



# CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS

**A Family Guide to navigating dementia & other  
cognitive change conditions in the Holiday Season.**



**Includes:**

**Meaningful Activities,  
Tips, Crafts & Recipes  
for a Calm, Connected  
Holiday Season!**



**REMEMBER  
THE CARER**

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This resource is not intended for professional medical advice, it is for general informational purposes only.

Please consult your physician or medical specialist for diagnosis, advice and treatment.



# CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS:

Meaningful Activities, Tips, Crafts & Recipes for a Calm,  
Connected Holiday Season

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# CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS:

## **Meaningful Activities, Tips, Crafts & Recipes for a Calm, Connected Holiday Season**

Christmas is a season of tradition and togetherness, but it can also feel overwhelming when a loved one is living with dementia.

This guide helps families create joyful moments, reduce unnecessary stress, and support your loved one in ways that honor their dignity, identity, and abilities.







## 1. KEEP CHRISTMAS SIMPLE, FAMILIAR, AND CALM

### Why familiar routines matter

Dementia affects memory, sensory processing, and the ability to handle change. The busy, noisy nature of Christmas can be overstimulating.



Simplifying the day helps your loved one stay grounded and enjoy the moments with confidence.

#### Tips for keeping Christmas simple, familiar and calm:

- **Maintain their normal routine**

People with dementia rely heavily on predictable patterns. Try to keep wake-up times, meals, rest times, and bedtime consistent.

- **Use familiar decorations**

Sudden changes in the home can increase confusion. Displaying meaningful, recognizable items (old ornaments, family photos, a familiar nativity set) creates comfort.

- **Limit sensory overload**

Avoid flashing lights, loud music, large crowds, or strong scents. Calming Christmas environments help reduce agitation and wandering.

- **Designate a "quiet space"**

Set up a restful corner with a comfortable chair, soft blanket, and gentle lighting where they can retreat for breaks.

- **Introduce visitors slowly**

Too many people at once may overwhelm your loved one. Stagger visits or invite guests for short, calm interactions.



# CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS:

## 2. TIPS FOR REDUCING HOLIDAY STRESS & OVERLOAD

### Watch for overstimulation

Signs include fidgeting, irritability, pacing, withdrawal, or confusion. Quiet time helps regulate their nervous system.

### Use simple communication

- Speak slowly
- Use short sentences
- Maintain eye contact
- Offer encouragement ("You're doing great.")
- Use demonstration rather than instructions when possible

### Prepare guests in advance

Share:

- Current abilities
- Conversation do's and don'ts
- Sensitivity to noise or confusion

### Avoid correcting or arguing

Validation reduces distress much more effectively than logic.





### 3. SUPPORTING EMOTIONS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

#### Offer emotional validation

The holidays may stir grief, loneliness, or confusion.

Instead of: "Don't be sad."

Try: "It's okay to feel this way. I'm here with you."

#### Use grounding techniques

- Hold hands
- Offer warm tea
- Sit together in silence
- Use familiar scents like pine, vanilla, or cinnamon

#### Honor past traditions gently

If something becomes overwhelming, adapt or simplify instead of forcing continuity.







# CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS:

## 4. NEW TRADITIONS THAT FEEL SAFE & JOYFUL

### Create simpler, slower rituals

- A morning carol while having coffee
- A daily Christmas story
- A gentle walk to see one neighbor's lights
- Decorating a small tabletop tree
- Ending each evening with hot cocoa and soft music





## 5. CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES FOR DIFFERENT STAGES OF DEMENTIA

### **Early Stage**

- Visiting Christmas lights (short trip)
- Reading Christmas cards aloud
- Light baking
- Setting the table
- Writing simple gift tags

### **Middle Stage:**

- Folding napkins
- Sorting ornaments by color
- Listening to Christmas hymns
- Sensory boxes
- Crafts with guidance

### **Late Stage:**

- Hand lotion with holiday scents
- Holding a soft Christmas plush
- Listening to gentle carols
- Watching flickering (but non-flashing) lights
- Feeling textures like ribbon or pine branch





# CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS:

## 6. MEANINGFUL, DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

### Activities that support memory, connection, and emotional wellbeing

These activities intentionally stimulate senses, memories, creativity, and connection. Using evidence-based dementia engagement principles like reminiscence, sensory grounding, and simple fine-motor tasks make a meaningful family experience.

