



20 SIMPLE WAYS TO HAVE A JOYFUL HEART OVER THE HOLIDAY SEASON

by Miiko Gibson

1. Wake up earlier than everyone else in the family. Do your devotions and then look and pray over your list for the day.

Enjoy your time with the Lord first, and the day will flow joyfully. Usually.

2. Eat a healthy breakfast each day.

Nothing like an energetic start of the day.

3. Budget and stick to it.

Being in debt in January and February is stressful!

4. Keep decorations simple.

No tree? A string of lights in the kitchen will give the house a festive look.

5. Get something pretty for your kitchen – a plant, a decorated candle, etc.

Something fresh and pretty to which you wake up every morning can lift up your spirit. I like new kitchen towels.

6. Play soothing Christmas carols throughout the day.

Sing along with the music. Read about the history of the carols.



7. Take a break from regular school in December - do a Christmas Unit study instead. [Amanda Bennett](#) has a good one.

Count all your Christmas preparations as part of school. I also spend the last week of December evaluating the year and planning for the next half of school for the new year.

8. Homemade gifts and baked goodies are fun and more meaningful.

Of course this activity is also part of school.

9. Too many traditions?

It's all right to throw out those that don't work. Really.

10. Include an Advent study so every one is reminded of the reason of the season.

You might enjoy this [study](#).

11. Do not over schedule.

Certainly try to stay home at least two days of the week!

12. Make time for yourself

I like going to a coffee place or bookstore to enjoy my tea and book. It recharges me. My husband and I take turns enjoying some solitude on a regular basis. We need that time alone.



13. Two simple gift ideas.

- a) *Magazine subscriptions*
- b) *Make coupons of gifts of time for loved ones.*

14. Keep your home smelling nice and warm

Light soy-based candles (scented with essential oils) or simmer a pot of apples and spices like cinnamon and cloves.

15. Make a master list for the month ahead. Then make weekly and daily lists.

If your master list is too long, it is too long. No worries. Don't stress over it and kill yourself so you can tick off each item. Just do what you can.

16. Relax when you visit.

If extended family members push hot buttons, do not overreact. They may never change, but you can choose not to get emotional about issues you don't agree. Bring everything to the Lord and leave it there.

17. Let your family be involved in one (or more) missions-focused activity.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive "rings true all the time.

18. Quality sleep.

Get enough sleep each evening. Go on a computer fast if need be. I've done that!



19. Cards and Gifts

Send cards only to those you don't usually see, and try to get your gifts all done the first week of December. Don't be lured by catalogs and coupons. Discounts will come around again.

20. It's all about Jesus

Don't let the world, your neighbors or friends tell you how to prepare and enjoy the holiday season. The greatest gift you can give your family is your faith and your patience; your love and your cheerfulness.

Don't stress. Simplify, smile and sit at Jesus's feet.

A Blessed Christmas!

