

# TUNE IN to CHRISTMAS



Finding Christ  
in Our Favorite  
Holiday Specials



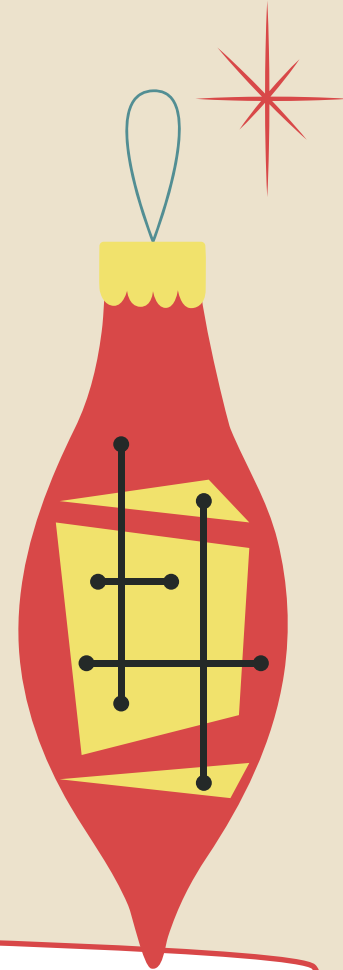
FAMILY  
GUIDE

# TUNE IN to CHRISTMAS

## Finding Christ in Our Favorite Holiday Specials

Cindy Lou Who, Ebenezer Scrooge, Buddy the Elf, Rudolf, Frosty, George Bailey and Tiny Tim. These classic characters are each part of his/her own beloved holiday story. Watching these stories together with family is a treasured seasonal tradition.

Join with family, friends and small groups this holiday season to witness the Christlike actions of these beloved characters and uncover and reflect on the universal Christian themes that can be viewed in our favorite Christmas programs. Family-friendly discussion questions are provided. Use them to help get the conversation started, and keep your eyes open for the acts of kindness, joy, redemption and love that remind us of the actions of our coming Savior, Jesus. The time spent together in reflection will make these holiday specials even more ... special!



1. Home Alone
2. Frosty the Snowman
3. It's a Wonderful Life
4. A Charlie Brown Christmas
5. How the Grinch Stole Christmas
6. Miracle on 34th Street
7. Elf
8. The Muppet Christmas Carol
9. White Christmas
10. Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer
11. A Christmas Story
12. The Polar Express
13. Jingle All the Way
14. Santa Claus Is Coming to Town
15. The Best Christmas Pageant Ever





# HOME ALONE

1990

## Never Truly Alone

Little Kevin is accidentally left at home by his family at Christmas. At first the prospect of being home alone is exciting. He can do whatever he wants! Then it gets a little boring and eventually quite scary as thieves attempt to rob his home multiple times. Kevin masterfully staves off the would-be robbers, but he is still on edge. He enters a church on Christmas Eve where he bonds with his seemingly creepy neighbor, Marley. Marley later saves Kevin from the robbers by subduing them with a snow shovel before police arrive.

Even at Christmas we may often feel we are on our own in this world, like Kevin was. But Christmas reminds us that we are never truly alone because God is with us in the person of Jesus Christ. We go to church to find him, but he is also by our side in our homes, when we battle against the devil and when we miss our loved ones who are far away or no longer among us. In Christ, we have a constant companion.

## TUNING IN to CHRIST

- When in shock, Kevin put his hands on his face with his mouth open. What still shocks you today? How does Jesus help you to calm down? See Philippians 4:6.
- Kevin's parents do anything and everything in their power to return to their son. We are reminded that Jesus, our Good Shepherd, always seeks us out until he finds us. See Matthew 18:12.
- Kevin uses all sorts of booby traps to stymie his home invaders. What tools does Jesus give us to stymie Satan, our faith invader? See Matthew 4:1-11.

## TALK ABOUT ...

- ... a time when you were alone (or felt alone) at Christmas.
- ... a special moment when you felt the presence of Jesus with you.
- ... a favorite gathering of family.

**"They shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."**

*Matthew 1:23*

# TUNING IN to CHRIST

- It wasn't a magic hat that brought Jesus to life. It was the Holy Spirit through Mary. See Luke 1:35.
- Echoing Frosty's first words, we say "Happy birthday" to Jesus on Christmas. See Luke 2:7.
- It is only through Jesus' sacrifice that we are gifted with forgiveness and new life: a rebirth-day! See Ephesians 5:1-2.
- Frosty says, "I'll be back again someday." Isn't it nice to know that Jesus will be back again someday to take us to heaven to live with him? See John 14:3.



