

Christmas Around the World



Produced by:



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Resource Kit Objectives:

- Increase global and cultural awareness
- Develop an understanding of God's love for the nations
- Foster a spirit of generosity and compassion toward others

How does this work?

There are many resources included in the Resource Kit, but don't feel like you need to use them all! Choose the activities that are best suited to your situation and needs. You might read about the location and pray for the needs listed as part of your personal or family devotions. Activities could be completed individually or incorporated into children's programming or women's ministries. Print off the materials and distribute to corps members or send out digitally with your corps newsletter.

If you use the resource in some way or complete the craft, post a comment or photo on our social media pages:

Facebook: @sa.w.missions

Instagram: @saworldmissions

Bible Lesson

What does the Bible say?

Luke 2:8-11 (International Children's Bible) - "That night, some shepherds were in the fields nearby watching their sheep. An angel of the Lord stood before them. The glory of the Lord was shining around them, and suddenly they became very frightened. The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. Today your Savior was born in David's town. He is Christ, the Lord."

Discussion

What does the scripture tell us about God?

What does the scripture tell us about ourselves?

What does this scripture tell us about the world?

Summary

While the scripture may be familiar—a passage from the Christmas story—there are many important lessons and truths for us in these verses. Jesus Christ the Lord came as a Savior for all people. While different countries and cultures have various ways to celebrate Christmas, we as Believers all rejoice over the same event, that Christ came to earth as our Savior! Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

Action

- Pray and thank God for sending His Son to be our Savior.
 - Christmas is a time when we often give gifts to one another. What meaningful gifts you can give this Christmas season? You may want to give a financial contribution to the Share Your Christmas Joy® campaign to allow children around the world to have a special Christ celebration. Maybe you would like select an Angel Tree tag and purchase a gift for a child or bake some cookies to share with a local retirement home.
 - There is a lot of excitement and tradition with Christmas but be sure to keep your focus on Christ during this season.
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Christmas in the Caribbean

Languages: Creole, Dutch, English, French, Surinamese

“Merry Christmas” in Creole: Jwaye Nowe

Though the weather in the Caribbean is quite different from our Christmas-time weather in the USA Midwest, there are some similarities in the traditions of the season. Christmas trees or decorated pine branches, nativity scenes, and even Salvation Army Christmas kettles are all common in the Caribbean.



There is some variance in the Christmas menu between the various Caribbean countries. In Jamaica, Christmas Day breakfast includes ackee and saltfish, breadfruit, fried plantains, boiled bananas and freshly squeezed juice. The Christmas dinner usually consists of chicken, curry goat, stewed oxtail, rice and peas. In Haiti the main Christmas meal is called “reveillon”, meaning “to wake up”, and lasts from the very early hours of Christmas morning until dawn. Throughout the islands of the Caribbean, black cake, which is often prepared a few weeks in advance, is a popular dessert.

Members of The Salvation Army often visit local hospitals on Christmas morning to bring gifts and a Christmas program to patients who are in the hospital for the holiday.

Activity:

Black Cake recipe—

<https://metemgee.com/non-alcoholic-guyanese-black-cake/>

Pray: Pray for cooperation and partnership between the churches and non-profit organizations in the Caribbean. Pray for government leaders.

Christmas in Congo (Brazzaville)

Languages: French, Kikongo, Kituba, Lingala, Vili

“Merry Christmas” in French: Joyeux Noël

In the Republic of Congo, the Christmas celebration is strongly tied to religious celebrations instead of commercial traditions. Some Salvation Army corps hold special Christmas services featuring the musical groups of the corps. This is a special time of celebrating the birth of the Savior!



Some families exchange a few small gifts. A Christmas meal might include a starch such as cassava, potatoes or plantains along with fish or pork. Many are not able to regularly afford meat, so this is a special treat at Christmas time!

The average temperatures in December are in the 80s. The warm weather allows families to enjoy a special Christmas outing to a park where they can play games and enjoy each others' company.

