

## **Keeping the Twelve Days of Christmas at Home**

Christmas is not just one day, but a whole season! It lasts twelve days, from Christmas Day to Epiphany (January 6). Keep celebrating! Connect with friends and family through phone or technology or snail mail, enjoy your Christmas decorations, watch Christmas movies, and sing all your favorite Christmas songs. Song suggestions for each day follow - or sing your favorites.

### **Saturday, December 26**

Sing “Joy to the world” (ELW 267). Bundle up and go outside to sing. Join your voices with the fields, rocks, hills, and all the earth! Jesus is born, and this is good news for creation. Notice the ways that the world outside is “singing” its praise: listen for birds singing, the sound of the wind through tree branches, and other nature sounds.

### **Sunday, December 27**

Sing “Go tell it on the mountain” (ELW 290). Today the church remembers St. John, Apostle and Evangelist. John’s gospel describes Christ as the Word-made-flesh who came to live among us. In Jesus, God comes to us in person to bring us love and light. With John and all messengers of good tidings, we shout from the mountaintop the joyful news that Jesus is born! Look out your window or search outside to see a mountain.

### **Monday, December 28**

Sing “O little town of Bethlehem” (ELW 279). If you have children at home, build a fort out of chairs, couches, pillows, and blankets. Fill your fort with stuffed animals, family members, and pets. Others of us could observe our neighborhood and notice which houses have garages – maybe you do. Try to imagine in these days that a garage may be used for the birthing of Jesus. Light a flashlight, lantern, or candle inside your fort (or garage) and think about Jesus being born among the animals in that little town called Bethlehem.

### **Tuesday, December 29**

Sing “O come, all ye faithful” (ELW 283). Jesus is born, and it is a happy morning! Cook breakfast — something delicious like pancakes or waffles. While you are cooking review your Christmas season so far (alone or with your family). While eating, give thanks for your favorite parts of the Christmas season.

### **Wednesday, December 30**

Sing “Love has come” (ELW 292). Celebrate love today. Call, text, FaceTime, or Skype family and friends who live far away and tell them you love them. At bedtime, bless one another – and yourself - by tracing the sign of the cross on foreheads and saying, “Jesus loves you.” And “I love you.”

### **Thursday, December 31**

Sing “It came upon the midnight clear” (ELW 282). At Christmas midnight, the angels welcomed Jesus. At midnight tonight, we welcome a new year. Say a special prayer tonight. Thank God for the blessings of this past year. Ask God for hope and protection in the new year. Pray for peace and healing for all people, nations, and creation.

### **Friday, January 1**

Sing “What child is this” (ELW 296). The church observes this day as “Name of Jesus,” because according to Jewish tradition, baby boys received their names on the eighth day of life. Do you know what your name means? Were you named after someone? Do you have a nickname? Remember today that in baptism, you were also given the name “Child of God.”

### **Saturday, January 2**

Sing “Away in a manger” (ELW 277/278). While baby Jesus slept in the manger, his parents, the animals, and even the stars watched him and protected him. Tonight, look outside to the stars above you (unless there is a

cloud cover). Imagine them watching you sleep – as we know God does. Perhaps you have stars put up in your home. Let them be a symbol that Jesus loves you and promises to guard you, sleeping or waking.

### **Sunday, January 3**

Sing “Silent night, holy night!” (ELW 281). Tonight, gather and light as many candles as you can find in your home. Turn off the lights. Notice how the candlelight bounces and flickers around the room. Have a leader say, “Jesus Christ is the light of the world.” Everybody else responds, “The light no darkness can overcome.” Take turns being the leader. Say it several times. If you are alone, say both parts. Be sure to repeat more than once.

### **Monday, January 4**

Sing “Angels, from the realms of glory” (ELW 275). Have the magi from your nativity set been waiting to come to the manger? Move them somewhere a little closer to the nativity scene, then go outside and look for the brightest star you can see in the sky. If you have had them in your nativity set all season, move them away slightly as you consider how long their journey took (approximately two years).

### **Tuesday, January 5**

Sing “Your little ones, dear Lord” (ELW 286). Collect all the stars you can find in your home—the stars you hung over your bed, star ornaments from the Christmas tree. If you cannot find any, make a few by cutting the shape out of paper. Place them around your nativity scene. Set the biggest one over the manger. As God used a star to guide the magi to meet Jesus, God keeps guiding you so that you know the love of God more deeply.

### **Wednesday, January 6**

Sing “The first Noel” (ELW 300). Have a home blessing. Notice what you are thankful for in each room of your home, and ask for God’s blessing (“God, bless our kitchen and the conversations we have there;” “God bless our bedrooms and our rest.” “God bless our living/family room...” etc.). Continue the celebration with other Epiphany traditions (research some on the internet such as burning pine branches or eating king cake).

Adapted from *Families Celebrate Advent & Christmas 2018–2019* (Augsburg Fortress, 2018)

From [sundaysandseasons.com](http://sundaysandseasons.com).

Copyright © 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.