



Let's Talk About Christmas!

Instead of going on auto-pilot the day after Thanksgiving...

Schedule a family meeting as early as possible in October or November.

Getting Started

Before your meeting, if possible, share this planner with friends and family. Do some homework, gather some ideas, but be willing to modify or even abandon them for the sake of the group.

Brainstorm during the meeting! No idea is too goofy. No ridicule allowed.

Then refine the ideas and try to reach a consensus. Vote on ideas only as a last resort. (Voting can sometimes become competitive, even divisive.)

Afterwards, share the results tactfully with the others in your celebrating circle, even with those who did not make it to the meeting. Post the results in a prominent place in your household.

Resources

The following resources from Alternatives will be helpful before, during and after the family meeting:

1. *Christmas Campaign Kit* (contains over 20 resources like this planner), \$19.
2. *Simplify & Celebrate: Embracing the Soul of Christmas*. 208 pages, \$16.
3. *Unplug the Christmas Machine* (the classic for simplifying Christmas). 207 pages, \$13. *Unplug Workshop Leader's Guide*, \$10. *Workshop-on-a-CD*, \$12. All three, \$30. All three in binder, \$33.
4. *Treasury of Celebrations: Create Celebrations That Reflect Your Values and Don't Cost the Earth*, 288 pages, \$12. Or *To Celebrate: Reshaping Holidays and Rites of Passage*, 224 pages, \$5.
5. *Hundred Dollar Holiday: The Case for a More Joyful Christmas* by Bill McKibben, 96 pages, \$12.
6. *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas* video. VHS, \$15; DVD (includes Joy video), \$15.
7. Many resources on paper, in Alternatives' web site archives at SimpleLiving.org >> Services >> Archives or on the CD-ROM *Simply the Best: Over 30 Years of Alternatives*, \$15.

- "Cost Analysis Form: How Much Do You Spend at Christmas?"

- "Alternate Giving Guides"

- Discussion Guides: "Christmas Traditions That Work for You," "The Gift of Giving," "What About Santa?" and "What Makes for a Perfect Christmas?"

- "Appropriate Christmas Gifts Questionnaire" and "Christmas Revival" (an excerpt from *Unplug the Christmas Machine*; both from *Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway?* 1996)

For a free copy of Alternatives' current *Resource Guide*, contact Alternatives at (800/821-6153) or Alternatives@SimpleLiving.org.

Visit www.SimpleLiving.org

Alternatives' Logo

The circle represents the Earth. The tree and the star answer the question "Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway?"

Alternatives has been pointing people to Jesus at Christmas time since 1973. The tree and its shadow also form an arrow, urging us to change directions, to turn away from overconsumption to alternative, simpler, more people-oriented ways of celebrating and living. The entire logo is a stylized "A" for Alternatives.



More Questions

5. *When* will we start and finish the preparations and the activity?

6. *Who* will do the work? Can we divide up the tasks differently?

7. *Cost/Budget*: How much will we spend? Is there flexibility? Are we willing to spend less on ourselves and give more to the truly needy?

8. How can we *simplify* this to reduce stress and cost, to nurture relationships instead of stuff, to curb overconsumption? Set a goal to simplify at least three activities.

Decorations

Travel

Gifts

Alternative Gifts

Entertaining

Food

Questions

1. What

2. Why

3. How

4. Where

5. When

6. Who

7. Budget

8. Simplify

Activities

**Family
Entertainment**

Cards

Relatives
Friends
Associates
Close by
Far Away

Church Activities

Advent
Christmas
Eve/Day
Sunday School
Choir
Other

**Home
Devotions**

Reflections
Services

Music

Clothes

Other

Postage

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