## TALK ABOUT ...

- ... a sacrifice you can make to help someone this Christmas.
- ... a time when someone else put your needs before their own.
- ... a friend you have who is special to you.
- ... a way you can have a birthday party for Jesus.

**To you is  
born this day in  
the city of David  
a Savior, who is  
the Messiah,  
the Lord.**

*Luke 2:11*

## Happy Birthday!

In this Christmas classic, a young girl named Karen and her friends build a snowman and name him Frosty. A magician's hat is placed on Frosty's head. "Happy birthday!" Frosty says as he comes to life. The children realize that the rising temperature will make Frosty melt, so Karen and Frosty head to the cold North Pole on a refrigerated train. But Frosty sees that the train is too cold for Karen. So out of love, Frosty carries her into a warm greenhouse to save her, knowing he might melt in the process. He is willing to sacrifice himself so that Karen might live.

At Christmas we remember that Jesus came to sacrifice himself for us on the cross. He died that we might live. Jesus helps us to offer ourselves to others in loving response to his great love for us, a love that will not melt away but remain for us forever.

# FROSTY THE SNOWMAN

1969

# TUNING IN to CHRIST

- Twelve-year-old George Bailey saves his younger brother Harry from drowning. Harry goes on to become a U.S. Navy pilot awarded the Medal of Honor. Christ, our brother, saved us from drowning in sin that we might one day receive the crown of life in heaven. See Titus 3:5.
- When George returns to his real life, he is overwhelmed with excitement to see the people and even the buildings he has grown to know and love. What excites us this Christmas when we see the people and places that have been touched by Christ's life? See Philippians 1:3.

- On Christmas Eve, when townsfolk are gladly giving money to help George get out of debt, Harry raises a toast to his brother, calling him, "The richest man in town." The implication is that he is rich in love and friendship, just as we are rich in love and friendship from Christ. See 2 Corinthians 8:9.

## TALK ABOUT ...

- ... what life would have been like if you had never been born.
- ... what a difference Christ has made in your life.
- ... when a cherished loved one returned at Christmas.



When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child ...

Luke 2:17

**IT'S A  
WONDERFUL  
LIFE**

1946

## If He'd Never Been Born

The turning point of *It's a Wonderful Life* comes when a down-on-his-luck George Bailey wishes he had never been born. The angel Clarence grants that wish, and George witnesses what life would have been like if he had not existed. At the moment George prays to God, asking to live again, George awakens from the dream. The whole experience makes George come to realize that his actions did, in fact, have a positive impact on the lives of others.

Christmas begs the question for us as Christians, "What if Christ had never been born?" In our mind's eye, we realize that without the birth of Jesus, our sins would not have been forgiven, we would not have heaven to look forward to and the world would be devoid of love and care and meaning. We thank God, therefore, for the wonderful life we have in Jesus, the babe of Bethlehem, who fills our days with blessing upon blessing.



# A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS

1965

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being!

2 Corinthians 5:17

## What Christmas Is All About

This beloved special finds an intrepid Charlie Brown on a mission to find the true meaning of Christmas. He does not find it in the Santa list from Sally, the shallow advice of Lucy, the random dance moves of his friends, the lights on Snoopy's award-winning doghouse or the hollow echoes after Linus knocks on an aluminum tree. No, he finds it in a scrawny evergreen, the words from Luke 2 spoken by Linus and the "little love" of the Peanuts gang that transforms a lowly tree into a spectacular showpiece.

The joy of this special is the excitement that comes through transformation. We are transformed as well by the lowly birth of our Savior Jesus, "wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12). Our hearts are changed by the grace of God and the care of others who surround us with a little love, making us new creations in Christ, glorious to behold.

## TUNING IN to CHRIST

- The children enjoy catching snowflakes on their tongues. We are reminded that in Christ, "if your sins are like scarlet, [they will] become like snow" (Isaiah 1:18).
- When Linus recites Luke 2:8-14, it is the only time in the special that Linus drops his blanket. You could say he is holding on to Christ in that moment.
- When one ornament bends the little tree over, we remember that the Bible says "a bruised reed he will not break" (Isaiah 42:3). God in Christ makes our bent and bruised lives whole again.

## TALK ABOUT ...

- ... a simple decoration or tradition that has special meaning in your family.
- ... a fond memory of a Christmas tree.
- ... a kind thing someone did for you at Christmas.
- ... the ways you share or hear the Biblical retelling of the Christmas story in your household.



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