life forever. Read Ephesians 2:8-9.

- What good behavior would it take from us to get Jesus' gift? (It doesn't depend on behavior; we can't ever be good enough.)

The verses say God saves us when we believe in Jesus. We need to be saved because we have all done wrong things and we deserve to be punished. That sounds pretty gloomy. But great news! God loves us so much that he sent Jesus to earth to be born as a little baby. (Show picture.) He grew up and he took our punishment for the wrong things we've done. That's how much he loves us!

The verse says when we have faith, when we believe that Jesus is God's Son and that he came to take our punishment, God saves us. He gives us life forever. What an awesome, special gift that no Christkind (show picture) could ever give us.

If you want to know more about getting God's special gift this Christmas, talk to me or one of the other club leaders before the end of the party.

Talk to God

Dear Jesus, thank you for being our real Christ Child. Thank you that you don't expect us to earn your good gift of forgiveness and life forever. Thank you that you offer it to us for free and all we have to do is believe in you. Amen.

Bible Memory

Make separate posters for Luke 2:6-7a, John 3:16 and Ephesians 2:8-9.

In Poland, reciting Bible verses is a common part of the Christmas season. Let volunteers take turns coming up, choosing a poster, holding it up



How to Make English Christmas Crackers

Supplies:

- toilet paper tube
- tissue paper
- ribbon
- scissors
- stickers or old Christmas wrapping paper
- small candies, toys, confetti
- glue
- optional: hole punch, colored paper, markers

Cut a full sheet of tissue paper 4-5 inches (10-12 cm) longer than the toilet paper tube. Wrap the tissue around the tube with the same amount hanging at each end. Tie ribbon around the tissue on one end to close it.

Fill with candies, tiny toys and confetti. Make confetti using a hole punch and colored paper, if desired. Close with another piece of ribbon. Decorate with stickers, Christmas paper or drawings.

In England, “crackers” are given at parties. Hold both ends of the cracker and pull sharply. One end will “crack” open and the goodies will spill out.



Swedish Heart Baskets

Supplies:



- copies of templates
- red cardstock
- yarn
- pencils
- white cardstock
- candies or small treats
- scissors
- hole punches



1. Cut out two templates per child, or enough to share.
2. Fold 8.5 x 11 inch cardstock in half, short ends together. Set a template on the cardstock, with the flat end of the template along the fold. Trace the template and cut out the cardstock. Make sure to cut all the way up the slits so there's room to weave. Make one cutout from white and one from red cardstock.
3. Set the cutouts in front of you as shown, still folded. Take the #1 red loop and slide it into the #1 white loop. Take the #2 white loop and slide into the #1 red loop. Slide the #1 red loop into the #3 white. Slide the #4 white into the #1 red. Slide the #1 red into the #5 white.

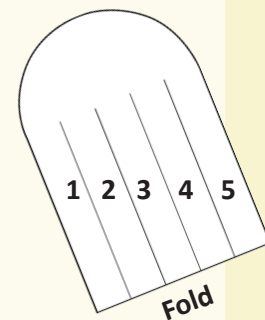
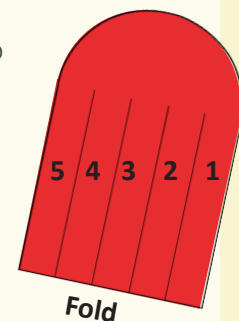
It may help kids keep track if they say, "Red into white, white into red, red into white, white into red, red into white."

4. Slide the red cutout all the way into the white slits.
5. Now take the #1 white loop and thread it into the #2 red loop. #2 red slides into the #2 white. #3 white slides into #2 red. #2 red slides into #4 white. #5 white slides into #2 red.

This step goes: "White into red, red into white, white into red," and so on.

6. Each time you finish weaving a loop, slide the red cutout all the way into the white slits.
7. For the #3 red loop, repeat the pattern in step 3.
8. For the #4 red loop, repeat the pattern in step 5.
9. For the #5 red loop, repeat the pattern in step 3.

