



Christmas Nativity: About the Holiday



For Christians, Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke tell of Mary and Joseph, shepherds, angels, and wise men who came to honor the newborn child. Families mark the season with church services, nativity scenes, carols, and gifts.

Most Western churches celebrate Christmas on December 25; some Eastern churches celebrate on January 6 or 7. In 2026, Advent begins on Sunday, November 29.

- Christians celebrate Christmas as the birth of Jesus, traditionally on December 25.
- The name Christmas comes from the old English phrase for Christ's Mass.
- The Gospel of Luke tells that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and laid in a manger.
- Luke 2:11 (KJV): "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."
- Luke 2:14 (KJV): "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."
- In Luke's Gospel, shepherds keeping watch over their flock by night heard the news from an angel.
- The Gospel of Matthew tells of wise men from the east who followed a star to find the child.
- Matthew says the wise men brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
- St. Francis of Assisi is credited with popularizing the nativity scene in 1223.
- Advent is the season of four Sundays before Christmas. In 2026, it begins on November 29.
- The Twelve Days of Christmas end with Epiphany on January 6, remembering the visit of the Magi.
- Some Eastern churches celebrate Christmas on January 6 or January 7.