

# Christmas in Ireland



By Primary 7 Pupils  
Holy Family Primary and Nursery School, Derry



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# Irish language



In Irish (or Gaelic) Christmas is 'Nollaig', Santa Claus is known as 'San Nioclás' (Saint Nicholas) or 'Daidí na Nollag' (Father Christmas) and Happy/Merry Christmas is 'Nollaig Shona Dhuit'.

Nollaig  
Shona  
Dhuit



# Christmas decorations



Cities, towns and villages put up lights and decorations everywhere to celebrate Christmas. There is usually a 'Big Switch On' in each city, town or village in November time.

Householders put up a Christmas tree, decorate their houses with lights and tinsel as well as put a crib on display. Some households put a candle on the window to welcome Mary and Joseph at Christmas time.

The Church will have a Christmas tree and a large crib with all of the nativity representatives. The baby Jesus is placed in the crib during the vigil (night before) mass for Christmas.

# Advent

It is the period of four Sunday's and weeks before Christmas.

At this time, people across Ireland prepare for the coming of Jesus.

People prepare by decorating their homes, making plans for Christmas, attending mass, praying and receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Each week during Advent a candle is lit during mass. There are five candles which sit on a wreath of evergreen leaves. The wreath represents eternal life. Three of the candles are purple which represent fasting and repentance. One candle is pink which represent joy. One candle is white which is lit on Christmas day. It signifies Jesus as the light of the world.







# Christmas at school



Children prepare for a nativity in their year groups. This involves them acting out the Christmas story.

Click on the image below to watch some of the rehearsals.



# Christmas at school

Children complete various Christmas related activities within school.





# Christmas at school

The school choir performs at various charity events helping to raise money for those in need.

Click on the image below to watch the choir rehearse for carol singing.



# Christmas at school

The school gets decorated for Christmas.

The children celebrate Christmas with their friends in school when the school cooks a Christmas dinner consisting of turkey, ham and stuffing with all of the trimmings.

Children do 'Secret Santa' within their own class. For this they have to pick out someone's name from a hat and buy them a present. They must not say who they got.





# Carol Services and Christingle

Throughout towns and cities Carol services are held in Churches, community centres, shopping centres, hotels and hospitals.

The school choir perform at various Carol services across Derry City.

Each church hosts a Christingle service. At this service children bring Christmas gifts to the altar during the service so that they can be passed on to children who are disadvantaged in the local community.



# Religious Traditions

- Most families go to mass at Christmas time, even if they are not usually religious.
- They attend mass on Christmas Eve (vigil mass) or they attend mass on Christmas Day itself. The Christmas vigil mass is usually at midnight.
- The main celebration on Christmas day is to celebrate the birth of Baby Jesus. During each Christmas day mass, the baby Jesus is placed into the crib in the church. This signifies the arrival of Jesus.



# resents

ighbours, friends and families exchange presents.

Presents are wrapped up and kept under the tree until Christmas Day (25<sup>th</sup> December).

Stockings are also placed on the fire place for 'Santa' to fill.

Confection boxes are given to children which usually consist of 4/5 bars of chocolate.

Many households will buy in tubs of sweets, chocolate, snacks and drinks to accommodate people who visit during the Christmas holidays.





# Dinner

Starter usually consists of homemade vegetable soup.

The traditional dinner consists of turkey, ham, stuffing, potatoes (mashed and roasted), brussels sprouts and other vegetables.

For desert many people eat mince pies, Christmas pudding or homemade trifle.

Mulled wine is a typical drink for adults and Shloer is a typical drink for children.



# Traditions

## Christmas crackers

People pull Christmas crackers before eating their dinner. Each cracker contains a paper crown, a joke and a small gift. Everyone wears the paper crowns whilst eating their dinner.

## Santa's grotto

On the run up to Christmas, children visit Santa's grotto to tell him what they would like for Christmas.

## Rickety Wheel

Schools hold a Rickety wheel where many people from the community come to try and win prizes by buying tickets. The money raised goes towards school funds and pays for outings and educational resources.



The background of the slide features a soft-focus image of Santa Claus on the left, wearing his iconic red suit and white beard. To his right, a reindeer is visible, partially obscured by the text. The scene is set in a snowy, outdoor environment, likely a winter wonderland or a snowy forest. The overall lighting is dim, giving the image a cozy, nighttime feel.

# Santa

Children write their letters to Santa Claus at the beginning of December with the hope of getting some new toys.

If the children have been good all year then Santa will bring them some toys from their lists.

If a child has not been well behaved all year, it is traditional for the child to receive coal as a gift.

Many households have an 'Elf on the shelf' which reports back to Santa about the child's behaviour on the run up to Christmas.



# Family Time

Family members come together at Christmas time.

Many families have two dinners - one on Christmas Day and one on Boxing Day (also known as St. Stephen's Day).

Families celebrate this time of year together because the birth of Jesus is the beginning of the Holy Family which is a huge part of our religious belief.



# Typical Christmas

Christmas celebrations begin on the 24<sup>th</sup> December.

Parents organise the dinner and we watch a Christmas movie as a family.

Before going to bed a glass of milk, some cookies and carrot is left for Santa and the reindeers.

The next morning we all wake up early (approximately 6am). We open our presents together.

We have a lovely fry up for breakfast before getting showered and then we go to attend 10am mass at the local chapel.

After mass we visit granny and granda. We stay there for a few days for Christmas dinner and we get more presents. My aunties, uncles and cousins all come to my grandparents house too.

On that day when we go home, we play with our presents before going to bed. We also play a new family board game.

It is time for bed again. It is a tiring day, but it is the best day of the year!



# New Year's Eve / New Year

One week after Christmas we celebrate the beginning of a new year.

Many Irish households have another big, delicious family dinner together.

On New Year's Even people usually attend local fireworks, or watch the fireworks on TV from other cities / countries around the world.

This usually indicates the end of the Christmas celebrations as many people get ready to go back to school and work on the 3<sup>rd</sup> / 4<sup>th</sup> January.





# Epiphany

This is a 'Holy Day.' Even though many people are back at school and work, this is a day which people attend mass to celebrate the wise men giving their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the Baby Jesus.

This is an important religious event because on this feast day we celebrate Jesus being revealed to the world.

This is the twelfth and final day of the Christmas season.





**HOLY FAMILY**  
PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

Merry Christmas  
and  
Happy New Year!

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