Activity: Same and Different—Fold a blank sheet of paper in half. On one half of the paper, draw a picture that shows a similarity between how Christmas is celebrated in Congo Brazzaville and your own celebration of Christmas. On the other half of the paper, draw a picture that highlights a difference between your Christmas celebration and the Christmas celebrations in Congo Brazzaville.

Pray: Pray for expansion of ministry throughout Congo Brazzaville and Gabon. Pray for the youth of the territory.

Christmas in India

Languages in India South Eastern: English, Malayalam, Tamil
“Merry Christmas” in Tamil:
கிறிஸ்துமஸ் வாழ்த்துக்கள் (Kiristumas vāittukka!)

As only 6% of the population in India are Christian, Christmas is a small celebration when compared with other religious festivals. However, Christmas is a well-respected holiday by people of different religions. Most of the Churches/Corps will make a big star that can be as large as 20 feet tall. Small stars are also hung up outside of homes, regardless of the religion of its residents.



Christmas caroling is a very important tradition for Christians because it allows them to spread good news that the King is born! The corps members might begin caroling by visiting every family in the corps and then also be invited by other religious people to visit their homes. The caroling group will sing a few Christmas hymns, read Scripture, and wish the family a Merry Christmas. The families that are visited sometimes offer snacks to the carolers and a small offering that is given to the church.

It is the expectation that Christians invite their friends of other religions and faiths to their home for Christmas cake. This is a great way to share about Jesus’s birth and show hospitality to those who are not Christians.

Activity: Christmas star craft—

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajmyK0TQFSE>

Pray: Pray that the love of Christ would be evident as Christians invite their friends of other faiths into their homes during this season.

Christmas in Kenya

Language: English, Kiswahili

“Merry Christmas” in Kiswahili: Kuwa na Krismasi Njema

In Kenya, Christmas is known as a time for families to gather together. Homes and churches are decorated with colorful balloons, ribbons, paper decorations, flowers and green leaves. Palm trees or Cyprus trees are often decorated with fake snow and bells. Most places in Kenya do not have snow, but this is a tradition that they have adopted from places with cooler climates.

During Christmas, church choirs visit homes to greet people, sing Christmas carols, and dance together.

The Christmas meal often will include barbecued meat such as goat, sheep, beef or chicken, served with rice and flat bread.

Rice pudding is commonly served for dessert.



In Kenya there is much more focus on celebrating Jesus’ birth than there is on exchanging gifts. If gifts are exchanged they are often homemade.

The day after Christmas, called Boxing Day, is also a holiday in Kenya. On this day celebrations may continue, more family may be visited, or people may spend the day resting after their Christmas celebration.

Activity: Rice pudding recipe—<https://www.onegreenplanet.org/vegan-recipe/african-sweet-rice/>

Pray: Pray for unity and peace in Kenya.

Christmas in Sri Lanka

Language: English, Sinhala, Tamil

“Merry Christmas” in Sinhala: ජරිනීමත් නත්තලක්
(prītimat nattalak)

In Sri Lanka, fireworks on December first signal the beginning of the Christmas season! While less than 10% of the population are Christians, people of all faiths celebrate Christmas as a time of sharing, giving, and spending time with family. During this season, many homes and businesses are decorated with lights and Christmas trees.



On Christmas many enjoy roast turkey. Christmas cake is also a special treat that is made weeks in advance of the celebration.

Many Christians attend a midnight church service on Christmas Eve. Sometimes Christmas Day church services are also held.

Carol sings are another Christmas tradition that Christians enjoy throughout the season. Groups often visit local nursing homes, hospitals, and orphanages to share carols together. Some of The Salvation Army Corps share their music in local malls and shopping areas, or host carol services in their corps building.

Activity: Attend a carol service at a local church or community center. Or gather a few friends and assemble your own caroling group. Visit the homes of friends and family to spread some Christmas cheer!

Pray: Pray for the growth of the church in Sri Lanka.