Christian Symbols of Christmas

1. The Nativity Scene

Bible References: Luke 2:7, Luke 2:12, Luke 2:16



Photo by Phuc Tran on Pexels.com

A nativity scene is a group of small statues that show the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. The scene shows baby Jesus resting in a wooden animal feeding box called a manger. Mary, Joseph, shepherds, farm animals, and wise men stand near Jesus. Families place this display on a table or under the Christmas tree. It shows that God loves us so much that he came to earth as a simple baby instead of a rich king.

2. The Christmas Star

Bible References: Matthew 2:1-2, Matthew 2:9-10

The Christmas star is a bright star with five or eight points. People make these stars out of glass, metal, or wood. Families place the star at the very top of their Christmas tree or hang it in front windows. It shows the special light in the sky that guided the wise travelers to find baby Jesus long ago. Today, the star reminds us of hope, light, and God's help.



Photo by Marta Branco on Pexels.com

3. Advent Wreaths and Door Wreaths

Bible References: Isaiah 9:2, John 8:12, Romans 15:13



Photo by Bastian Riccardi on Pexels.com

A wreath is a round ring made of evergreen branches that stay green all year. An Advent wreath sits on a table and holds four or five tall candles. Families light one candle each week in December to count down to Christmas Day. The complete circle has no beginning and no end, showing God's endless love. The evergreen branches mean living forever with God in heaven. The growing candlelight reminds us that Jesus brings light into a dark world.

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4. Angels

Bible References: Luke 1:26-33, Matthew 1:20-21, Luke 2:10-14

Artists picture angels as glowing figures with feather wings, golden halos, and long white robes. In the Bible, God sent these special messengers from heaven to tell Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds about the birth of Jesus. People place large angels on top of Christmas trees or hang small angel ornaments on branches. They also put angels next to the shepherds in nativity sets. Angels show happy praise, good news, and God's care for us.



Photo by Matthias Cooper on Pexels.com

5. The Christmas Tree

Bible References: John 3:16, Romans 6:23, 1 John 5:11



Photo by Egor Komarov on Pexels.com

A Christmas tree is a real or fake evergreen tree. Evergreen trees stay green all through the cold winter. For this reason, the tree shows the free gift of living forever with God because of Jesus. Families decorate the tree branches with bright lights, ornaments, shiny strings called tinsel, and a star or angel on top. During December, families place wrapped gifts under the tree branches. The top of the tree points up to the sky to help us think about God.

6. Candy Canes

Bible References: Psalm 23:1, John 10:11, 1 Peter 2:24

A candy cane is a hard peppermint candy shaped like a hook with bright red and white stripes. The curved top looks like a shepherd's walking stick, called a staff. This shape reminds us that Jesus is the Good Shepherd who takes care of his followers. Turned upside down, the hook forms the letter "J" for Jesus. The white color shows that Jesus is pure and lived a perfect life without wrong actions. The red stripes show his love when he bled and died on the cross to forgive our wrong actions and bad choices.



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7. Gifts

Bible References: Matthew 2:11, John 3:16, 2 Corinthians 9:15



Photo by Jeffry Surianto on Pexels.com

Christmas gifts are special items wrapped in bright paper and tied with colorful ribbons. People place them under the Christmas tree to open on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning. Giving gifts reminds us of the rich travelers, called wise men, who brought expensive treasures of gold, sweet oils, and perfume to young Jesus. Most of all, giving presents shows God's great love in giving his Son, Jesus, as a free gift to the world.

8. Christmas Lights and Candles in Windows

Bible References: Isaiah 9:2, Matthew 5:14, John 8:12

Christmas lights are long lines of tiny white or colorful electric light bulbs. People wrap them around trees, hang them on roofs, or place them on window sills. Many families also set small electric candles in their windows. These glowing lights show that Jesus brings light and truth to the world. A bright light in the window also gives a warm welcome to guests, reminding us of how Mary and Joseph looked for a place to stay on the first Christmas Eve.

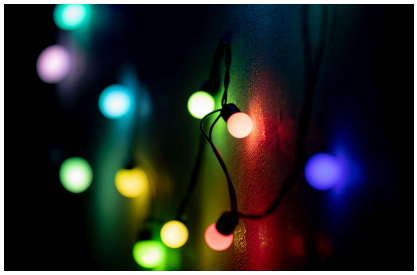

Photo by Sergei Starostin on Pexels.com

9. Holly and Ivy

Bible References: John 10:10, Matthew 27:29, 1 John 1:7



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Holly and ivy are strong plants that stay green all winter long. People use them to make door wreaths and long green ropes called garlands. Holly has sharp, pointed leaves and groups of bright red berries. These green plants show life and hope during cold weather. The sharp points on the leaves remind us of the sharp crown of thorns that soldiers placed on Jesus' head. The red berries show his love when he bled and died on the cross to forgive our bad choices.

