MERRIEST

Christmas

BOX



Christmas DINNER CHECKLIST

BEFORE THE GATHERING

- ✧ Choose a date and invite your guests.
- ✧ Ask about food allergies or dietary needs.
- ✧ Plan your menu.
- ✧ Make your shopping list and prepare what you can ahead of time.
- ✧ Set the table and add a little Christmas cheer with candles, greenery, music, or twinkle lights.
- ✧ Pray for your guests and for God to be present in your time together.

AS GUESTS ARRIVE

- ✧ Turn on some Christmas music.
- ✧ Welcome everyone in.
- ✧ Offer something to drink.
- ✧ Help people connect and settle in.

AROUND THE TABLE

- ✧ Be present and enjoy the people around you.
- ✧ Ask good questions and listen well.
- ✧ Make space for everyone to join the conversation.
- ✧ Share stories and laugh together.
- ✧ Pay attention to where God might be at work in the conversation.
- ✧ Let conversations about faith happen naturally.

BEFORE EVERYONE HEADS HOME

- ✧ Take a group picture.
- ✧ Thank everyone for coming.
- ✧ Make plans to gather again.

AFTER THE GATHERING

- Send a quick message to say you're glad they came.
- Follow up on something someone shared.
- Keep praying for your guests.

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PLAYLIST



THE CHAPEL

HAVE YOURSELF THE

MERRIEST *Christmas*



GOD CAN DO A LOT AROUND A DINNER TABLE.

Jesus often shared meals with people, gathering around tables with friends, strangers, and those others might have overlooked. In those moments, He made people feel seen, known, and loved, and as a result, their lives were changed.

That's the heart behind this box.

This Christmas, gather your small group, neighbors, friends from work, or people you've been meaning to spend time with. Share a meal. Laugh together. Ask good questions. And trust that God can use something as simple as sitting around a table to do something meaningful in someone's life.

Christmas
ACTIVITIES

MAKE ROOM FOR CONNECTION.

Use these ideas to help create meaningful moments of connection. Choose a few that fit your evening, give people space to participate, and ask God to guide your time together

START A CONVERSATION

- What Christmas tradition brings you joy?
- What's something you're grateful for this year?
- What has brought you hope in a difficult season?
- What are you looking forward to in the coming year?

SHARE THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Read: Luke 2:1–20 together
Ask: What stands out to you about this story?

For additional stories, read about Mary in Luke 1:26–38, Joseph in Matthew 1:18–25, or the wise men in Matthew 2:1–12.

SHARE AROUND THE TABLE

Write one prompt on each place card and leave room for a response:

Something I'm thankful for:

Something I'm carrying:

Something I'm hoping for:

Invite anyone who wants to share. If it feels appropriate, ask if you can pray for what they shared.

A SIMPLE PRAYER:

God, thank You for each person at this table. Meet us in what we're carrying, fill us with Your hope, and help us share Your love. Amen.

ADD A LITTLE CHRISTMAS

Put on A Charlie Brown Christmas or The Muppet Christmas Carol. Keep it low or play it on mute with Christmas music so there's still plenty of room for conversation.

HOST A COOKIE EXCHANGE

Ask each household to bring two dozen cookies and a container. Set them out, label common allergens, share the stories behind your favorites, and send everyone home with a mix.

QUICK LASAGNA

INGREDIENTS

2 cloves garlic, minced

1½ lb ground beef

2 tsp Italian seasoning

1 jar (24 oz) spaghetti sauce

12 precooked or oven-ready lasagna noodles (about 7 x 3 inches each)

2 containers (12 oz each) reduced-fat cottage cheese (about 3 cups total)

2 cups shredded mozzarella (8 oz)

¼ cup grated Parmesan

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oven to 400°F. Cook beef and garlic in skillet over medium heat about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until browned. Drain.
2. Stir in Italian seasoning and sauce. Spread ½ cup beef mixture in an ungreased 9 x 13-inch pan.
3. Layer 4 noodles, overlapping as little as possible, then about 1 cup beef mixture, 1 cup cottage cheese and ⅔ cup mozzarella.
4. Repeat layers twice more. Sprinkle Parmesan over the top.
5. Cover with foil; bake 35–40 minutes. Remove foil; bake 10–15 minutes more, until bubbly around the edges and very hot. Let stand 10 minutes before cutting.

SERVES 8–10 • BAKE 45–55 MIN • REST 10 MIN

EQUIPMENT: 10-INCH SKILLET; 9 × 13-INCH BAKING PAN

MAKE AHEAD

Assemble, cover, and refrigerate up to 24 hours. Bake covered for 45–50 minutes, then uncovered for 10–15 minutes, until bubbly and very hot.

SUBSTITUTION

Use ricotta in place of cottage cheese for a drier texture.

SERVING IDEAS

Pair with garlic bread or breadsticks and one of these:

- Caesar or Italian garden salad
- Roasted broccoli or green beans with lemon
- Caprese salad with balsamic glaze

Easy menu: Lasagna, garlic bread, and Caesar salad.

CLASSIC POT ROAST WITH POTATOES & CARROTS

INGREDIENTS

5–6¼ lb beef chuck roast, divided into 2 smaller roasts

5 tsp kosher salt, divided, or to taste

2 tsp black pepper, divided

1 tbsp plus 1 tsp olive oil

2 med. yellow onions, chopped

5 cloves garlic, chopped

¼ cup tomato paste

8¾ cups beef stock, divided

7–8 carrots, peeled & cut into 2" pieces

3 lb Yukon Gold or red potatoes, cut into large chunks

2 bay leaves

8 sprigs fresh thyme or 1¼ tsp dried thyme

½ cup plus 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oven to 325°F. Season beef with 4 tsp salt and 1¼ tsp pepper.
2. Heat oil over medium-high heat. Brown beef on all sides; remove.
4. Sauté onions 4–5 minutes. Add garlic; cook 30 seconds. Stir in tomato paste; cook 2 minutes.
5. Add 1¼ cups stock, scraping up browned bits.
6 Add remaining stock, salt, pepper, herbs, beef, and carrots. Bring to a simmer; cover and bake.
7. Add potatoes during the final 1–1½ hours. Cover and cook until vegetables are tender and beef shreds easily, about 3–4 hours total.

