

On the 1st day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

A Partridge in a Pear Tree

The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whose birthday we celebrate on December 25, the first day of Christmas. In the song, Christ is symbolically presented as a mother partridge that feigns injury to decoy predators from her helpless nestlings, recalling the expression of Christ's sadness over the fate of Jerusalem: "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! How often would I have sheltered you under my wings, as a hen does her chicks, but you would not have it so"

Read: Luke 13:34-35

Activity:

Cut out a cross of cardboard or coloured paper and decorate to hang on your tree.

Eat:

Ginger Pear Cheesecake Cups

1 can pear slices undrained

12 crispy ginger cookies broken into crumbs

¼ cup cream cheese spread

1 cup Cool Whip thawed

Drain pears, reserving 4 Tbsp of juice. Sprinkle ¾ of crushed cookies evenly into 4 dessert bowls. Mix cream cheese and 4 Tbsp juice till blended. Stir in whipped topping. Spoon evenly over ginger crumbs in dessert cups. Top with pear slices and remaining crushed cookies.

On the 2nd day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

Two Turtle Doves

The Old and New Testaments, which together bear witness to God's self-revelation in history and the creation of a people to tell the Story of God to the world.

Read: Revelation 22:18-21

Activity:

Play some “two” person games such as war, checkers, chess, battleship or cribbage. You can even pick one and turn it into a tournament.

Eat:

Turtle Cookies

1 cup flour
1/3 cup cocoa
¼ tsp salt
½ cup butter
2/3 cup sugar
1 egg separated + 1 egg white
2 Tbsp milk
1 tsp vanilla
1 ¼ cups chopped pecans

Caramel filling: 14 caramels, 3 Tbsp heavy cream

Chocolate Drizzle: 2 oz semi sweet chocolate
1 tsp shortening

In medium bowl, combine flour, cocoa & salt. With mixer beat together butter and sugar for 2 minutes till light and fluffy. Add egg yolk, milk and vanilla. Mix until incorporated. Reduce speed to low and add flour till combined. Wrap dough in plastic and refrigerate one hour. Whisk egg whites in bowl till frothy. Roll dough into one inch balls. Dip the cookie balls into the egg white and roll in the chopped pecans till coated. Place 2 inches apart. With a teaspoon make an indent. Bake at 350° 12 minutes or until set.

While they are baking, prepare caramel. Melt over caramels and cream over low heat in saucepan.

Once cookies are baked, make indent again with spoon and use spoon to fill with caramel.

Melt chocolate and shortening in microwave. Put in ziplock and cut corner. Drizzle over cookies. Yield 24 cookies.

On the 3rd day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

Three French Hens

The Three Theological Virtues: 1) Faith, 2) Hope, and 3) Love

Read: 1 Corinthians 13:4-13

Activity:

Make some jello play dough and create a nativity scene or make the letters for “Faith”, “Hope” and “Love”.

Jello Playdough

1 cup flour
1 pkg (85g) Jello jelly powder (No name works fine)
1 Tbsp cream of tartar
¼ cup salt
1 cup water
2 Tbsp oil (I use canola)

Combine the first 4 ingredients in small saucepan. Stir in water and oil. Cook on medium low 5 to 7 minutes or until mixture pulls away from side of pan and starts to form a ball. Once a ball is formed, remove from pan and put on parchment paper on counter. Once cool enough to handle, you may want to knead in more flour if it feels sticky.

Eat:

Chicken Wonton Appetizer

24 wonton wrappers
1 cup marble cheese shredded
½ cup cooked chicken diced very small
½ cup ranch dressing
¼ cup green pepper chopped small
¼ cup red pepper chopped small

Preheat oven to 350. Spray muffin tins with cooking spray. Place one wonton wrapper in each cup. Mix all other ingredients. Fill wontons.

Bake 6-8 min.

On the 4th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

Four Calling Birds

The Four Gospels: 1) Matthew, 2) Mark, 3) Luke, and 4) John, which proclaim the Good News of God's reconciliation of the world to Himself in Jesus Christ.

