

This time of year brings so many reasons to celebrate.

Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day ... don't you just love all the excitement of the winter holidays?

The most exciting of all is remembering Jesus' birth on Dec. 25! Some families start celebrating the Christmas season in November and keep it going into January. It's a season of togetherness, and a season of giving and receiving. You might give Christmas cookies to your neighbors, receive a present from your parents, give a card to your pastor, or receive an invitation to a party.

To help you celebrate this festive season, we rewrote the words to the classic carol "The 12 Days of Christmas" for this special issue. Sing along to celebrate everything your family gives and receives by sponsoring a child!







Senior Manager of Marketing and Engagement Krissy Thomas Smith Director of Creative Content

Smith

Director of Creative Content

Casey Scofield

Managing Editor

Willow Welter

Michelle Dana

Writers
Katy Bennett
Brandy Lovelace
Willow Welter

Proofreader
Suellen Wenz

Designer
Ben Lew
Illustrators
Alicja Colon
Ben Lew

Photographers
Ben Adams
Chuck Bigger
Helen Manson
Jonathan L. Suwaratana
Emily Turner
Sally Dunn

questions of Comments

Email us at: mpassionkids@compassion.com

Write to:
Compassion International,
Attn: Compassion Explorer Magazine Editor
12290 Voyager Parkway, Colorado Springs, CO 80921

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The 12 Days of Compassion Christmas

Is it better to **give** or to **receive**? It's a question you may ask yourself a lot this Christmas season. **Receiving** presents feels great! But so does **giving** them to people you care about, doesn't it?

In Acts 20:35, Paul reminds us that "the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Your family **gives so much** to the child you sponsor! But did you ever think about all you **receive** because your family sponsors?





Just ask Dimas and Rachel. Dimas is in Compassion's program in Indonesia. He is sponsored by Rachel and her family in the U.S. Let's sing an Explorer version of "The 12 Days of Christmas." Dimas and Rachel will guide us through the song to show what kids **give** and **receive** through sponsorship!





a party for a special baby ...



These girls in Uganda have a lot to smile about — they're celebrating Jesus' birthday at their Compassion center! Some kids in their neighborhood may not know much about Jesus. But sponsored kids learn about Jesus and why His birthday is so important! They also **receive** Christmas presents. Some of the kids have never **received** a present before in their lives because their families don't have enough money to buy gifts. So Compassion Christmas parties are extra special!





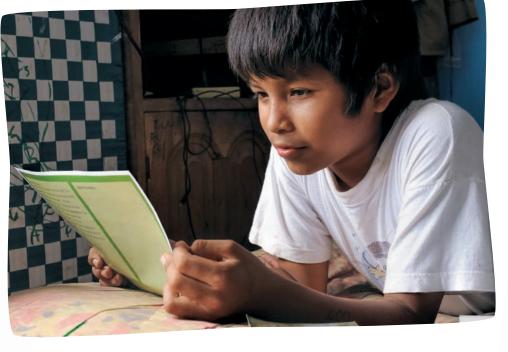
Baby Jesus!



2 treasured letters ...

When you and your family's sponsored child write to each other, you become long-distance friends! How do you feel when you **receive** a letter from your friend in another country? It's like a far-away friend **giving** you a gift by writing to you. And sponsored kids — like Daniel, the Bolivian boy pictured here — get SO excited when they **receive** letters from their sponsors! You can share joy just by writing a letter!





Letters from your sponsored child also give you a sneak peek into what life is like in another country. What if you set a New Year's resolution to learn all about your sponsored child's culture? Then research the foods, art, customs, clothing and languages common to where he or she lives.

Here's how to wish someone a merry Christmas in five countries ...



Juaye Nowe



Suba Naththalak Wewa Sri Lanka





6

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On the 3rd day of Christmas, sponsorship gave to me:

3 new books ...



Maria, 10, is doing her homework at home in Indonesia. Her village doesn't **receive** electricity all the time. Maria never knows whether the lights in her home will work. So she does her homework when she comes home for lunch because it is still light outside.

Being sponsored helps **give** Maria the chance to get a good job someday. At school and her Compassion center, she is **receiving** the education she needs.



















