



How can I spread the Christmas spirit?

1. Reach out to others. Show others you love them by smiling, sending a text, or spending time with them (Ephesians 2:10; Hebrews 10:24).
2. Perform small acts of service. Little things like shoveling snow and baking cookies for someone can go a long way (Acts 20:35; Hebrews 12:12).
3. Write a letter. Take some time to write a thoughtful, heartfelt letter for a loved one.

SEVEN GOLDFISH A-SWIMMING

MY FAMILY WANTED TO FOCUS on the Christmas spirit during the Christmas season, so we decided to do a secret “12 Days of Christmas.” We chose a family in our stake who were good friends of ours and had been going through a rough time. On each night of the 12 days leading up to Christmas, my four younger siblings and I prepared a gift with that day’s theme. For example, on the second day we used turtle chocolates for “two turtle doves,” and on the seventh day for “seven

swans-a-swimming,” we used goldfish crackers and bubbles. We dropped off the nightly treats on the family’s doorstep, rang the doorbell, and ran and hid so they couldn’t find us.

On Christmas Eve, the 12th day of Christmas with “12 drummers drumming,” we brought the family a box of Drumstick ice-cream-cone treats and let them know who we were. They were so happy and thanked us for helping them feel love during the Christmas season.

Because that family felt loved they decided that they also wanted to show love to other families. My family also had such a positive experience spreading the Christmas spirit that we still continue this tradition. I’m grateful my family could focus on the true spirit of Christmas and help others feel it as well. Those nightly treat drop-offs have become some of my favorite Christmas memories.

Sydney J., Alabama, USA

“There are many words one might use to describe [the Christmas spirit]: joy, hope, anticipation, good cheer. . . . One word best describes the feelings we experience at Christmastime. That word is *love*.”

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Scatter Your Crumbs,” 2017 First Presidency’s Christmas Devotional, broadcasts.lds.org.

MY UPSIDE-DOWN CHRISTMAS

WHEN I WAS 12, I had pretty much the worst Christmas ever.

I missed two weeks of school with strep and mono. When Christmas break came, I was still tired and sore. I barely had strength to get out of bed, and my brain felt so drained that I couldn't even read a book.

Finally Christmas Day came, but I was so sick that I didn't even want to get up to open gifts. My parents realized there must be something seriously wrong, so they took me to the hospital. There I learned that on top of everything else, I had type 1 diabetes.

My body felt weak, my mind was cloudy, and my emotions jumped from feeling bad for myself to frustration to not caring about anything. But after several confusing, miserable days, a large group of visitors came to see me—parents and siblings, grandparents from both sides, aunts and uncles and cousins.

There was a spirit in that room unlike anything I'd ever felt, a sure feeling of God's love through the ministering angels he'd sent to comfort me. I knew then that I could cope with this trial. I learned that even when everything seems to be going wrong, even when all my expectations for the holidays were turned upside-down, one thing will always be right: I will always know how much I am loved. And that gives me strength to deal with whatever challenges life sends my way.

Alex H., Oregon, USA



I'LL SEE GRANDPA AGAIN

"IT'S CHRISTMAS!" my sister and I screamed, running into our parents' bedroom. Every Christmas we set an alarm and woke our parents up at 5:00 a.m. on the dot. That year, we tried to act like everything was normal, but Christmas felt very different. It was different because my grandpa was dying. He had been fighting brain cancer for two years, and in the last couple of days, he had gone downhill.

We were still opening presents when Grandma called to say that Grandpa wasn't doing well. My mom and dad went to say goodbye to him, and my sister and I were taken to a relative's house. Later that Christmas evening, Grandpa died. We were heartbroken.

I was sad that Grandpa had died and upset that it was on Christmas. But his death helped me remember why Christmas is important in the first place. It is a day to remember Jesus Christ's birth. He was born so that death could be overcome. And so, even though Christmas that year was a day of mourning, it was also a day of rejoicing because I knew that through Jesus Christ's birth, life, and Atonement, I would see Grandpa again.

Jessica S., Utah, USA

