# Calendar Activities

## The Night Before Christmas




As well as the Christian traditions associated with Christmas Eve such as attending Midnight Mass, there are plenty of other non religious traditions. Many non Christians celebrate the present giving and non faith traditions of Christmas, and over the years it has become evermore focused on family, food and entertainment. Christmas is enjoyed by people of all ages but it is especially special for younger children. For those that believe in the legendary character Santa Claus, the night before Christmas is one of the most magical times of the year.

## Discussion

Have a discussion on childhood memories of Christmas. These can be memories about resident's own childhood or memories of their children, friends, nieces, nephews or grandchildren.

Can anyone remember thinking they heard or saw Santa Claus?

Did you ever pretend to be Santa?

What did you get in your Christmas Stocking?

What time do you get up on Christmas Day?

Do you have any Christmas Eve traditions you would like to share?

**Can you name all of Santa's seven reindeer?**


A little something for Santa

**Have you ever left anything out for Santa, if so what?**


Stephen Fry Reading A Night before Christmas


Tom and Jerry Night Before Christmas, 1941


Norad - Santa Tracker


The Night Before Christmas 1905, Silent movie

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# Twas the Night Before Christmas
## by Clement Clarke Moore

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
in hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there.

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
while visions of sugar plums danced in their heads.
And Mama in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap.

When out on the roof there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
tore open the shutter, and threw up the sash.

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
gave the lustre of midday to objects below,
when, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
but a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer.

With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles, his coursers they came,
and he whistled and shouted and called them by name:

"Now Dasher! Now Dancer!
Now, Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! On, Cupid!
On, Donner and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch!
To the top of the wall!
Now dash away! Dash away!
Dash away all!



"As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
when they meet with an obstacle,mount to the sky
so up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
with the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
the prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head and was turning around,
down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
and his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot.
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
and he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.

His eyes--how they twinkled! His dimples, how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
and the beard on his chin was as white as the snow.

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
and the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.
He had a broad face and a little round belly,
that shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
and I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself.
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
and filled all the stockings, then turned with a jerk.
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
and giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim, 'ere he drove out of sight,
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"



# The Night Before Christmas - Other Traditions



## Spain

In Spain they do not recognise the tradition of Father Christmas, presents are delivered to children much later by *Reyes Magos*, the Three Wise Men. This happens on January 6th, there is usually a town parade known as the 'Cabalgata' or 'Cavalcade of the magi' people dressed as the wise men ride on horseback and throw sweets to the watching crowds.
Nowadays Spanish children also get presents on Christmas Eve and Day, as the tradition is more international.



## Austria

In Austria Santa Claus rewards the good children with presents, but if you have been naughty Krampus will take you away! The Austrians have a tradition that on Christmas Eve a beast like creature, Santas's evil sidekick Krampus will roam the street looking to punish and frighten naughty children. It sounds very sinister, but it is light-hearted and a little like Halloween. With older children dressing up in Krampus costumes to scare those younger than them.



## Scandinavia

In Norway they have a very odd tradition of hiding their brooms on Christmas Eve! This is because of the pagan belief that witches would be attracted by the brooms!

The Yule goat is a traditional symbol of Christmas in Scandanavia and was supposed to help deliver presents. In the Swedish city of Gavle they have a tradition called the **The Gävle Goat.** Every year a 13 metre giant straw goat is erected, and almost every year since 1966 it has been burnt down by pranksters!

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