



Ten ways to Invite People Home this Christmas

“Come home for Christmas!” There are people who have lost touch with the Church who long to come back, especially at Christmas time, but are hesitant to take the first step. In this leaflet we explore the practicalities of inviting people ‘home’ to their local parish this Christmas.

1. Pray for them

During Advent, light a candle each night and pray for one special person who has lost touch with their parish community. As part of your prayer ask God to show you the best way to reach out to this person.

2. Ask forgiveness

Advent is a season of renewal in preparation for Christmas. This Advent, let's examine the ways in which we have made it difficult for people to belong to the Church, whether by our lack of love, judgmental attitudes or by simply ignoring them. Ask God's forgiveness and say 'sorry' to an individual who is distanced from the Church.

3. Write a letter

Thoughtfully and prayerfully write a letter or Christmas card to a loved one, expressing what's in your heart and what it would mean to you if he/she joined you at Christmas Mass this year.

4. Host drinks after Mass

Arrange for drinks to be held (at home or at a local venue) after the Christmas Vigil Mass this year. Then invite your friends, including those who are far from the Church, to join you—for drinks *and* Mass!

5. Involve children

Children have a natural ability to soften hearts. Involve them in your efforts to welcome, invite and reach out to people this Christmas.

6. Hold a nativity play

A children's nativity play held in your home or street is a friendly way to proclaim Christ to the neighbours. Send out invitations, prepare the children, welcome people as they arrive, and finish with Christmas carols. To top it off, warmly invite your 'audience' to visit their local church on Christmas Day.

7. Send an invitation

Design a Christmas card on behalf of your local parish and include Christmas Mass times. Then letter-box-drop all the Catholics in your area. By joining with other Christian churches in your locality, a strategy like this can work well as an ecumenical venture.

8. Advertize widely

As well as letter-box-drops, check that Mass and Reconciliation times and other parish activities during Advent and Christmas are well publicized. Is there a clear sign outside the church? Are they listed in the bulletin? Submit an attractive advertizement to local media outlets.

9. Affirm and empower gifts

One way to involve 'distanced Catholics' in the life of the parish is to acknowledge their talents and put them to work. Whether it be serving meals to the poor, collecting for Christmas hampers, assisting with the children's liturgy or organizing the parish Christmas party, let people know that they are needed and valued.

10. Proclaim Jesus at home

When visitors enter your home, do they 'catch' the spirit of Advent and Christmas? Display symbols of faith, light the Advent wreath each evening, decorate a Jesse Tree, display a nativity scene, fill your home with beautiful Christmas carols and a spirit of love.

Helpful Hint

During Advent hold an evening of welcome for people who have been away from the Church and who wish to reconnect. Two simple ways to invite people to share their story: E.g., "How did you come to be here tonight?" "What happened that led you to lose touch with your Catholic community?" Invite parishioners to share their experience of belonging to this parish.

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