#### A. Music & Singing Together

**Music stimulates areas of the brain often preserved in dementia. Even when language declines, rhythm and lyrics can remain deeply known.**

##### **How to make this meaningful:**

- Create a playlist of carols from your loved one's young adult years (ages 10–30 often hold the strongest memories).
- Play soft background music during meals or quiet times.
- Hand them a gentle instrument (jingle bells, shaker, tambourine).
- Sing together at their pace—no expectations, just enjoyment.



##### **Conversation prompts:**

- "Did you sing this song as a child?"
- "Who used to play music in your home?"



## B. Simple Decorating Together

Even small tasks build a sense of purpose and inclusion.

### Ideas:

- Place ornaments together.
- Hang stockings.
- Arrange pinecones or holiday florals.
- Choose colors for ribbons or lights.

### Tips:

- Avoid ladders, glass ornaments, and candles.
- Keep decorations minimal to avoid visual clutter.



## C. Looking Through Old Christmas Photos

Reminiscence therapy supports emotional connection and long-term memory access.

### How to do it:

- Choose photos from past holidays, childhood, or family traditions.
- Avoid asking "Do you remember?" Instead say:
  - "This looks like such a happy moment."
  - "You always had the best tree!"
- Allow your loved one to lead the conversation naturally.

### Why it works:

Photos help affirm identity, reduce anxiety, and strengthen emotional bonds.







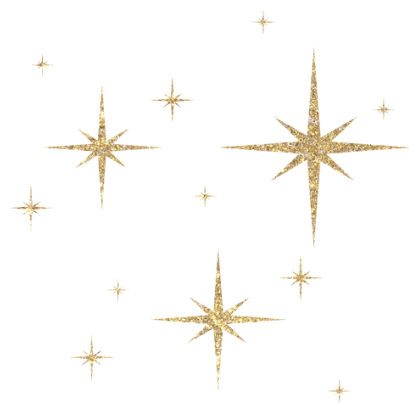


# CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS:

## 7.SIMPLE CHRISTMAS CRAFT IDEAS

### Christmas Crafts

Crafting supports fine-motor movement, creativity, and self-esteem. Simple, failure-free projects give your loved one a sense of accomplishment.





# CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS:

## 1) No-Fail Christmas Ornament Painting

Even small tasks build a sense of purpose and inclusion.

### Why it works:

Encourages creativity with no right or wrong outcome.

### Materials:

- Plain wooden or cardboard ornaments
- Thick, washable paint
- Large paintbrush or sponge
- Paper plate or palette

### Steps:

1. Place only 1–2 paint colors at a time to avoid overwhelm.
2. Let them brush, dab, or sponge colors freely.
3. Allow the ornament to dry and add ribbon for hanging.

### Tip:

Use metallic paint for festive shine without extra steps.



## 2) Holiday Memory Box

Even small tasks build a sense of purpose and inclusion.

### Why it works:

Gentle reminiscence without pressure.

### Materials:

- Small box (shoebox or gift box)
- Christmas wrapping paper
- Familiar items: old ornaments, ribbons, photos, cards

### Steps:

1. Help wrap and decorate the box.
2. Invite them to place meaningful or pleasant objects inside.
3. Open it together throughout December.

### Tip:

Avoid items that may trigger grief; focus on positive memories.







### 3) Paper Christmas Tree Collage

#### Why it works:

Large shapes, easy sticking, no fine motor strain.

#### Materials:

- Large outline of a Christmas tree (printed or drawn)
- Pre-cut shapes (stars, circles, bows)
- Glue stick or double-sided stickers
- Optional: textured pieces (felt, glitter foam, ribbon)

#### Steps:

1. Place the large tree template on the table.
2. Let the person choose decorations from a bowl or tray.
3. Support by offering one piece at a time if needed.
4. Celebrate the finished tree and display it visibly.

#### Tip:

Use high-contrast colors for easier visual processing.



### 4) Scented Christmas Pomanders (Clove Oranges)

#### Why it works:

Strong sensory stimulation; familiar holiday scent.

#### Materials:

- Oranges
- Whole cloves
- Optional: ribbon to wrap and hang

#### Steps:

1. Start the first few holes with a toothpick (to reduce hand strain).
2. Let them gently press cloves into the orange.
3. Display as a centerpiece or hang.

#### Tip:

The scent may evoke positive memories.





# CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS:

## 5) Simple Christmas Cookie Cutter Stamping

### Why it works:

Hand-over-hand friendly; predictable and soothing.

### Materials:

- Christmas cookie cutters (star, tree, angel)
- Washable paint
- Paper or cards

### Steps:

1. Dip the cookie cutter into shallow paint.
2. Press onto paper to make festive prints.
3. Rotate cutters for variety.

### Tip:

Great for making simple Christmas cards together.



## 6) Christmas Sensory Garland

### Why it works:

Tactile and visual stimulation; repetitive actions feel calming.

### Materials:

- Large felt shapes (stars, circles, bells)
- Thick ribbon or twine
- Clothespins or paperclips

### Steps:

1. Lay shapes in a bowl.
2. Assist them in attaching shapes along the ribbon using clips.
3. Hang the garland in a doorway or window.

### Tip:

Felt is soft, comforting, and easy to handle.





## 7) Christmas Sticker Scene

**Header** Even small tasks build a sense of purpose and inclusion.njbgkfnbjkfgnbjkgfnjk

### Why it works:

Very low effort, high success, good for moderate–late dementia.

### Materials:

- Christmas scene background (snowy house, tree, stockings)
- Large Christmas stickers

### Steps:

1. Present the background sheet.
2. Offer stickers one at a time.
3. Let them place stickers anywhere.

### Tip:

Use repositionable stickers to reduce frustration.





# CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS:

## 8. CHRISTMAS IN THE KITCHEN



**Christmas can be a warm and meaningful time for families and caregivers.**

**Cooking together—safely and simply—can create connection, spark pleasant memories, and provide sensory joy.**

### **Why this helps:**

Sensory grounding reduces anxiety and strengthens connection. Cooking engages smell, touch, taste, and sight—all powerful sensory pathways for joy and memory.

**These dementia-friendly recipes are easy to follow, require minimal steps, and are safe for all cognitive levels. They are designed so caregivers handle heat and sharp tools**

**They also include sensory participation: sprinkling, stirring, smelling, tasting and arranging.**

**Hint:** You may like to set a calming and festive atmosphere by using soft Christmas music, familiar scents (cinnamon, peppermint), and a calm environment to make the experience even more enjoyable.





## Recipe 1: Peppermint Bark

These recipes focus on minimal steps, safe handling, and sensory enjoyment.

**Sensory = Presence.**

### Ingredients

- 2 cups (350 g) white chocolate chips
- ½ cup (60 g) crushed candy canes
- Optional: ½ teaspoon peppermint extract

### Utensils

- Microwave-safe bowl or heatproof bowl
- Baking tray or cookie sheet
- Parchment paper
- Rubber spatula
- Spoon or small bowl for holding the crushed candy canes

### Steps

#### 1) Prepare the tray:

- Line a baking tray with parchment paper. Smooth it so it lies flat.

#### 2) Melt the chocolate (caregiver step):

- Add white chocolate chips to a microwave-safe bowl.
- Microwave in 20–30 second intervals, stirring each time until smooth.
- (Alternatively, melt in a double boiler.)

#### 3) Spread the chocolate:

- Pour melted chocolate onto the lined tray.
- Use a spatula to spread it into a rectangle about ½ cm thick.

#### 4) Loved one's part:

- Offer a small bowl of crushed candy canes.
- Invite them to sprinkle the pieces over the melted chocolate.
- Use verbal cues like: "Would you like to sprinkle some here?"

#### 5) Set and break:

- Chill in the fridge for 1 hour.
- Break into pieces with hands for a rustic look.
- Serve or package in small gift bags.





# CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS:

## Recipe 2: Warm Spiced Apples

These recipes focus on minimal steps, safe handling, and sensory enjoyment.

### Why this works:

The scent of apples and cinnamon has a soothing, memory-evoking effect.

### Ingredients

- 2 medium apples, peeled and sliced
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1–2 teaspoons sugar (optional)
- 1 tablespoon butter

### Utensils

- Cutting board and knife (caregiver only)
- Microwave-safe bowl OR small saucepan
- Spoon
- Oven mitts

### Steps

#### 1) Prepare apples (caregiver step):

- Peel, core, and slice 2 apples into thin wedges.