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10. Christmas Bells

Bible References: Psalm 98:4, Isaiah 52:7, Luke 2:10-11

Christmas bells are shiny metal decorations made of brass, silver, or gold. People hang them on Christmas trees, place them on door wreaths, or ring small bells while singing Christmas carols. Long ago, early churches placed large bells in high towers. The ringing sound called people to come to church and celebrate happy events. Today, Christmas bells show joy and good news across a whole town, reminding us of the happy message the angels gave when Jesus was born.



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Other Traditional Symbols of Christmas

1. Santa Claus

Bible References: Proverbs 19:17, Matthew 6:3-4, 2 Corinthians 9:7



Photo by Skyler Ewing on Pexels.com

Santa Claus is pictured as a happy man with a white beard, a red suit with soft white fur, and tall black boots. His story comes from a real person named Saint Nicholas, a kind Christian leader in the 4th century who gave secret gifts to poor families. Today, Santa appears in Christmas stories, movies, and decorations. While the modern picture of him has little to do with the Bible, he shows kindness, quiet giving, and the joy of helping others. His story encourages us to give to people in need.

2. Stockings

Stockings are large, sock-shaped cloth bags. People hang them by the fireplace or near a bed on Christmas Eve. While children sleep, family members fill them with small toys, sweet treats, and fresh fruit. This tradition comes from a famous story about Saint Nicholas. The story says he secretly dropped bags of gold coins down a chimney, and the coins landed inside socks hanging by the fire to dry. Today, stockings show happy waiting, quiet kindness, and fun surprises on Christmas morning.



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3. Poinsettias



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Poinsettias are bright plants from Central America with star-shaped red leaves and tiny yellow centers. People use them to decorate living rooms and special tables called altars in churches during December. A famous Mexican story tells about a poor girl named Pepita who had no gift for baby Jesus. She gathered simple green plants from the road and laid them at the church altar. The green leaves turned into bright red flowers! Today, poinsettias show joy, praise, and simple gifts given to God. The red color also reminds us of Jesus' blood and his forgiveness of our wrong actions.

4. Mistletoe

Mistletoe is a green plant with small oval leaves and tiny white berries. Long ago, non-Christian groups used mistletoe in their worship traditions. Because of this history, early church leaders did not allow mistletoe inside church buildings. Today, people use mistletoe as a fun decoration at home. People hang it high in doorways or arches. Guests stop under the hanging branches for a friendly hug, a kiss, or a handshake. It shows peace, friendship, and a warm welcome.



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5. Gingerbread Houses and Cookies



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Gingerbread items are hard cookies baked with ginger and sweet spices. Bakers cut the dough into shapes like little cookie people or build small houses held together with white frosting and colorful candies. This tradition started in Europe after travelers brought spices from Asia and fun stories like Hansel and Gretel became popular. Today, gingerbread shows home warmth, holiday sweetness, and the fun tradition of baking treats together with family.

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6. Nutcrackers

A nutcracker is a wooden figure carved to look like a toy soldier. It has a colorful uniform, a tall hat, real fur or hair, and a handle on the back that opens its big mouth. Workers in Germany started making them in the 1600s to crack open hard nuts. Old stories said these wooden soldiers brought good luck and protected homes from harm. In the 1800s, a famous dance show called The Nutcracker ballet made these toy soldiers popular all over the world. Today, people place nutcrackers on tables and shelves as fun holiday decorations.



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Vocabulary List

1. **Altar**: (noun) A special table in a church used for religious services.
2. **Arch**: (noun) A curved doorway or opening.
3. **Crown of thorns**: (noun) A sharp ring of thorny branches placed on Jesus' head by soldiers.
4. **Evergreen**: (adjective) A plant or tree that keeps its green leaves all year long.
5. **Garland**: (noun) A long rope or chain of green leaves and branches used for decoration.
6. **Halo**: (noun) A circle of bright light drawn above the head of an angel or holy person.
7. **Manger**: (noun) A wooden box used to hold food for farm animals.
8. **Messenger**: (noun) A person who carries a message or news from someone else.
9. **Ornaments**: (noun) Small, pretty objects hung on a Christmas tree for decoration.
10. **Shepherd**: (noun) A person whose job is to take care of sheep.
11. **Staff**: (noun) A long walking stick used by a shepherd.
12. **Statue**: (noun) A figure of a person or animal carved out of stone, wood, or other material.
13. **Tinsel**: (noun) Shiny, metallic thread or string used as a Christmas tree decoration.
14. **Uniform**: (noun) A special set of clothes worn by members of a group or army.
15. **Wreath**: (noun) A round ring made of green branches, flowers, or leaves.

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