

How to Turn your Christmas Party into a Christ-Centered Gift



Every year InterVarsity chapters host hundreds of Christmas parties. With a little work, we can improve these gatherings to help skeptics and seekers consider following Jesus. The idea of sharing the gospel at a Christmas party will sound awkward to your students initially. Let's be like Buddy from "Elf".....he effectively spreads Christmas cheer even to the coldest of skeptics. We too can embrace being slightly awkward for the sake of spreading true Christmas cheer and lifting the bushel of faith.



Josh spent the entire semester inviting his friends to Bible study and large group, but they never came. At the end of the semester, Josh invited his friends to come to the InterVarsity Christmas party....that party became their first-ever InterVarsity event. They talked about faith and Christmas, which became a launching point for spiritual growth through the following semester.

One key to overcoming awkwardness is to make the title and invitation crystal clear, in order to avoid the bait and switch. *Come to our Christmas Party: Lots of cookies, bad sweater competition, and a 15 minute Christmas faith encouragement.*

Three Reasons for Christmas Parties that Share the Gospel:

1. **NON-CHRISTIANS GET CHRISTMAS PARTIES.** Christmas parties are widely understood and embraced among Christians and non-Christians. It is normal to go to Christmas parties.
2. **EASY INVITATIONS.** It is easy for students to invite non-Christian friends to a Christmas party, even friends who have said "no" in the past.
3. **EVANGELISTIC MOMENTUM.** It's an opportunity for ending the semester on a high note with some evangelistic fruit and momentum.

Three Things to Do:

1. Explain to your students the 15 minutes of content, with the invitation to be like the wise men in Matthew's story. Role play winsome invitations to the Christmas Party.
2. Plan a fun way for non-Christian friends and newcomers to enter into the community and relax.
3. Plan 15 minutes of content where you or a student share the Christmas story and share the gospel.

Example: Christmas Party Theme - Most Disappointing Christmas Gift

Activity	Notes
Sample Winsome Invitation	InterVarsity is having a second chance Christmas party, where the story of the worst Christmas gift makes you the winner. We'll have food, fun and games, and hear a fresh take on the Christmas story. I would love for you to come with me. Can I pick you up on the way?
Icebreaker	Write the disappointing Christmas gift on your name tag. Take a sticker, vote for someone else's disappointing gift. The person who is voted having received the worst gift wins the door prize at the end of the night..
Transition from party to Content 5 min	<p>Christmas is a time of anticipation. The gifts, the music, the parties... all pointing to Christmas day, the magical moment when families gather, there is never any arguing, and we exchange gifts that are just perfect. Or more likely, Christmas is a season filled with anticipation, the same Christmas songs on a loop on the radio and in all the stores, and moments with family that are both sweet and terrible! And the gifts, even if they are exactly what you want, only satisfy for a little while before we are on to wanting more. And sometimes we get stuck with awkward gifts, like that sweater from your aunt that you never want to wear, or [tell short bad gift story.]</p> <p>Our winner of the bad Christmas gift is</p> <p>The first Christmas was full on anticipation too, in fact, it was hundreds of years of anticipation. For decades God was silent and his people, the people of Israel were waiting and watching for God's savior to come. And then, suddenly, God spoke again to a young girl and she became the mother of the long awaited savior of the world.</p>
Read the Christmas Story 5 min	<p>Choose 3 students who can read the scripture with enthusiasm.</p> <p>Student 1: Matthew 1:18-25 Student 2: Matthew 2:1-6 Student 3: Matthew 2:7-12</p>
Brief Interpretation and Gospel Presentation 3 min	<p>The first Christmas wasn't disappointing nor did it's significance fade, this little child is actually the turning point of all history, and the wise men saw this. The wise men, knew the prophecies of the Israelites and being scholars, were looking for signs in the heavens and recognized the God of the people of Israel was fulfilling his promise to send a King and savior. And they didn't want to miss out, in fact, they gathered precious gift to give to this King and prepared to worship him.</p> <p>You see, this child is a part of a much bigger story, that starts back when the world was created. God created the world to be a perfect place. And he created people, us, to be in right relationship with him, with each other, and with each other. Things were perfect.</p> <p>We all long for that perfection. That's why when we imagine Santa, gifts and Christmas is so magical, but reality is disappointing. Christians believe that perfection was broken when people thought we could do better than God. Instead of placing God at the center of our lives, we put our own selfish desires at the center. And as a result, everything fell apart. We broke our relationship with God, with each other, and with all of creation. Fortunately, God didn't leave us in our mess and disappointment.</p> <p>God relocated to our world that first Christmas in the person of Jesus. And this baby would</p>

	<p>grow up and take all of our brokenness onto himself. By dying on the cross and rising again, he broke the power of our broken world. If we're willing to let God take his place at the center again, and if we are willing to trust Jesus with our lives, as the wise men did when they gave gifts and worshiped, we can be restored to a right relationship with God.</p> <p>And once we choose to follow Jesus, he sends us into the world to bring his love, power, justice wherever we go. We get to live and declare this good news.</p>
<p>Invitation 4m</p>	<p>Tonight, I want to leave us with a Christmas challenge to be like the wise men.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maybe you want to bring Jesus your gifts and worship him like the wise men. To do that, we put our full trust in Jesus and make him the center of our story. Maybe this would be for the first time for you or maybe you have had faith in Jesus, but it has been the faith you grew up with and you want to claim it as your own tonight. 2. Maybe you want to metaphorically look to the heavens for signs. And you make a new years resolution to explore more about Jesus with us when semester starts again. 3. We don't know what happened when the wise men returned home, but I would like to think they told their people of their experience worshipping the baby Jesus. Maybe you want to take a step of sharing your faith with others this Christmas.
<p>Response: 1 min</p>	<p>Response Options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hand out a contact card where students can check an option. (Encourage InterVarsity students to ask their friends at the party how they responded.) 2. If there are fewer than 10 at your party, you can ask people to put up fingers and share if they like.