

It's Christmastime Again

By Cory Busse

As we reflect on another Christmas come and gone, it's easy to think that it's all over until next year. But if you need a little Christmas right this very minute, here are 21 ways to keep the spirit alive the entire year.



1. Hang mistletoe around the house all yearlong. Surprise family and friends with the kinds of sincere kisses you normally reserve for the threshold of your home when they arrive and depart.

2. Sing more together as a family.

3. The holidays serve as a great reminder of how some people are less fortunate than we are. Donate to a food shelf or volunteer at a soup kitchen the other 11 months out of the year.

4. On a random family movie night, watch "It's a Wonderful Life." Remember to count your blessings.

5. Copy your family's best or most favorite recipes. Give them as "stocking stuffers" on Mother's Day or Father's Day.



6. Use the good china.

7. Keep your own naughty/nice list — go easy on the naughty, though.

8. Send out a "Christmas card" with a photo of your family ... on St. Patrick's Day, Halloween or Fourth of July.

9. Use two hours of your summer vacation to make homemade Christmas ornaments as a family craft.

10. Between now and next Christmas, learn all the words to your favorite carols.



11. Leave the lights and decorations up in your yard. (No, I'm kidding. Don't do that. The city will fine you, and your neighbors will call your association.)

12. Treat every Sunday like you do Christmas Mass. Dress up. Go as a family. Sing. Celebrate. Remember.

13. Create coupons for family and friends that can be redeemed throughout the year: Baby-sitting for you sister's kids. Grocery shopping for your grandparents. Include no expiration dates, and 100 percent satisfaction guaranteed.

14. Send one additional card or letter to family and friends who otherwise only hear from you at Christmas. It doesn't have to be long. But don't e-mail. Don't blog. Don't Facebook. Write it. With a pen.



15. Sometime in mid-May, go on a family scavenger hunt to find a fruitcake.

16. Bake sugar cookies shaped like trees or reindeer.



17. Memorize "The Night Before Christmas." The whole thing. Rehearse it. Really get good. And next Christmas Eve, perform it. Voices. Sound effects. The whole deal. Ditto "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch."

18. Say that special prayer you say before tucking into Christmas dinner — the one where you reflect on how thankful you are for family, health and togetherness — over takeout on a regular Wednesday.

19. Two words: Reindeer games.

20. If your kids are bombarded with presents, pull a couple back and stow them in the closet for a rainy day in April or May.

21. Leave the Nativity scene up; we could all use a persistent reminder of the miracle, wonder and innocence of Jesus' birth (and our own).