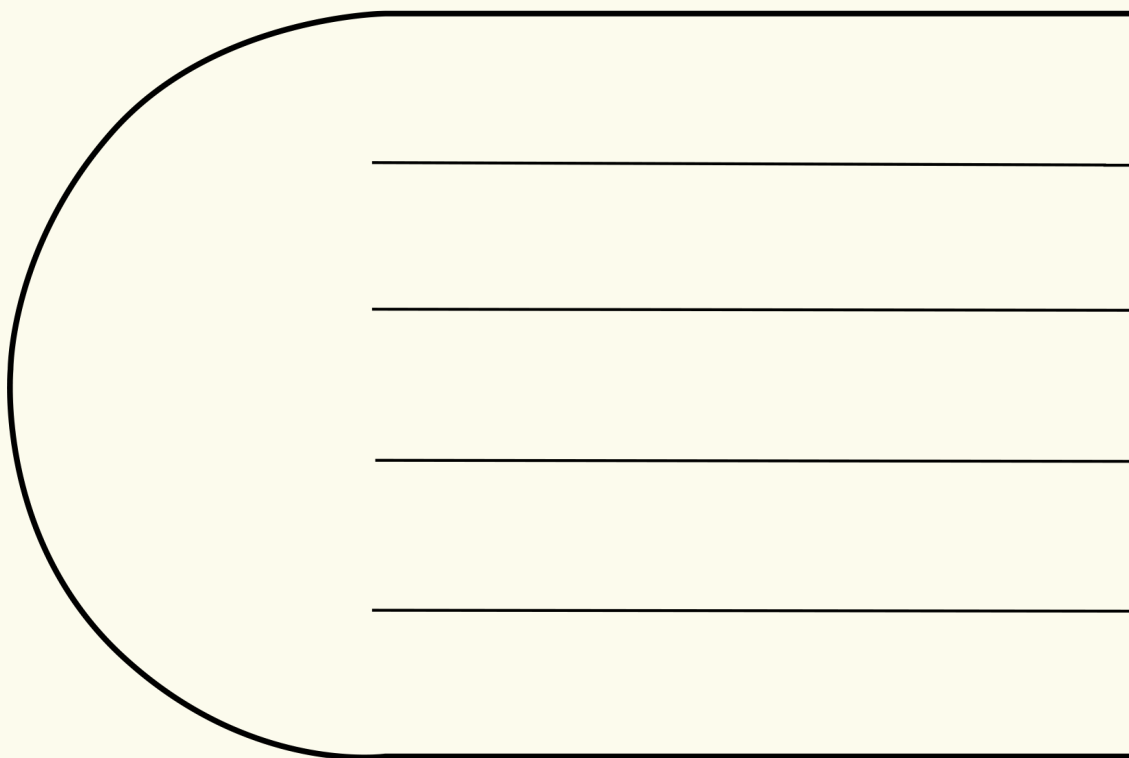
10. Punch a hole through the top middle of both layers. String yarn through for a handle. Fill with little treats.



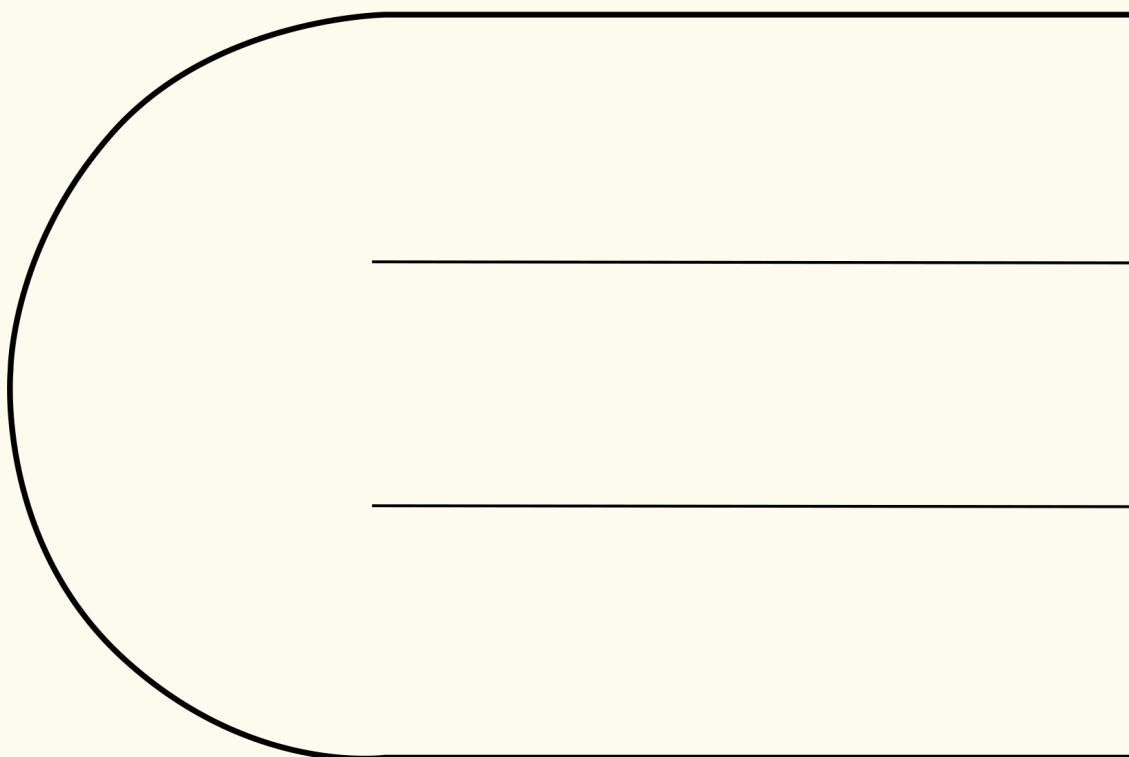
Hint:

