

BILL GILLARD

Christmas time is a wonderful and joyful occasion we celebrate in our family each year. The memories coming from our gatherings remain alive in our minds and are supplemented by the many photos taken.

As well as Betty and I, our family consists of our four children with their partners, their seven children, some with partners as well as our gorgeous five great grandchildren, a total of 26 people who gather to celebrate Christmas.

We have followed a similar pattern for our Christmas celebrations and we have found it works out well, so we try and continue using the same format each year.

Preparation commences in November as we plan for what is to happen and who is to bring the various items of food for the dinner at night. Our homes are decorated, many with Christmas lights. Christmas carols and songs play in Betty and my home throughout December.

Betty commences cooking Christmas cakes and puddings for our family and her three siblings. She also cooks plates of Christmas goodies for our friends the owners of our local Coffee shop and their staff.

On Christmas Eve those of our family who can come assemble at the home of our son Wayne and wife Leesa to enjoy the carols from Melbourne on television with nibbles and drinks. Their home is completely filled with beautiful decorations that express the joy of this special time. Christmas morning Betty and I return to their home for breakfast.

Two of our grandsons play in their churches bands so they are off to their worship services with their families on Christmas morning

Christmas lunchtime sees some of our families visit with their in-laws to share in their Christmas celebrations.

In the afternoon we all assemble for Christmas dinner at one of our daughter's homes on their 5 acre property with plenty of room for the children to run around. This year however, we are breaking tradition by having our celebrations at the new home of our grandson Luke and wife Rachel.

Before our meal we offer a Christmas blessing

of thanks to our God for the gift of His Son to the world.

Following the meal we share our gifts around the Christmas tree. We call this sharing, "Secret Santa" and it is not done in the traditional form of gift giving. We share our gifts in a different way providing a lot of fun and laughter.

Our family has been truly blessed from being together on this special day and sharing in the spirit of Christmas.





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