

People Are Born To Shine!

A newsletter rooted in the Christian faith created to inspire and support all people, irrespective of nationality, race, and religion.



EMOTIONAL HEALTH

EXCERPTS REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION

Ways to Keep Christ in Christmas

Stay focused on Jesus this holiday season.

Don't get wrapped up in stack of presents and baking cookies, rather keep your focus on what is truly important – the birth of Jesus Christ.

Each year in Christian circles there's usually some heated discussion about Christmas. Conversations about how the religious holiday has become too secular, overly centered on shopping, and no longer about Jesus' birth. While most Christians agree with these issues, it can be hard to figure out what to do about it.

We've come up with simple things you can do to keep your focus on Jesus— no theology degree required! This is not a mandatory to-do list, but rather a few ideas to remind yourself, your family and your friends about the real reason for the season. There are some surprisingly simple ways to honor the holiness of Jesus' birth.

OBSERVE ADVENT WITH YOUR FAMILY

It offers the opportunity to pause and consider the state of our souls, not our shopping lists.

LIGHT ADVENT CANDLES

This is a way your children can get more involved in the holiday as well. Reflect on each Advent reading and discuss it as a family and how you plan to execute its lesson in your daily life.

WRITE CHRISTMAS, NOT X-MAS

It helps you share the meaning of Christmas with others. To share Christ is beautiful



In this issue

Interesting Facts about Gingerbread
The different types likely share a common origin.

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Give your child opportunities to practice.

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Driving Safely This Holiday Season
The holiday season brings a number challenges that make safe driving difficult.

www.najicherfanfoundation.org

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Interesting Facts about Gingerbread

Gingerbread is a sweet food product flavored with ginger and typically using honey or molasses rather than just sugar. Gingerbread foods vary, ranging from a soft, moist loaf cake to something close to a ginger biscuit. The different types likely share a common origin.

Originally, the term gingerbread referred to preserved ginger. It then referred to a confection made with honey and spices. Gingerbread is often used to translate the French term pain d'épices or the German term Lebkuchen or Pfefferkuchen.

Gingerbread was brought to Europe in 992 by the Armenian monk Gregory of Nicopolis. He taught gingerbread baking to French Christians.

During the 13th century, gingerbread was brought to Sweden by German immigrants. In 15th century, an early references from the Vadstena Abbey show how the Swedish nuns were baking gingerbread to ease indigestion in 1444.

The first documented trade of gingerbread biscuits dates to the 17th century, where they were sold in monasteries, pharmacies and town square farmers' markets. In Medieval England gingerbread was thought to have medicinal properties.

In England, gingerbread may refer to a cake, or a type of cookie/biscuit made with ginger. In the biscuit form, it commonly takes the form of a gingerbread man. Gingerbread men were first attributed to Queen Elizabeth I, who allegedly served the figurines to foreign dignitaries. Today, however, they are generally served around Christmas.

In Germany gingerbread is made in two forms: a soft form called Lebkuchen and a harder form, particularly associated with carnivals and street



markets such as the Christmas markets that occur in many German towns.

In the Nordic countries, the most popular form of ginger confection is the pepperkaker. They are thin, very brittle cookies / biscuits that are particularly associated with the extended Christmas period.

In Switzerland, a gingerbread confection known as "biber" is typically a three-quarter inch thick rectangular gingerbread cake with a marzipan filling.

In the Netherlands and Belgium, a soft and crumbly gingerbread called Peperkoek, Kruidkoek or Ontbijtkoek is popularly served at breakfast time or during the day, thickly sliced and often with butter on top.

In Poland, gingerbreads are known as pierniki. The most famous are called Toruń gingerbread, a traditional Polish gingerbread that has been produced since the Middle Ages in the city of Toruń.

In Romania, gingerbread is called turtă dulce and is usually coated with sugar glazing.

In Brazil, a type of cake similar to gingerbread is known as pão de mel, it can be as big as a coffee cake, or bite-sized, and it's usually coated with chocolate.

There is also a very popular local variety of gingerbread in Bulgaria. It's called меденка ("made of honey"). Traditionally the cookie is as big as the palm of the hand, round and flat, covered in a thin layer of chocolate. Other common ingredients include honey, cinnamon, ginger and dried clove. It is also made in Karakol.

