

1. Worship More

Do we really worship Christ at Christmas? Outside of reading the Christmas story before tearing open our presents, how much time do we spend sincerely worshipping the birth of Jesus? So here's the challenge for you. How about we dedicate ourselves to truly worshipping Christ at Christmas time? Worship occurs when we tune out the noise of this world, and tune into person and work of Jesus. We worship Jesus through our service, through our actions, our prayers, and through telling others about Him! In fact we can worship Jesus through an infinite variety of methods. Christmas is all about the birth of Christ so how about this year we Simplify Christmas and we'll start by Worshipping More!

What can I do to Worship More? Here are some ideas:

For Individuals:

- Invite a neighbor over to dinner
- Participate in a service project
- Read through the Christmas Story from a different perspective of those involved.
- Many Christian bookstores sell small Christmas story booklets. How about getting a few and giving them to people that we know?

For Families

- Create a skit of the Christmas Story with everyone participating.
- Each night dedicate time to read through the Christmas Story
- Invite a neighboring family and share a meal with them.
- As a family think of some service projects, ways that you can help others while working together as a family!
- Auction a skill that you can offer your family and donate the money to a worthy cause.
- Go Christmas caroling with friends and neighbors.
- Watch a good Christmas movie and discuss how it points people to Christ.

2. Spend Less

Do I really need another t-shirt, or that Elvis Toe-Nail Clipper? Our kids have three times the amount of toys that we had, do they really need more? How many of us give gifts to someone because last year they gave us a gift? If we were to be really honest, we'd say that most of us give out of sense of obligation, or because we feel we have a duty to buy. Every year the lists keep on getting longer of gifts we need to give to others. How about we do something radical this Christmas? Let's spend less and let's jump out of the materialist mindset and really Simplify Christmas! Begin by setting a family cap, say \$100! Not

possible? Of course it is. By setting a family cap, we will be challenged to give gifts that truly have meaning: Gifts of time, of service. How about giving relational gifts? Maybe we can make something for another, write a letter to a friend expressing why you enjoy them. What at first seems impossible suddenly causes us to give gifts that really have meaning and value. I'd much rather have a letter that was thoughtfully worded than that Elvis Toe-Nail Clipper!

How do I Spend Less? Here are some ideas:

- Set a family spending cap and stick to it!
- Get creative and think about gifts of time and relational gifts.
Create a family coupon book of time gifts: babysitting, making a meal, doing yard work, etc...
- Involve your children and grandchildren in the gift making process.
- Visit a fabric store and purchase felt and make blankets for each other.
- As a family make a meal for someone in need and then give it to them.
- Ask others for ideas and maybe as a group, give gifts of time to each other.

3. Give More

On my birthday, I get the gifts. Christmas is Jesus' birthday, so shouldn't He get the gifts? Jesus once told his followers that when we take care of the '*least of these*' they are taking care of Him! So let's give gifts to Jesus at Christmas, by giving our money to worthy causes.

Get creative and think outside of the box when it comes to giving more. Start by asking yourself, '*What is an issue that I'm passionate about?*' or '*What would I like to learn more about?*' If you have children or grandchildren, get their involvement by asking them to assist you in making the decisions about where to give a gift to Jesus at Christmas. If the ministry is a local one, work with your children to stop by and give the check directly, anything to actively involve them in Simply Christmas.

How do I Give More? Here are some ideas:

International Justice Mission...

International Justice Mission is a Christian human rights agency that secures justice for victims of slavery, sexual exploitation and other forms of violent oppression. IJM lawyers, investigators and aftercare professionals work with local governments to ensure victim rescue, to prosecute perpetrators and to strengthen the community and civic factors that promote functioning public justice systems.

PO Box 58147

Washington, DC 20037

www.IJM.org

Voice of the Martyrs...

Voice of the Martyrs is an International Christian organization which assists those who are imprisoned specifically b/c of their religious beliefs.

P.O. Box 443

Bartlesville, OK 74005

www.persecution.com

Blood:Water Mission

Blood:Water Mission is a non-profit organization founded by the members of the multi-platinum, Grammy Award-winning band, Jars of Clay, to address the HIV/AIDS crisis in Africa.