By being sponsors, your family **receives** new reasons to pray and talk to God! And did you know that your sponsored child prays for you too? When you and your sponsored child pray for each other, you are **giving** and **receiving** God's blessings! Before each meal, you can pray that your sponsored child **receives** enough food and clean water to stay healthy. And before bed, you can ask God to **give** your sponsored child's family the shelter, bedding and clothing they need to sleep well. What other prayers do you say for the child your sponsor?





These kids **received** goats from people who **gave** livestock through Compassion's Gift Catalog. As cute as the goats are, they **give** so much more than their natural good looks! Goats **give** manure that helps vegetable gardens and fruit trees grow. Some adult goats **give** milk that families can drink or sell. They can also make more baby goats or even be used for meat. Wow — who knew goats were such a generous bunch?









Jar of Advent-ures

Sponsors like you and Rachel **receive** *Compassion Explorer Magazine* and learn how to make all kinds of family crafts — like this one for you to try at home!

Has your family ever had an Advent calendar? You know, the ones with flaps you open every day of Advent to get the special treats inside? This Advent jar is like an Advent calendar, but better! Making an Advent jar is one of Rachel's favorite Christmas activities. Each year she decorates a jar. Her mom writes down 24 Christmas activities on slips of paper, folds them and puts them in the jar. Each day of Advent, Rachel shakes the jar, closes her eyes and picks one slip of paper. Then her family enjoys the activity written on the piece of paper!

You can join in the fun by creating your own Advent jar this Christmas season!

What does "Advent" mean?

Advent is the special season leading up to the celebration of the birth of Jesus. It begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas.

Supplies

- large jar (check a secondhand store if you don't have one at home)
- Advent jar activities list (printable PDF at explorer.compassion.com/jar-of-adventures)

Jar decoration ideas

- ribbor
- paint (acrylic paint works best on jars)
- buttons
- googly eyes
- jingle bells
- glitter
- glue
- construction paper
- stickers

Directions

- 1. Adult help needed. Find a jar, clean it and let it dry.
- 2. Gather your decoration materials. Lay down a newspaper on your table to keep the table clean as you work. Decorate the jar however you'd like! If you need help thinking of ideas, check out the examples Rachel's family made below.
- **3.** Ask an adult to go to explorer.compassion.com to print out the 24 Advent activities paper. Then the adult will need to cut out each activity into strips, fold the strips and place them in the jar. The activities are super secret so don't peek!
- **4.** Let the Advent fun begin! On each day of Advent (Dec. 1-24 this year), close your eyes and pick a slip of paper from the jar. Do the activity on the paper with your friends or family! On Dec. 25, you can help an adult put a tealight candle in the empty jar to remember that Jesus is the light of the world!

What else can you create with a jar? How about a candle, a recipe kit or a snow globe? Go to **explorer.compassion.com/jar** for directions!

Lots more crafts for families: explorer.compassion.com/crafts



On the 7th day of Christmas, sponsorship gave to me:

7 snow white cookies ...

Thanks to sponsors, kids in Compassion's program **receive** healthy food. They also receive checkups to see how much they're growing. And on special occasions, their Compassion center cooks might even **give** the kids sweet treats like cookies!

When Dimas went to his Compassion center Christmas party in Indonesia, he **received** seven of these traditional cookies to share with his family. Now he's **giving** the recipe to you! It makes about 2 dozen cookies.

Kue putri salju (snow white cookies)

Ingredients

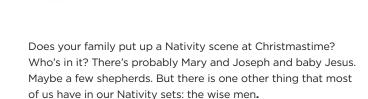
1 c. unsalted butter, softened 1½ c. powdered sugar, divided 1 tsp. vanilla extract 13/4 c. all-purpose flour 1 c. finely chopped nuts such as peanuts or pecans

Directions

- 1. Adult help needed. Preheat an oven to 350°F. Cream the butter and $\frac{1}{2}$ c. of the powdered sugar at low speed. Beat in the vanilla. Then gradually add the flour and chopped nuts. Mix until the dough is no longer sticky.
- 2. Dust your hands with flour and roll the dough into balls, about the size of golf balls. Use the bottom or side of a cup to flatten each ball to a 1/4-inch disc. Then use the top of the cup to cut each disc into a crescent shape.
- 3. Place the cookies on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Leave a couple of inches between each cookie. Bake 12-15 minutes, or until the edges look crisp. Remove from oven and let cool about 5 minutes.
- 4. Put the remaining 1 c. powdered sugar in a bowl. Dip each cookie into the powdered sugar while still warm. Enjoy the cookies when they're cool enough. You can also store them in an air-tight container after they cool completely.



