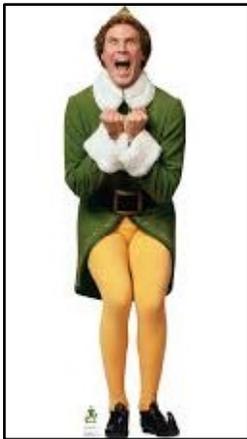


How to Turn Your Christmas Party Into a Jesus-Focused Gift

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 (Matt 5:15).



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 a 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 enjoy Christmas parties.** Christmas parties are widely understood and embraced among both 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. Plan 15 minutes of content where you or a student share the Christmas story and share the gospel.
2. Plan a fun way for non-Christian friends and newcomers to enter into the community and relax.
3. Explain to your students how you will share the meaning of Christmas. For example, "we are all invited to be like the wise men in Matthew's story." Role play compelling invitations to the Christmas Party.

Example: Christmas Party Theme - "Your Most Disappointing Christmas Gift"

Activity	Notes
Sample Compelling Invitation	<i>InterVarsity is having a "second chances" 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?</i>
Icebreaker	Write the disappointing Christmas gift on your name tag. Take a sticker, vote for someone else's disappointing gift. The person who gets the most votes for receiving the worst gift wins the door prize at the end.
Transition from Party to Content (3 min)	Our winner of the bad Christmas gift is Some of us love the Christmas season. Others of us dread the horrible gifts. [tell a 30 second bad gift story] We want to reclaim and celebrate the real purpose of Christmas.
Read the Christmas Story (5 min)	Choose 3 students who can read the Scripture with enthusiasm. Student 1: Matthew 1:18-25 Student 2: Matthew 2:1-6 Student 3: Matthew 2:7-12
Brief Interpretation and Gospel Presentation (3 min)	<p>The first Christmas wasn't disappointing. This little child is actually the turning point of all history, and the wise men saw this. Being scholars, they were looking for signs in the heavens and they sensed that the Creator of all things was sending a new kind of King and savior. They did not want to miss out. In fact, they gathered precious gifts to give to this King to honor and 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 grow up and take all of our brokenness onto himself. By</p>

	<p>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 (4 min)</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. Some of us are ready to be like the wise men. You want to bring your gift, your life, to Jesus. This means putting our full trust in Jesus and making him the center of our story. This might be your first time making this decision, or you might be ready to make your faith your own, not just your family's. 2. Others are looking for a sign from God. Please make a new year's 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>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.