Blood:Water Mission

PO Box 60381

Nashville, TN 37206

www.bloodwatermission.com

World Vision.

The Mission of World Relief is to work with, for and from the Church to relieve human suffering, poverty and hunger worldwide in the name of Jesus Christ.

World Relief

7 East Baltimore St

Baltimore MD 21202

www.wr.org

Prison Fellowship

Prison Fellowship partners with local churches across the country to minister to a group that society often scorns and neglects: prisoners, ex-prisoners, and their families.

www.prisonfellowship.org

Local Ministries

Milwaukee Rescue Mission

The Milwaukee Rescue Mission provides spiritual and material help and direction for the homeless and poor of the Milwaukee Community. Through the compassionate provision of essential services, the Mission also seeks to effect meaningful and radical life changes through the ministry of the Christian Gospel to the glory of God.

830 North 19th Street

Milwaukee, WI 53233

Phone: 414-344-2211

www.milmission.org

Evangelical Child and Family Agency...

Evangelical Child & Family Agency is a Christian organization that serves thousands of women, men, the unborn, infants, children and their families with Christ-centered, compassionate care. Provides adoption support, care for unwed mothers, and works to promote a culture of life.

1617 S. 124th Street,
New Berlin, WI 53151

www.ecfawisc.org

Kids in the Hood –A ministry to the inner city children of Milwaukee.

Jim and Debi Godsey lead this ministry out of their home. Their purpose is to model Christ and to care for the physical and spiritual needs of inner city children. Over the past few years, Southbrook has partnered with Kids in the Hood, providing them with food, constructed a play set as well as picnic benches. Many in our church have donated toys and clothes to this great ministry.

Jim and Debi Godsey

God's Kidz in the 'Hood, Inc.

P.O. Box 16966

Milwaukee, WI

414-349-4114

Salvation Army

The Salvation Army provides a variety of services to our local communities. With facilities through Greater Milwaukee we are able to meet the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of those in need. From housing and feeding programs to disaster services, we are committed to meeting needs in the diverse communities we serve.

8853 South Howell Avenue

Oak Creek, Wisconsin 53154

414.762.3993

http://www.usc.salvationarmy.org/usc/www_usc_greatermilwaukee.nsf

BASICS: Brothers and Sisters in Christ Serving –Milwaukee

Brothers and Sisters In Christ Serving (BASICS) in Milwaukee, is a Christian organization which provides “ministry outreach leadership and resources” to prepare indigenous leaders to support sustainable community development by integrating spiritual, social and physical aspects into the *change process*. BASICS recognizes the need for equipping Christian leaders to administer ministries in holistic ways and is committed to effecting a spirit of unity. Its primary partners are both church and outreach ministries whose missions are based upon Christian values and a commitment to serving the needs of central cities.

2224 W Kilbourn Ave

Milwaukee, WI 53233
(414) 372-7200
www.basicsinmke.org

4. Love All

At Christmas we do think of others who are less fortunate, but for most of us it is but a fleeting thought. How about this year we think of one or two specific people who we know and let's truly love them; unconditionally, intentionally and with Christ-like depth. Romans 5:8 tells us that '*while we were still sinners, Christ died for us...*' This Christ-like love can really make the difference to a person in need this Christmas time. Think about that person that is easily overlooked: maybe a gas station attendant, the nurse at the hospital, the janitor at your child's school, the check-out woman at the local grocery store.

How do I Love More? Here are some ideas:

Ask yourself questions like:

"Who are those that are most overlooked?"

"Who in my community are the less fortunate?"

"Who has God placed in my path that needs to feel the love of Christ?"

Then Pray for God to show you ways to love these people.

-How about baking Christmas cookies and giving them to the guy behind the counter at your local gas station?

-Maybe visit your local assisted living facility and offer to spend time with the residents.

-Go out of your way to thank the clerk at the grocery store or the waitress at the local restaurant.

-Many of us have neighbors that are from other countries. We can model the love of Christ to them by inviting them over for a cup of tea, etc...