OPTIONAL GRAVY

Remove beef and vegetables. Mix 2½ tbsp cornstarch with 2½ tbsp cold water. Stir into simmering juices until thickened.

SERVING IDEAS

For 10 guests, add:

- 2½ lb green beans with butter and garlic
- 10–15 dinner rolls
- Garden salad, optional

Easy menu: Pot roast with vegetables and gravy, green beans, and rolls.

SERVES: 10 • COOK: ABOUT 3–4 HR, UNTIL FORK-TENDER
EQUIPMENT: TWO DUTCH OVENS OR A LARGE COVERED ROASTING PAN; DIVIDE INGREDIENTS EVENLY IF USING TWO POTS

CROCKPOT CREAMY WHITE CHICKEN CHILI

EQUIPMENT: LARGE SLOW COOKER

INGREDIENTS

2 lb boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trimmed

2 yellow onions, diced

4 cloves garlic, minced

6 cups low-sodium chicken broth

4 cans (15 oz each) great northern beans, drained and rinsed

4 cans (4 oz each) diced green chiles, mild or hot

2 cans (15 oz each) corn, drained

2 tsp salt, or to taste

1 tsp black pepper

2 tsp ground cumin

1½ tsp dried oregano

1 tsp chili powder

½ tsp cayenne, optional

2 small handfuls fresh cilantro, chopped

8 oz reduced-fat cream cheese, softened and cubed

½ cup half-and-half

DIRECTIONS

1. Add all ingredients except cilantro, cream cheese, and half-and-half to the slow cooker. Stir gently.
2. Cover; cook on LOW 6–8 hours or HIGH 3–4 hours, until chicken reaches 165°F and shreds easily.
3. Remove chicken, shred, and return to the pot.
4. Stir in cream cheese and half-and-half. Cover; cook on LOW 15–30 minutes, until melted. Stir until smooth.
5. Add cilantro; adjust seasoning and serve.

SERVES: ABOUT 10 WITH SIDES

COOK: 6–8 HR LOW OR 3–4 HR HIGH, PLUS 15–30 MIN

MAKE AHEAD

Prep onions, garlic, and beans a day ahead; refrigerate separately.
Add dairy and cilantro at the end as directed.

SERVING IDEAS

Offer cheese, sour cream, avocado, tortilla chips, cilantro,
or lime wedges.

Easy menu for 10: Chili, 2 loaves crusty bread, a large green salad,
and Christmas cookies. Offer cooked elbow noodles separately, if desired.

CROCKPOT BBQ CHICKEN

INGREDIENTS

4 lb boneless, skinless chicken breasts

2 cups BBQ sauce

½ cup Italian dressing

½ cup brown sugar

2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce

Salt, to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Lightly salt chicken; place in the slow cooker.
2. Mix BBQ sauce, Italian dressing, brown sugar, and Worcestershire sauce. Pour over chicken.
3. Cover; cook on HIGH 3–4 hours, until cooked through and easy to shred. Larger batches may take longer.
4. Shred chicken; stir into sauce. Cover and cook 10–15 minutes more.
5. Serve on buns with coleslaw, over rice, in wraps, or on a salad.

EQUIPMENT: LARGE SLOW COOKER
SERVES: 10–12 WITH SIDES • PREP: 5 MIN
COOK: 3–4 HR HIGH, PLUS 10–15 MIN

SERVING IDEAS

Pair with coleslaw, macaroni and cheese, corn on the cob, baked beans, potato salad, or green salad.

Easy menu for 10–12: BBQ chicken, 12 buns, 6 cups coleslaw, 10–12 servings macaroni and cheese or baked beans, and Christmas cookies.

SHARE SOMETHING SWEET

A SWEET ENDING DOESN'T HAVE TO BE HOMEMAD — THE TIME TOGETHER IS WHAT MATTERS!

Keep dessert simple! Choose one favorite to finish your meal:

- Brownies & ice cream: Bake brownies from a box and serve with vanilla ice cream and chocolate syrup.
- Warm apple crisp: Make your favorite recipe and serve with vanilla ice cream.
- Christmas cookie platter: Arrange store-bought cookies on a festive tray.
- Ice cream sundae bar: Set out vanilla ice cream, chocolate sauce, caramel, sprinkles, and whipped cream.
- Pie & whipped cream: Pick up an apple, pumpkin, or pecan pie.
- Chocolate-dipped pretzels: Buy them ready-made or dip pretzel rods in melted chocolate and add Christmas sprinkles.
- Brownie & berry platter: Pair brownie bites with fresh strawberrie s and whipped cream.

For 10 guests: Plan on 12–15 brownies or cookies, or a 9 × 13-inch apple crisp. If serving ice cream alongside dessert, one half-gallon is plenty.

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CHAPEL.ORG/MERRIESTCHRISTMAS

WELCOME

We've included a few things to make gathering easy: recipes, decorations, a checklist, and the Christmas story. Before your guests arrive, pray for them by name. Ask God to help you listen well and notice what's happening beneath the surface. And if the opportunity comes, be ready to share your story and the hope you have in Jesus.

Scan the code on the back of this card for More resources!

Happy Hosting!