Source: confectionarychalet.com

How To Teach Your Child To Say Thank You For Holiday Presents

The best time to teach your preschooler to say thank you for presents received over the holidays is beforehand.

DEMONSTRATE HOW TO RECEIVE A PRESENT WITH THE PROPER WORDS AND ACTIONS

You could introduce a lesson on receiving a present by saying, "I'd like to show you what to do when you receive a present." Demonstrate the actions along with the appropriate words.

GIVE YOUR CHILD OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE

Repetition is essential for young children to learn social graces. You should give your child as many opportunities to practice as possible before your child is actually given a present. Be creative.

BE SPECIFIC IN YOUR ENCOURAGEMENT WHEN YOUR CHILD REMEMBERS THE PROPER ETIQUETTE TECHNIQUE

DON'T CRITICIZE OR EMBARRASS YOUR CHILD IN PUBLIC IF HE OR SHE FORGETS THE ETIQUETTE TECHNIQUE

Remember that young children need lots of practice. Repeat the lesson again later. Give more opportunities for practice.

Source: livingmontessorinow.com



Loving Father,

Help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be Thy children, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

— ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Prayer Corner

How To Have An Eco-Friendly Green Christmas Holiday

Green is one of the traditional colors of the Christmas season, but the green we have in mind is the environmentally friendly kind. Here's a list of some eco-friendly, energy saving tips that will put you at the top of Santa's nice list this holiday season.

USE LED LIGHTS

These small Light Emitting Diodes use 80% less energy and last 10 times longer than incandescent bulbs, plus they're cool to the touch.

LIMIT LIGHTING

Turn Christmas trees on only when you're in the room to enjoy them. Turn outside decorations off before you go to bed at night, or put them on a timer.

SEND E-CARDS

Replace snail mail cards and letters with e-cards and e-mails to save paper and mailing expense. It also will reduce your carbon footprint since it eliminates the fuel used for transporting standard mail.

SHOP ONLINE

Rather than burning gas driving around searching for that perfect Christmas present, shop online instead.

GIVE GREEN GIFTS

Consider giving eco-friendly or homemade gifts to those on your shopping list. Purchased green presents include: Energy saving items- Books on green living- Bicycles- Mass transit passes- Gift certificates to health food stores or organic restaurants- Membership in an organic farm or co-op- Donations to organizations that support the environment.

Homemade presents include: Baked goods and other food items- Paintings and photographs- Pottery and ceramics- Sewing and knitting- Handmade ornaments- Woodworking projects.

ECO-FRIENDLY GIFT WRAPPING

Buy gift wrap made from recycled materials- Make your own gift wrap from cloth and other materials- Save wrapping paper from gifts you receive to use next year- Reuse boxes for shipping and gifts, rather than buying new ones- Recycle wrapping paper and boxes rather than throwing them away.

GREEN CHRISTMAS TREE

Visit a local Christmas tree farm and cut down your own tree.



Try to find an organic tree farm that is pesticide free to reduce the toxins in your home. An even greener option is to buy a live Christmas tree then plant it in your yard after the holidays are over.

MAKE NATURAL DECORATIONS

Rather than buying plastic ornaments, wreaths, and decorations shipped from overseas, make your own from pine cones, holly, seashells, river stones, and evergreen branches.

RECYCLE DECORATIONS

After the holidays, but sure to recycle your Christmas tree and other natural decorations rather than sending them to the landfill.

REDUCE TRAVEL

Between shopping, trips to visit relatives, and the flurry of parties and other activities, the holiday season often involves a lot of travel, which in turn adds more pollutants to the atmosphere.

SAVE ENERGY

While saving energy is a good idea anytime of year, it's especially important to address during the holidays with a long winter ahead. Here are some ways to reduce your energy bills while helping the environment at the same time:

- Consider limiting your fireplace use this year, and be sure to close the damper once the fire is completely out.
- Turn down your thermostat when you're asleep or not at home, or install a programmable one.
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescents to reduce your lighting bill by 75%.
- Adding insulation to your attic is the best way to reduce your heating and air conditioning bills.