Keep the red loops that are unwoven folded up to keep them out of your way

Swedish Heart Baskets Template



Template for
older kids



Template for
younger kids

(Scooters may
do better making
one dimensional
woven shapes
rather than
true baskets)



Matching Game

Match the ways to say "Merry Christmas" with the languages they come from.

Portuguese

Sing Dan Fai Lo (sing dahn fi lah)

Thai

Glaedelig Jul (gilly yool)

French

Joyeux Noel (zhoy-uh no-ell)

German

Frohliche Weihnachten (FRER-licka VI-nock-tin)

Cantonese (China)

Kala Christouyenna (ka-LAH krees-TOO-yenna)

Hawaiian

Mele Kalikimaka (MEH-lay kuh-LEE-kee-MAH-ka)

Italian

Buon Natale (BWOH-nah-TAH-leh)

Cantonese (China)

Feliz Natal (fay-leess nah-tahl)

Russian

S Rozdestvom Khristovym
(ss rahzh-deest-VOHM Chrest-OHV-im)

Swedish

God Jul (god yool)

Tagalog (Philippines)

Maligayang Pasko (ma-lee-gah-yahng pahs-koh)


Danish

Souksaan Wan Christmas (sook-sahn-wahn cris-mahss)


Welsh

Nadolig Llawen (nah-DOH-lick LAH-wen)





Matching Game Answer Key



Hawaiian ————— Sing Dan Fai Lo (sing dahn fi lah)

Welsh ————— Glaedelig Jul (glilly yool)

Italian ————— Joyeux Noel (zhoy-uh no-ell)

Portuguese ————— Frohliche Weihnachten (FRER-licka VI-nock-tin)

Russian ————— Kala Christouyenna (ka-LAH krees-TOO-yenna)

Tagalog (Philippines) ————— Mele Kalikimaka (MEH-lay kuh-LEE-kee-MAH-ka)

French ————— Buon Natale (BWOH-nah-TAH-leh)

German ————— Feliz Natal (fay-leess nah-tahl)

Greek ————— S Rozdestvom Khristovym
(ss rahzh-deest-VOHM Chrest-OHV-im)

Thai ————— God Jul (god yool)

Cantonese (China) ————— Maligayang Pasko (ma-lee-gah-yahng pahs-koh)

Swedish ————— Souksaan Wan Christmas (sook-sahn-wahn cris-mahss)

Danish ————— Nadolig Llawen (nah-DOH-lick LAH-wen)



International Christmas Party NIV Bible Memory Cards



Special Event International Christmas Party

And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.
She wrapped Him in cloths and placed Him
in a manger, because there was
no guest room available for them.

Luke 2:7 (NIV)



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International Christmas Party ESV Bible Memory Cards



Special Event International Christmas Party

And she gave birth to her firstborn son
and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths
and laid Him in a manger,
because there was no place for them in the inn.

Luke 2:7 (ESV)



Special Event International Christmas Party

And she gave birth to her firstborn son
and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths
and laid Him in a manger,
because there was no place for them in the inn.

Luke 2:7 (ESV)



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Luke 2:7 (ESV)



Special Event International Christmas Party

For those whom He foreknew He also
predestined to be conformed to the image
of His Son, in order that He might be the
firstborn among many brothers.

Romans 8:29 (ESV)



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Luke 2:7 (ESV)



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and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths
and laid Him in a manger,
because there was no place for them in the inn.

Luke 2:7 (ESV)

International Christmas Party KJV Bible Memory Cards



Special Event International Christmas Party

And she brought forth her firstborn son,
and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes,
and laid Him in a manger; because there was
no room for them in the inn.

Luke 2:7 (KJV)



Special Event International Christmas Party

And she brought forth her firstborn son,
and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes,
and laid Him in a manger; because there was
no room for them in the inn.

Luke 2:7 (KJV)



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Luke 2:7 (KJV)



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