Read: Matthew 1:18-24

Luke 2:8-20

Activity:

Play some games for four people like Bridge, Euchre, Whist, Sorry

Eat:

Four Cheese Lasagne

1 lb ground beef	2 cups cottage or ricotta cheese
1 onion chopped	2/3 cup parmesan cheese
2 garlic cloves, minced	¼ cup shredded cheddar cheese
1 tsp oregano	1 ½ cups shredded mozzarella cheese; divided
1 tsp basil	12 lasagna noodles
3 ½ cups tomato sauce	1 tsp Italian seasoning
2 eggs, beaten	

Preheat oven to 350°. Cook noodles according to package directions.

In skillet, brown beef with onion and garlic. Drain then stir in herbs and sauce. In a bowl, mix eggs, cottage/ricotta, parmesan, cheddar and ½ cup mozza.

Spread 1 cup meat sauce into a greased 13X9 in baking dish. Layer with 4 noodles then cottage cheese mixture. Next 4 more noodles and half of the remaining meat sauce. Put another 4 noodles and remaining meat sauce. Sprinkle with Italian seasoning and remaining mozza cheese.

Cover with greased foil. Bake for 50-55 minutes. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

On the 5th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

Five Gold Rings

The first Five Books of the Old Testament, known as the Torah or the Pentateuch: 1) Genesis, 2) Exodus, 3) Leviticus, 4) Numbers, and 5) Deuteronomy, which gives the history of humanity's sinful failure and God's response of grace in the creation of a people to be a light to the world.

Read: Deuteronomy 33:1-5

Activity:

Play a game of Yahtzee (five dice)

Eat:

Enjoy some onion rings or sour cream rings.

On the 6th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

Six Geese A-laying

The six days of creation that confesses God as Creator and Sustainer of the world

Read: Genesis 1

Activity:

Create six ornaments for your tree; one for each day of creation. Use loose parts and recyclables and be creative.

Eat:

Egg Frittata

8 Eggs
½ cup milk or cream
¼ cup grated parmesan cheese
1 tsp Vegetable seasoning
2 cups frozen diced hash browns; thawed and drained
1 onion
3 cloves garlic
1 bell pepper
Bacon broken into pieces
2 cups shredded cheese

In a large skillet or frying pan, sauté onion, garlic and pepper in some olive oil until tender. Add frozen hashbrowns and cook thru about 5 min. Beat eggs together in a bowl and add milk or cream and parmesan cheese. Add vegetable seasoning and salt and pepper to taste.

To greased 9X13 pan, add the hashbrown mixture and bacon; pour the egg mixture evenly over top.

Bake for 30 minutes at 350°. Top with 2 cups shredded cheese and bake 10-15 min longer or until the cheese begins to brown.

On the 7th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

Seven Swans A-swimming

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: 1) wisdom 2) understanding 3) knowledge

4) right judgement 5) Fortitude 6) piety 7) fear of the Lord

Read: Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:8-11

Activity: Play “Go Fish” or any other game you may know involving water. Some of ours include Niagara, Survive and Forbidden Island

Eat:

Seven Layer Salad

1 head of lettuce shredded

1 cup diced celery

6 hard boiled eggs sliced

2 cups frozen peas

½ cup chopped green pepper

8 green onions chopped

8 bacon slices broken up

Dressing: 1 cup mayo, 1 cup sour cream, 2 Tbsp sugar

Layer salad in order. Top with dressing. You could add some shredded cheese to the top.

On the 8th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

Eight Maids A-milking

The eight Beatitudes: 1) Blessed are the poor in spirit, 2) those who mourn, 3) the meek, 4) those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, 5) the merciful, 6) the pure in heart, 7) the peacemakers, 8) those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

Read: Matthew 5:3-10

Activity:

Play a game of Old Maid

Eat:

Enjoy your favourite milk product like some eggnog, decadent ice cream or some nice cheeses

On the 9th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

Nine Ladies Dancing

The nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit: 1) love, 2) joy, 3) peace, 4) patience, 5) kindness, 6) generosity, 7) faithfulness, 8) gentleness, and 9) self-control.

Read: Galatians 5:22

Activity:

Create an 8X10 picture representing one of the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit. Use paint, crayons, markers, mixed media...just create.