Source: todayshomeowner.com

6 Tips for Driving Safely This Holiday Season



The holiday season brings a number of challenges that make safe driving difficult. During this time of year, there can be difficult weather conditions, limited daylight, and drivers in unfamiliar areas. Here are six ways you can drive safely and smartly this holiday season.

1. PLAN AHEAD

Before you start your trip, make sure your vehicle is in good shape for travel. This is especially important for winter driving conditions. Check the weather before heading out to ensure the roads are safe to drive on. And don't forget a windshield scraper!

2. STAY FRESH AND ALERT

Make sure you're well-rested before a long drive. Plan the trip so you share the driving and take regular breaks to avoid drowsy driving.

3. MIND YOUR SPEED

Give yourself plenty of time and distance to react to the traffic around you. For every one percent increase in speed, a driver's chance of an accident increases by two percent, the chance of serious injury increases by three percent, and the chance of a fatality increases by about four percent.

4. DRIVE DEFENSIVELY

Increased holiday traffic and winter road conditions can be frustrating. Put the safety of everyone in your car first by letting impatient and aggressive drivers pass you or go through the intersection ahead of you so that you control the situation.

5. DON'T DRIVE IMPAIRED

If you plan to drink, don't plan to drive. Using a designated driver when you have a couple of holiday refreshments is always the safest choice.

6. AVOID DISTRACTIONS

Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for five seconds. Driving requires your full attention. When you're able to do so safely, pull off to the side of the road or find the nearest rest stop when you have to use your cell phone.

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CLICK to join us for daily news and inspirational messages!



Source: motus.com

Christmas Child

He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. — Philippians 2:7

Imagine the One who made cedars spring from seeds starting life over as an embryo; the One who made the stars submitting Himself to a womb; the One who fills the heavens becoming what would be in our day a mere dot on an ultrasound. Jesus, in very nature God, making Himself nothing (Philippians 2:6-7). What an astonishing thought!

Imagine the scene as He's born in a plain peasant village, among shepherds and angels and bright lights in the sky, with the bleating of animals His first lullabies. Watch as He grows in favor and stature: as a youngster, astounding teachers with answers to grand questions; as a young man at the Jordan, getting His Father's approval from heaven; and in the wilderness, as He wrestles in hunger and prayer.

Watch next as He launches His world-changing mission— healing the sick, touching lepers, forgiving the impure. Watch as He kneels in a garden in anguish and as they arrest Him while His closest friends flee. Watch as He is spat on and nailed to two wooden posts, the world's sins on His shoulders. But watch, yes watch, as the stone rolls away, an empty tomb ringing hollow, because He is alive!

Watch as He is lifted to the highest place (v. 9). Watch as His name fills heaven and earth (vv. 10-11).

This Maker of the stars who became a dot on an ultrasound. This, our Christmas Child.

—Sheridan Voysey

Source: odb.org



REFLECT & PRAY

What would life and history be like had Jesus never been born? What prayer or poem can you offer God to thank Him?

Jesus, thank You for making Yourself nothing so I could be forgiven.

Will You Further NCF's Work?

The Naji Cherfan Foundation was founded after the passing of the beloved Naji Cherfan. Our main goal is to praise the Lord through community work.

The foundation works to improve the quality of life of the poorest of the poor of all ages, both those who are healthy and those with health problems, and those with brain injury of any kind, resulting from accident, stroke, etc, while promoting Christian values.

If you like the work NCF is doing and wish to participate, we invite you to become a member of our Board. The goal is to share our inspiration and activities in your country.

Please contact us for more information at +961 (0)4 522221.

info@najicherfanfoundation.org

Quotable!

“In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.”

— Albert Camus

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in God's eyes.

BAKE A BIRTHDAY CAKE FOR JESUS

This will help the Christmas story come alive for young children in a tangible way.

READ THE BIBLE

Reading the nativity story straight from the Bible will help refresh your memory of all the little details. Find a Bible devotional to go along with your reading, so you can get the most out of it.

DECORATE YOUR TREE WITH CHRISTIAN ORNAMENTS

Instead of shiny silver balls and big bows, use manger scenes, angels and other tangible reminders of the religious reason for the holiday to decorate your Christmas tree.

