



The 12 ways of Christmas

Christmas is both a major feast of the church and a major cultural holiday. People are in the pews for a myriad of reasons. Regardless of how or why people came to be in your Church on Christmas Eve we must offer hospitality to all, without question or reserve.

Here are 12 ways to offer hospitality this Christmas:

1. **There is plenty of room** – we all are the recipients of God’s welcome of strangers to the manger. Any hint that someone is perceived as an outsider is the same as saying, “No room in the inn!”
2. **Greet everyone equally – avoid asking people to identify themselves as visitors.**
3. **Don’t assume that anyone knows anything!** Print it. Project it. Proclaim it.
4. **Enliven the church’s faith without apology or hesitation.** The Christmas Eve liturgy is the great rehearsal of the incarnation. Any who come can be part of a living community’s drama of welcoming Jesus. In doing so, they hope to discover again (or for the first time) who God is and who Jesus is up close and personal.
5. **Share and invite!** This is a glorious time full of God’s splendour, mystery, and presence invite others to be with you to experience this glory.
6. **Celebrate!** Sing, pray, rejoice in all the ways your community is able.
7. **Be real, be kind!** Deep joy and genuine excitement are contagious and appealing.
8. **Be attentive!** Extend welcome to all those taking seats near you. Not only at the sign of peace but at the beginning, throughout and once the mass has ended.
9. **Love all the people!** On this holy occasion, all those who gather are welcoming Jesus. Forget about wondering and worrying about whether or not they will come back.
10. **What’s on!** Use bulletin notices or a special insert with mass times, how to contact the church office or priest, and information about the church’s distinct ministries.
11. **Extend the table!** Some people are alone over Christmas. Who will offer them a seat at their table for Christmas lunch or dinner? Welcoming the stranger is a great way to share hospitality and to ensure that people know they don’t need to go home to an empty house.
12. **Giving!** Your time, your kindness, your warm smile and friendly welcome can’t be wrapped, but if it is open and genuine it will be greatly received.

We all must prepare our hearts for Jesus’ coming into our own lives and there is no better way to prepare than to have hearts bursting with love for one another.

References: <http://bit.ly/2EvUSjY>; <http://bit.ly/2PBXfTn>; <http://bit.ly/2UjxLag>.



REFLECTION

> Reflection: Where can you make room to create welcome in your life?