Eat:

Fruits with Caramel Dip

2 8oz blocks of cream cheese

2 cups icing sugar

2 tsp vanilla

1 bottle Caramel Smucker's sundae syrup

3 Skor bars broken in small pieces

Various fruits cut up for dipping: apples, grapes, honey dew, strawberries, pineapple, mandarin oranges

Using a mixer, cream together cream cheese, icing sugar and vanilla until smooth. Spread in a glass pie plate. Squeeze the caramel topping on the cream cheese trying to cover it in a swirly manner. Spread Skor bar over the caramel. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

On the 10th day of Christmas my true love gave to
me...

Ten Lords A-leaping

The ten commandments: 1) You shall have no other gods before me; 2) Do not make an idol; 3) Do not take God's name in vain; 4) Remember the Sabbath Day; 5) Honour your father and mother; 6) Do not murder; 7) Do not commit adultery; 8) Do not steal; 9) Do not bear false witness; 10) Do not covet.

Read: Exodus 20:1-17

Activity:

Reach out to a few "lords" in your family on the phone, Face Time or Zoom.

Eat:

Make a snack tray with ten items. Veggies, cheeses, meat, fruits or pickles would be some examples.

On the 11th day of Christmas my true love gave to
me...

Eleven Pipers Piping

The eleven Faithful Apostles: 1) Simon Peter, 2) Andrew, 3) James, 4) John, 5) Philip, 6) Bartholomew, 7) Matthew, 8) Thomas, 9) James bar Alphaeus, 10) Simon the Zealot, 11) Judas bar James. The list does not include the twelfth disciple, Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus to the religious leaders and the Romans.

Read: Luke 6:14-16

Activity:

Make some music together. Use real instruments or create your own. Sing some carols.

Eat:

Bake some cake mix cupcakes and “pipe” some icing onto them.

On the 12th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

Twelve Drummers Drumming

The twelve points of doctrine in the Apostles' Creed: 1) I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. 2) and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. 3) who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, 4) suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. 5) On the third day he rose from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. 6) From there he will come to judge the living and the dead. 7) I believe in the Holy Spirit, 8) the holy Catholic Church, 9) the communion of saints, 10) the forgiveness of sins, 11) the resurrection of the body, 12) and life everlasting.

Activity:

Play a game of double 12 dominoes or make a puzzle with 24, 48 or 60 pieces.

Eat:

Make and eat a dozen of your favourite muffins

Best ever Banana Muffins

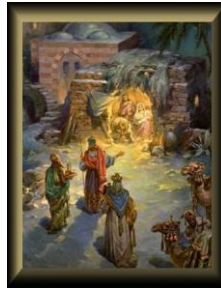
1 cup flour
½ cup rolled oats
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp baking soda
½ tsp salt
1 egg
¾ cup sugar
1/3 cup melted margarine
2 mashed bananas
¾ cups semi sweet choc chips

Combine flour, oats, baking powder, baking soda and salt in a bowl. Using a mixer, beat egg, sugar and melted margarine. Add mashed banana and mix till combined. Add banana mixture to dry ingredients and stir till just combined. Spoon batter into well greased or lined muffin tins.

Bake at 375° for 20 minutes. Muffins are done when inserted toothpick comes out clean.

Note: mini muffins only take 15 minutes

Epiphany, January 6



A Prayer to the Prince of Peace

Dear God:

The newspaper brings nothing new
only an old, old story of war-
more bombing, more shooting, more bloodshed.
One more family wailing a funeral song.
Against the backdrop of brutal images,
we hear the old, old story of an angel with good news,
who brought good tidings of great joy for all people.
Angel of Bethlehem, we long to hear your song again this day.
We want good tidings for countries in crisis.
We want good tidings for soldiers caught in webs of violence.
We want good tidings for terrorists whose actions spread fear and anguish.
We want good tidings for all who grieve, and who see no end to grieving.
We want good tidings for children who long to inherit a country
where peace has blossomed.
Jesus, our Saviour,
you escaped Herod's best-laid plans.
May your Spirit of peace be born again this year
in the hearts of all who work for peace. Amen.

Activity:

Move the three kings to the manger and listen to or sing “We Three Kings”, “The First Noel” and “What Child is This”

Eat:

Have a celebration with Christmas crackers, put on your crowns and eat your favourite meal; a meal fit for a king.