SEND CHRISTIAN CHRISTMAS CARDS

Chose Christmas cards that include Bible verses or Christian artwork. This is a way to proudly share with your friends and family that you are a Christian that is ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, and not the arrival of Santa.

TRIM YOUR SHOPPING LIST

Giving gifts at Christmas can be a beautiful way to remember God's gift of His Son to the world. Review your list and consider who you most want to give a gift to, and replace the gift with something that feels appropriate.

VISIT A SICK OR HOMEBOUND FRIEND OR RELATIVE

Those who are alone or sick this season shouldn't be forgotten, this is exactly what Jesus would want us to do.

SET UP A NATIVITY SCENE IN YOUR HOME

The nativity scene is a staple icon of Christmas. It depicts the time where Mary and Joseph came into a stable and gave birth to the King, Jesus Christ.

FORGIVE SOMEONE

Jesus came to forgive our sins, and we, too, are obligated to forgive. Prayerfully consider who and how to forgive, whether it's a person you need to ask for forgiveness, or a private moment between you and God.

VOLUNTEER TO HELP THE HOMELESS

Volunteer at a shelter, make a donation, or make a monthly commitment for the coming year to volunteer. Volunteering helps teach you about kindness, humility and respect for others.

ATTEND A CHRISTMAS EVE OR CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE

With family obligations it can be challenging to find time to get to church, but make a church visit a family affair, so that before Christmas dinner, you've had time to worship and reflect on how much Jesus truly loves you.

INVITE A FRIEND TO CHURCH

If you've got a good friend who's not a church-goer, or a friend who's in need of a spiritual boost, invite them to come to church with you. It helps to build your relationship with them while also sharing the amazing Word of Jesus.

FOLLOW THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR

The joy of Christ's birth isn't limited to one day. In fact, Advent marks the start, not the end, of the liturgical year. After Christmas, consider how you might let the seasons of the liturgical calendar shape your faith journey in the year to come.

Keeping Christ in Christmas is very easy if you put a little bit of effort into it. Your faith should always trump anything secular about the holiday. Don't get wrapped up in stack of presents and baking cookies, rather keep your focus on what is truly important – the birth of Jesus Christ.

Source: beliefnet.com



How I Remember Naji...

Excerpt from *Virtual Patience*

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On June 8, 1999 Naji Cherfan wrote these words and faxed them to a friend in Greece:

“While in Canada I came to realize there wasn’t much wrong with me. So what if my left hand and my right leg are not 100%. After all, nobody’s perfect. I am very lucky. Some people don’t have any legs or arms. I have to accept things and improve on myself as much as possible, be happy with myself first as I am and then do my best to improve. There will be no limitations to what my mind can achieve”.



Ten years after the brain injury which stole his sight, speech and ability to move, this young man is making his dreams come true. He has learned that patience is a virtue and he’s putting it to good use. The journey from accident-to-coma-to-therapy-to-a normal life continues for Naji Cherfan.

“They can because they think they can”

— Virgil

People Are Born To Shine!

People are Born To Shine is a bi-monthly, electronic newsletter owned by The Naji Cherfan Foundation focusing on spirituality and health. The objective of *People are Born to Shine* is to raise awareness among our readers on health challenges and disease prevention, while inspiring them to live a fuller, more abundant life guided by Christian values. This newsletter is dedicated to people of all ages, those who are healthy and those with health problems, and those with brain injury of any kind resulting from accident, stroke, etc.

The content has been carefully selected from internet sources considered reliable and accurate to bring you good news of health and spiritual well being. However The Naji Cherfan Foundation assumes no responsibility for inaccurate information. The NCF would like to recognize the devoted work of its volunteers, mainly Marianne Debs, Me. Kamal Rahal, Me. Harold Alvarez, Zeina Costantine, Joyce Abou Jaoude, Rita Kassis, Marleine Nassrany, Diala Ghostine Nassrany, Dima Rbeiz, Father Joseph Abdel Sater, Father Joseph Soueid, Reine Kassis, Nabil Khoury, Roland Khoury, Father Elia Chalhoub, Valèria de Proença, Athena and Christina Georgotas, Violette Nakhle, and all the field volunteers who are supporting NCF in spreading the words of Jesus through their institutions, churches, hospitals, establishments, etc.

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