Ask an adult to post a public photo of your finished cookies to Instagram with the hashtag #12DaysOfCompassion. We will choose some posts to feature on explorer.compassion.com!



Christmas 🤦

I have a secret for you, though. The wise men didn't come until AFTER Christmas. They didn't show up on Christmas morning, but came later. It took them awhile to get to Jesus because they had to travel a long way.

So why is that important to you? Because it's a good reminder that Christmas doesn't end on Dec. 25. Just like the wise men came to worship Jesus after Christmas, we get to do the same thing. We get to keep Christmas in our hearts and in our lives for days and weeks and even months after we've unwrapped the presents and taken down the Christmas tree!

Sometimes, we get sad after Christmas, don't we? For so long, we had Christmas morning to look forward to. And then it's over so fast! But this year, when you're helping put away the Christmas decorations, think about the wise men. They were just starting their celebration of the Messiah, Jesus, as they set out to find and worship Him.

And just like them, you can keep the celebration going! Because remember, at Christmastime we are celebrating that Jesus was born — that His ministry on Earth was just getting

So doesn't that mean Christmas Day should be when we just start getting excited? What ways can you keep worshipping Jesus after Christmas Day this year?

Read more Bible studies online at explorer.compassion.com/devotions

On the 8th day of Christmas, sponsorship gave to me:

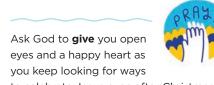
8 Bible studies ...



Some Bible translations call the wise men "Magi." It's just a different word for the people who studied stars. They followed a star to find Jesus and give gifts to Him!

One way you can keep the Christmas celebration going is by writing thankyou notes for gifts you received. Saying thank you is such a great way to show others the love of Jesus and our gratitude that He came to Earth!

Ask God to **give** you open eyes and a happy heart as you keep looking for ways to celebrate Jesus even after Christmas













9 holiday customs ...

In their letters to each other, sponsors and sponsored children can **give** each other a special peek into customs from their countries! Depending on where they live in the world, people have different customs — their own ways of doing things. Here are nine holiday customs from countries where sponsored kids live.



There are 10 countries with holidays set aside to **give** thanks. In the U.S., Thanksgiving is held every year on the fourth Thursday of November.



In Ghana there is a Thanksgiving-like festival every September. It celebrates one of the most common foods grown in the country: yams.



Most Christian kids in
Ethiopia wake up at dawn
on Christmas morning. They
put on white clothes called
shamma and go to church.



Mexicans celebrate Las Posadas

— a nine-night celebration held

Dec. 16-24 each year. Each night,
people go to a party at a different
home for prayer, music, food and
piñatas.



In Bangladesh, Christmas Day is a national holiday called *Bara Din*, which means "Big Day."



In Peru, families who can afford Christmas gifts usually place them around a Nativity scene — not under a tree.



Many Latin Americans celebrate Christmas Eve by setting off fireworks.



There's a New Year's Eve tradition in Colombia where some people carry around an empty suitcase in hopes they will get to travel a lot in the new year.



Some people in Ecuador celebrate New Year's Eve by building large scarecrow-like figures and lighting them on fire at midnight. It's their way of saying goodbye to "the old years." On the **10th** day of Christmas, sponsorship gave to me:

10 kids a-caring ...

Stories of compassionate kids like you.



By learning about their sponsored children's lives, caring kids like 10-year-old Aleigha often **receive** inspiring ideas for how they can help!

Aleigha and her family have some fun traditions. On Christmas Day, they eat a cake in honor of Jesus' birthday — for breakfast! But their favorite Christmas tradition is reading the story of Jesus' birth in the Bible.

"I like that Jesus was born in a stable and not in a castle," Aleigha says. "I think that's important because it shows that Jesus was humble, and that's how we should be too."

