



SUSTAINABLE CHRISTMAS INSPIRATIONS

CHRISTMAS VALUES

As Laity of the Chevalier Family, we live a *Spirituality of the Heart* which calls us 'to be on Earth the Heart of God'. We are inspired by God's heart to have a 'heart for Creation' in celebrating Christmas in liturgy, gatherings, and within our own hearts.

Christmas is a season for celebrating the 'Good News' - the first encounter we have with the Sacred Heart - our loving God incarnated. Inspired by the Christmas stories (Luke 2-8-20 and Matthew 2:1-12) and Chevalier Family spirituality (such as the MSC constitution), we place at the centre of our celebrations the values of **simplicity, authenticity, hospitality, gratitude, joy, good humour, and an openness to transformation of our hearts.**

“

Ours is a spirit of family formed by kindness and understanding, by compassion and mutual forgiveness, by gentleness, humility and simplicity, by hospitality and a sense of humour. (MSC Constitution)

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CHRISTMAS CHOICES

By putting 'care for Creation' in our hearts for Christmas, we can make choices about our gift-giving, celebratory feasts, liturgies, and festive settings that reflect this care whilst still holding true to our Christmas values. These choices can include:

- Reimagining Christmas traditions and gifts
- Selecting products, services, and companies that are sustainable, ethical, socially responsible, and local
- Minimising/eliminating excess and waste
- Deciding not to do something



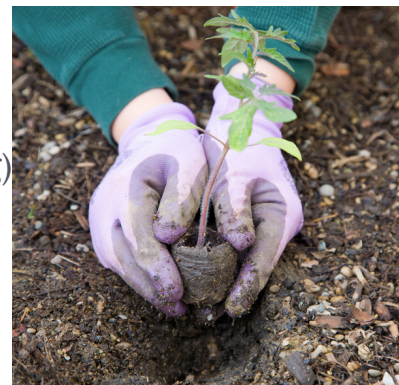
CHRISTMAS INSPIRATION

We hope the following sustainable Christmas inspirations provide ideas for how you can make choices with a 'heart for Creation'. Whether you make a few small changes, or try to embrace as much as possible, each choice will have an impact on reducing the negative environmental impact of Christmas and changing how we and others prioritise Creation.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Show our love for others in a way that honours them

- Homemade gift cards for services (e.g., doing chores, gardening)
- Experiences (e.g., show tickets, date, family picnic, bike riding)
- Handmade or edible (e.g., craft projects, food)
- Donations (e.g., support a charity or giving program)
- Local products to reduce carbon footprint
- Sustainable packaging



CHRISTMAS WRAPPING

Show our love for others through presentation of gifts

- Fabric items that can be reused or form part of the gift (e.g., scarves, tea towels, tote bags, napkins, offcuts)
- Recycled (e.g., old Christmas paper)
- Artwork (e.g., children's drawings)
- Natural string (e.g., jute, twine)
- Avoid cellophane and plastic wrapping



CHRISTMAS CARDS

Show our love for others through words and pictures

- Handmade
- Upcycled (e.g., reuse old images in new cards)
- Ecards
- Video message
- Text message
- Social media message



CHRISTMAS FEAST

Show our love and hospitality for others through food and drink

- Sustainable/ethical (e.g., sustainable seafood)
- Buy fresh, loose, or unpackaged items
- Local products
- Shop with reusable bags or refillable jars/containers/bottles
- Avoid excess or food with short expiries
- Choose items and recipes that can be stored for later



CHRISTMAS TREES

Symbolise new life, everlasting life

- Decorate a tree in your garden
- Potted tree (e.g., native, indoors, edible, pruned branch)
- Craft or wooden tree
- Handmade tree from sustainable materials
- Avoid plastic fake trees
- Avoid cutting down trees



CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

Create a festive setting to remind us of God and hospitality for others

- Sustainable materials (e.g., fabric, pottery, wood, glass, paper)
- Living
- Reuse existing decorations to maximise their lifespan
- Homemade
- Decorate with items representing love and shared experiences
- Avoid tinsel and plastic decorations



CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Symbolise the light/presence of God

- Solar
- LED
- Paper lanterns
- Switch off when not needed
- Less is best - avoid excessive light displays



CHRISTMAS CANDLES

Symbolise the light/presence of God and fruits of the Holy Spirit

- LED
- Natural (e.g., soy, wax)
- Crafted (e.g. paper, origami)
- Natural light
- Avoid polluting candles (e.g., paraffin or gel)
- Limit the time candle flames are lit



CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

Activity to spread the spirit of community celebration and joy

- Handmade (e.g., recycled paper, fabric, kid's Christmas artwork)
- Reuse (e.g., ribbon, twine, old Christmas paper)
- Sustainable gift
- Joke, inspirational quote, or message of love
- Avoid plastic trinkets



CHRISTMAS WREATH

Symbolises eternal life

- Handmade or recycled materials
- Pruning off cuts with soft foliage
- Herbs that slowly dry and can be used for cooking later
- Crafted (e.g., wooden)
- Avoid plastic fake wreaths



CHRISTMAS SETTING

Place that feels comfortable, welcoming, and hospitable

- Host outdoors
- Sustainable energy, lighting, and water options
- Open/close windows instead of using air conditioning/heaters
- Wear appropriate clothing for the temperatures/weather
- Avoid disposable cutlery and plates



CHRISTMAS TRAVEL

Journey to celebrate with others

- Carpool where possible
- Purchase carbon offsets for flights
- Consider staying local
- Plan your trips to minimise travel
- Consider travelling in hybrid vehicles or public transport
- Cycle or walk

