



WEEK ONE

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An angel tells Mary she is going to have God's Son, and His name will be Jesus.

SAY  
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**WHY IS JESUS SPECIAL?  
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MORNING TIME

When you go into your child's room this month, count down to Jesus' birthday (Christmas day) by saying, "Good morning, [child's name]! It's \_\_\_ days until Jesus' birthday!"

REMEMBER THIS

"God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son."  
John 3:16, GNT

BASIC  
TRUTH

**JESUS WANTS TO BE MY FRIEND FOREVER.**

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## 7 WAYS TO GET TO CHRISTMAS WITHOUT A MELTDOWN

By Carey Nieuwhof

We all know Christmas creates incredible pressure, and it can cause your family to suffer under the weight of expectation. How do you fix that? I'm learning, year by year, what I need to do to make sure the prep for Christmas doesn't kill Christmas.

Here's are some holiday tips for a more peaceful holiday:

**1. Create realistic expectations.** If the secret to happiness is low expectations, then set realistic expectations for the holidays. Take your expectations and cut them in half. You might find some joy in the process.

**2. Set a reasonable pace.** When I was in school, my last exam would finish on December 23rd. I'd have 24 hours to get everything ready. I'd run into Christmas exhausted. Now, theoretically, I could start preparing in July, but I still tend to leave it too late. A sustainable pace creates a sustainable peace. And who doesn't need that?

**3. Expect the unexpected.** I don't like surprises, but Christmas is full of them. If you expect surprise guests, surprise commitments, surprise interruptions, and surprise expenses, you won't be as a surprised. And you'll be much more gracious.

**4. Agree on a budget.** Peace on earth is one thing. Peace in January is another. If you agree on a budget for everything and everyone ahead of

time, you will significantly reduce your stress before Christmas.

**5. Say no.** You don't have to go to every Christmas party, buy every gift on your kid's list, or send cards to everyone you know. When you say no to the less important things, you're saying yes to what matters most.

**6. Rest.** Someone once said 70% of discipleship is a good night's sleep. There's some truth in that. If you're rattled, frazzled, and angry, go to bed. You are at your most kind when you're most rested.

**7. Prioritize time with God.** Unfortunately, one of the great omissions of the Christmas season is our personal time with God. The very reason we're doing all of this is to celebrate Someone who loves you. So love Him back. Start your day with God, and you're far more likely to remember Him in all your moments.

When I follow these seven guidelines, Christmas is so much better.

But it's not just better for me, it's significantly better for everyone else around me, too.

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