So when the Oklahoma girl found out that kids in some parts of the world have never seen a Bible or read about Jesus' birthday, she wanted to help. Since her family sponsors two kids in Bolivia, Aleigha knows that the Bible **gives** a hope to kids living in poverty. So she used her own birthday to help **give** Bibles to more kids.



When Aleigha invited family and friends to her birthday party for Italian food and games, she didn't ask for presents. Instead she wrote in the invitations: "This year, I would like to send Bibles to children around the world through Compassion International." Her goal was to raise \$100 — enough to send Bibles to 10 kids in honor of her 10th birthday.

Her awesome party guests ended up beating Aleigha's goal! Together they raised \$120 — enough for Compassion to **give** Bibles to 12 kids! Aleigha sent the money to Compassion, along with a handmade card. In it she wrote: "I think that children having Bibles is one of the most important things in spreading God's Word and starting a new generation of Christians."

"... Jesus was humble, and that's how we should be too." - Aleigha

Calling all kids!

Have you done something special to help Compassion-sponsored children? Let us know by emailing compassionkids@compassion.com!

11 clever captions ...

Remember this picture from the Fall 2019 **Compassion Explorer Magazine?** Here are some of your great captions! Find more at explorer.compassion.com/explorers.

Uh oh! Eeyore turned blue!

Kaden, 6 San Dimas, Calif.

Boing ... boing ... boing! Liam, 10 Brownsburg, Ind.

Breaking News: New Species of Giraffe Discovered by Young Boy!

Paisley, 14 Mobile. Ala

Just bouncin' along back home!

Henry, 8 St. Anthony, Minn..

What? You've never seen a blue donkey?

Audrey, 9 New Freedom, Penn.

Giddyup, horsey! I'm late for school.

Bourbonnais, III.

Let's bounce away to adventure!

Vivian, 9 Mandeville, La.

Don't mind me, Mom. Just goin' to get some ice cream!

Ryleigh, 8 LaFayette, Ga.

Can't talk. gotta bounce! Ava, 12 Lebanon, Ohio

Hey, buddy, can you point me to the highway? Parker, 11

Pomerory, Iowa

I think I fed my donkey too many blueberries!

Audrey, 9 Markham, Ontario









12 children singing ...

Music is an important part of Christmas celebrations everywhere. Whether you live in the U.S. like Rachel or a developing country like Dimas, you can give and receive Christmas joy through music! You could sing Christmas carols for neighbors or elderly people at a care center. If you play an instrument, you could write a song as a gift for someone.

Let's put together the whole "12 Days of Compassion Christmas" song. It's a mouthful, but that's part of the fun! Watch an example video at explorer.compassion.com/12days!



On the 1st day of Christmas, sponsorship gave to me ... a party for a special baby

On the 2nd day ... 2 treasured letters

On the 3rd day ... 3 new books

On the 4th day ... 4 ways to pray

On the 5th day ... 5 baby goats — aww!

On the 6th day ... 6 crafts for families

On the 7th day ... 7 snow white cookies

On the 8th day ... 8 Bible studies

On the 9th day ... 9 holiday customs

On the 10th day ... 10 kids a-caring

On the 11th day ... 11 clever captions

On the 12th day ... 12 children singing





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Up for our Carol Challenge? Details on the back cover!







Compassion International 12290 Voyager Parkway Colorado Springs, CO 80921-3668 (800) 336-7676







Submit your caption at:

explorer.compassion.com/giggles

This boy in the Philippines is all dressed up for a motorcycle ride. In countries where Compassion works, it's common to see kids riding on the backs of motorcycles — sometimes with several other people.

Calling all carolers!

Ask a parent to film you singing "The 12 Days of Compassion Christmas" (words on page 15) and post the video to Instagram with the hashtag #12DaysOfCompassion. Your video might be featured as a Compassion Instagram story or on the Compassion Explorer website! Find an example video and more details at explorer.compassion.com/12days.



Kritamet, a 9-year-old in Thailand, holds a Christmas gift he received at his Compassion center last year. He was also surprised to get something he'd never seen before: a stocking! The custom of putting goodies in socks is uncommon in his village.







Explorers, love this magazine? Want more?