

# CHRISTMAS STORIES AND TRADITIONS

*The Connections staff thanks all who responded to our request to share a Christmas tradition or story. Some were short - some were sweet. Some were naughty – some were nice. We hope that you enjoy reading these and that this may even be a new Connections Christmas tradition.*

I have many happy memories of Christmas, both as a child and adult. It is a very special time when LOVE seems to be the theme.

I always enjoyed family gatherings, attending midnight Mass, singing in the choir, listening to Christmas stories and music.

Sr. Ruth Ann Heider, OSF

One tradition I miss is going to my Grandma Senatore's house on Christmas Eve. My parents would always give her money, as she had very little income. She would open her card, take out the money and say "that's-a-nice."

Kathy Sako

I took over the tradition from my Mom and Dad to have the Christmas Eve gathering at my house. We have a great meal including Guatemalan Tamales that my sister Sylvia and her husband prepare, and I fix the rice and at about 10 p.m. Santa Clause arrives and hands out candy canes to the children. We then sing a few Christmas songs with Santa leading the way.

At midnight Jesus is born (we have a nativity scene) and we always manage to place the Baby Jesus in the manger without the children noticing. Then someone notices the Baby Jesus and declares "Baby Jesus is born."

We then kneel and pray one decade of the Rosary and sing Happy Birthday to Jesus. Finally we all hug and kiss each other with a Merry Christmas greeting, then distribute gifts and finish eating. I usually have about 40-50 people for this



great celebration.

Ervin Ruiz & Family

Our family tradition was to attend Mass at Holy Cross and then going to Mom and Dad's for our Christmas exchange. We always had ham, potato salad and sugar cookies.

Fran Klausman

My family always bakes a birthday cake for Jesus on Christmas day.

Lori Lewis

One Christmas memory of mine is that after we opened all gifts and ate



a wonderful meal, we all gathered around the piano. Mom played and we five kids and Dad sang Christmas carols.

Helen Meers

I got anything I wanted for Christmas because I slept with Santa 😊 My husband was a "Mall Santa" for years and he would visit the neighborhood houses on Christmas Eve as Santa to delight all the young kids and their parents.

Vicki Meyer

I can remember the big thing was Mom's Plum Pudding. This was an Irish tradition. So after the turkey dinner Mom would bring it to the table and pour whisky on it and then light it with a match and the flames would appear and then go out. She would serve it with a sauce poured over it that had whisky in it.

Patty Jones

I remember Christmas being a time of family. When my Great-Grandmother was alive the whole family would gather at Baba's. I was little enough to think this was just the way all families were. After she passed away the Christmas gathering moved to my Grandma's but we were always together for a traditional Polish Christmas.

Michael F. Barrett

I spend my Christmas at my house and we have a party. The best part about Christmas is when we open presents.

Brynnar Rice, age 7



Christmas morning my family is waiting downstairs for my brother and me to wake up and come downstairs to open presents.

My mother has the egg-cheese casserole that I love. Every Christmas I look forward to having egg-cheese casserole.

Rachele Rice, age 10

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are very important to our family. We attend Mass on Christmas Eve and gather at our home with all three children and their spouses and five grand children and extended family members. We have dinner and exchange gifts. Christmas morning we have breakfast at our daughter's home. Santa is under the tree to give gifts to the children. We all have dinner at our oldest son's home. God has blessed us and we thank Him.

The Frank Shirey Family

Christmas in my grandmother's house, where I grew up, included lots of baking. Every December Grandma Cataline baked a variety of cookies, but it is her German springerle that I most fondly remember. To this day, the pungent aroma of anise takes me back to grandma's Christmas kitchen. She gave away many of her cookies as gifts, and I have baked these same old recipes as Christmas gifts many times. Now it is my daughter, Mary, who continues Grandma Cataline's

cookie recipes for family and friends at Christmas every year.

Anne Medert

My sisters, Rosalie and Susie and I remember my Father, John J, ringing sleigh bells from our front porch roof, which was adjacent to our bedrooms. The bells told us that Santa had flown by our Sunbury Rd. homestead because we had not yet gone to sleep. Later Santa would return and slide down our narrow front room chimney using his magic chimney extenders, so he could fit along with our gifts. He would eat his snack of a ham sandwich and beer, which he told us he preferred to cookies and milk. This went on every Christmas Eve until us Medert kids were older and wiser. End of story.

John Medert

About 25 years ago I was mixing a 50 pound fruit cake dough at Bierberg Christmas Cookies, which is still in business in German Village at 729 S. 5th St. When I finished, I suddenly realized I was no longer wearing my wedding ring. Helen Bierberg, who attended Holy Cross Grade School, and I decided to go through the whole 50 pounds, inch by inch, just in case someone found the ring and they might tell everyone that "there's gold in Bierberg fruitcake!" Or if they broke a tooth they might sue. The very, very last spoonful of batter, all of which was very chunky with dried fruit, yielded my ring. So, no law suit, but no Christmas gold fruitcake either.

Ann Seren

We send over 400 Christmas cards to family, friends and business associates. As we get over 200 cards sent to us, we save them and for each family dinner we pull one or two out – read the name of the person or family who sent it – and pray for them. It keeps the Spirit

of Christmas alive all year long.

The Bartley Family

I remember the Christmas that I was chosen by my teacher to carry the Infant Jesus and place Him into the Nativity scene, at Midnight Mass at St. Leo's. I felt so connected to the Baby Jesus and felt I did something very special.

Unsigned

This Novena was in Warren's grandmother's prayer booklet: Christmas Novena - Blest be the hour and the moment when the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary. At midnight, in Bethlehem, in piercing cold. In that hour Vouchsafe, O My God, to hear my prayers and grant my desires through the merits of my Savior Jesus Christ and of his Blessed Mother. Amen.

Warren and Carolyn Roberts

My brother was born on Christmas Day. We celebrate Christmas in the morning and his birthday after our Christmas dinner. We have birthday cake and birthday gifts. Before our Christmas dinner we all individually pray and give thanks for someone or something. We also sing the 12 Days of Christmas - we have a complete set of "12 Day" dishes, we never know which day we will be, although my nephew is always "5 golden rings." We all sound like howling cats but we do have fun.

Veronica Wolfe

