



REWRAPPING CHRISTMAS

Share your best gifts this season

FAMILY CONVERSATION GUIDE - A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR JESUS (THE REWRAPPING CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE)

FOCUS: This Christmas, let's focus on the greatest gift-giver of all, God, and His generosity toward us. As we explore all the amazing gifts God gives to us, we will find that your most significant presents, to both give and receive, are wrapped very differently this year. We hope our "rewrapping" focus and our challenge activity will help each one of us move away from our consumer culture's version of gifting and "rewrap" Christmas to receive with gratitude and give with generosity the very best kind of gifts, shifting our focus away from ourselves toward others.

THE REWRAPPING CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE: Ask God to show you a specific person you know to serve or care for in a practical way this Christmas, meeting a need, whether emotional, physical, spiritual, or a combination. Meet this individual's need as your identifiable special gift to Jesus for Christmas.

1) THINKING TOGETHER

Discuss in a family gathering the following concepts:

- Let's think about Christmas. Whose birthday are we celebrating? Why do you think it might be easy for us to forget that?
- If it's Jesus' birthday, why do you imagine we give each other presents?
(Though the history of gift-giving during this season is available in many versions online, the point of this question is to foster conversation about our focus of giving and receiving gifts during Christmas. Positively, many Christians use this tradition as a way to remember the three wise men bringing gifts to Jesus at his birth. At the same time, as we reflect, we know that this tradition can distract us from the "birthday boy" and the good gifts God has given us.)
- It's funny, but on his own birthday, Jesus gave US gifts. He is the best gift-giver. What are some of the gifts that Jesus gives us? He gives us life, peace, forgiveness, and purpose just to name a few. Most importantly, He gives us Himself. Those are way better presents than just stuff we see on TV or we see our friends have. What if we focused on thanking God for all His good gifts and think about how we can give really, really good gifts (like what God says are good gifts) to others this Christmas?

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- AND, what if as a family we pick a way to give Jesus a very specific special gift this Christmas for His birthday?

2) LEARNING TOGETHER

- How in the world will be able give something to Jesus when He isn't with us on earth right now? He was with us on earth when he was born and the wise men could bring him actual presents. He will be coming back in the future to earth to set up His kingdom so we could give him gifts. But, right now while He is in heaven, how could we give him a special Christmas gift just from our family?
- Let's look in the bible to see if Jesus can give us any ideas. Read Matthew 25:35-40:
Jesus is talking and says . . .
35 I was hungry. And you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty. And you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger. And you invited me in. 36 I needed clothes. And you gave them to me. I was sick. And you took care of me. I was in prison. And you came to visit me.' 37 "Then the people who have done what is right will answer him. 'Lord,' they will ask, 'when did we see you hungry and feed you? When did we see you thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you as a stranger and invite you in? When did we see you needing clothes and give them to you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' 40 "The King [Jesus, when he comes back] will reply, 'What I'm about to tell you is true. Anything you did for one of the least important of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' (New International Reader's Version)
- So from what Jesus just said, how can we give Him gifts? (By caring for, serving, supporting, befriending, or helping someone we know with a need.)
- What are some needs people have?

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- o **Emotional Needs:** Some people need some emotional support, like a visit or a thoughtful card.
- o **Physical Needs:** Some people need something physical, like fixing something or paying for something they can't afford.
- o **Spiritual Needs:** Some people need something spiritual, like hearing the good news of the Jesus or an invitation to church, or your home on Christmas eve and/or Christmas day.

3) PRAYING TOGETHER

- What if we ask God to show us a person who we know with a need that our family could take care of in some way this month before Christmas? It might be by serving or encouraging or inviting or giving or helping or some other way. That could be our **special Christmas present for Jesus!** Let's together, as a family, pray about this every day for a week, asking God for ideas of who we can care for as a **special Christmas present for Jesus.**
- Here's the plan: Each of us can pray by ourselves everyday and ask God for ideas, and we can pray together every night at dinner/ before bed/at breakfast. Then, next week on _____, we'll have another family gathering, write all of our ideas on a big poster, and see which one we think God wants us to pick for our **special Christmas present for Jesus.**
- Close your family gathering in in a simple prayer.
Sample family prayer: *Dear God, help us give the best gives to each other and other people this Christmas. Gifts like you give. Please give us ideas and show us how we can give a special Christmas gift to Jesus this Christmas. We want to show you how thankful we are for all your gifts to us. (let each person that wants to pray)*

4) OBEYING TOGETHER

- Work your plan for the week, reminding each other to pray on your own and praying together once a day as a family in a very simple way.
Sample family prayer: *Dear God, help us give the best gives to each other and other people this Christmas. Gifts like you give. Please give us ideas and show us how we can give a special Christmas gift to Jesus this Christmas. We want to show you how thankful we are for all your gifts to us.*
- In your family meeting, ask, "Who do we know who has a need, and how can we meet it?" Record ideas on a poster board.
Some Ideas to Consider:
 - o **Emotional Needs**
 - Bake cookies and hand deliver them with a note of encouragement
 - Spend time with someone (treat them to a movie, go for a walk in the park or do something they enjoy)
 - Call someone on the phone and remind them that they are special and loved (and while you're on the phone invite them to do something with you, like have a meal together)
 - o **Physical Needs:**
 - Pay a bill, such as a phone, electric or rent
 - Mow a lawn and leave a potted plant on the front porch
 - Fix something that is broken, such as a fence or AC/Heater
 - o **Spiritual Needs:**
 - Invite someone to attend a Christmas service (and let them know that you'll drive them)
 - Make plans for someone to spend Christmas eve and/or day with your family
 - Enjoy lunch (you pay!) with someone, share the gospel, and give them a Bible
- Do it! Pick a person to care for and make arrangements to follow through as a family on your **special gift for Jesus.**
- Celebrate and remember your **special gift for Jesus** by hanging the special Hill Country memory ornament on your tree as a family.