

Missing Someone at Christmas

By Rich Nelson



Dealing with the absence or loss of a loved one can be especially difficult at Christmas, a holiday when families usually expect to be together. This reflection will guide your family as you develop a ritual to help express feelings of grief during the holiday season.

For

Teen Family

Season

Winter

Needed

Missing Someone at Christmas worksheet (see last page); photo of the person who will not be with the family for the holidays (due to death, military service, work, moving, or other separation); small box or other container with a lid; pens or pencils



creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/ 1

Prepare in Advance

- Make a copy of the Missing Someone at Christmas worksheet for each person.
- Place the picture of the absent family member on the table where you will gather for this activity.
- Put the box next to the picture.

Activity Plan

1. Say this prayer aloud to begin.

Loving God, we come together as a family to lift our heavy hearts to you. We miss [name of absent family member] and wish he/she was with us to celebrate Christmas. Help us to talk about our continued love for him/her. Amen.

2. Affirm that Christmas can be an especially difficult time when someone we love is absent. A season that is supposed to be filled with joy and excitement feels weird when we are too sad to be joyful and we don't want to "get into the Christmas spirit." This is a normal and common experience for people who are missing family members who cannot be with them. One of the best things to do is to lean on those who are able to be with us and to share our sorrow and memories with one another.
3. Give each person a copy of the Missing Someone at Christmas worksheet, and invite him or her to write or draw a response to each of the five statements. Encourage everyone to be honest about their feelings, which may range from sad to lonely, angry, or indifferent. Reassure family members that there is no wrong way to feel about the absence of someone.
4. Take turns listening to each person read his or her responses on the worksheet. After each person does this, place his or her worksheet in the box next to the picture. After each person has done this, close your time together in prayer:

Healing God, we give thanks that the power of your love overcomes all obstacles of time, distance, or separation. Help us to rest in your love as we celebrate the birth of your Son. Amen.

5. Variation: If it is possible to communicate with the loved one you are missing, have everyone sign a Christmas card and mail it to him or her. Take care to include petitions for this person's safety and well-being in your family's prayers this season.

Missing Someone at Christmas

One thing I really miss about this person:	
One thing this person taught me that I value:	
One thing I would like to say to this person:	
One thing I will say to this person when we meet again someday:	
One way I can honor this person at Christmas:	