#### 2) Loved one's part:

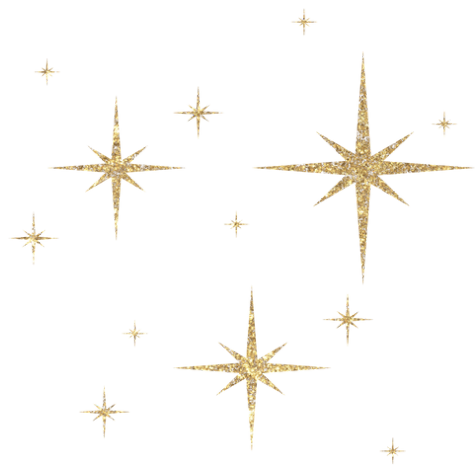
- Place apple slices into a microwave-safe bowl.
- Invite them to sprinkle cinnamon.
- If desired, let them sprinkle a small amount of sugar.
- Give them the tablespoon of butter to place on top.

#### 3) Heat (caregiver step):

- **Microwave method:** Heat for 1–2 minutes, stir, then heat another 1–2 minutes until soft.
- **Stovetop:** Heat apples, butter, and cinnamon in a pan on low for 5–7 minutes, stirring occasionally.

#### 4) Serve warm in a bowl.

- Optional: Add vanilla ice cream or whipped cream for sweetness.





## Recipe 3: Festive Fruit & Cheese Plate

These recipes focus on minimal steps, safe handling, and sensory enjoyment.

### Why this works:

Low-pressure, visually appealing, and encourages gentle decision-making.

### Ingredients

- 1 cup seedless grapes (green or red)
- ½ cup fresh cranberries or dried cranberries
- 150 g soft cheese (brie, camembert, or cream cheese)
- 1 cup crackers
- Optional garnish: mint sprigs or rosemary twigs for a Christmas look

### Utensils

- Serving plate or small wooden board
- Small knife (caregiver only)
- Small bowls (optional)

### Steps

#### Prepare ingredients (caregiver step):

- Slice soft cheese into small wedges or cubes.
- Wash grapes and cranberries.

#### Loved one's part:

- Invite them to place the grapes, cheese, and crackers onto the serving plate.
- Provide one item at a time if this is easier.

#### Add festive touches:

- Ask them to add mint leaves or a small rosemary sprig.
- Keep layout simple and uncluttered.

#### Serve:

- Enjoy as a light, colorful Christmas snack.





# CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS:

## Recipe 4: Hot Cocoa with Whipped Cream

These recipes focus on minimal steps, safe handling, and sensory enjoyment.

### Why this works:

Simple sensory joy—the warmth, smell, and topping choices create a meaningful experience.

### Ingredients

- 1 cup (250 ml) milk
- 2 tablespoons cocoa powder  
OR 1 hot chocolate sachet
- 1–2 teaspoons sugar (optional)
- Whipped cream
- Optional toppings: cinnamon, marshmallows, chocolate sprinkles

### Utensils

- Mug
- Spoon
- Small bowl for toppings
- Microwave or pot for heating milk (caregiver only)



### Steps

#### 1) Heat the milk (caregiver step):

- Warm 1 cup of milk in the microwave (1–1.5 minutes) or on the stovetop until hot but not boiling.

#### 2) Mix the cocoa:

- Stir cocoa powder and sugar into the hot milk until smooth.
- (If using a sachet, empty it into the mug and stir with the hot milk.)

#### 3) Loved one's part:

- Give them the mug and a can of whipped cream.
- Invite them to add the whipped cream on top.
- Allow them to sprinkle cinnamon or add marshmallows.

#### 4) Serve Warm.





## Recipe 5: Easy Sugar Cookie Decorating

These recipes focus on minimal steps, safe handling, and sensory enjoyment.

### Why this works:

Creative, sensory, low-pressure—and no hot surfaces or knives required.

### Ingredients

- 12 pre-baked sugar cookies
- 3–4 tubes of colored icing (red, green, white, gold)
- ½ cup sprinkles or edible decorations
- Optional: chocolate chips, mini marshmallows

### Utensils

- Tray or large plate
- Small bowls for sprinkles
- Paper towels
- Apron (optional)

### Steps

#### 1) Prepare the space:

- Lay out cookies on a tray.
- Set up bowls of sprinkles and icing tubes.

#### 2) Loved one's part:

- Offer one cookie at a time to avoid overwhelm.
- Invite them to squeeze icing in any pattern they like.
- Encourage sprinkling decorations gently over the icing.

#### 3) Caregiver support:

- Offer hand-over-hand assistance if needed.
- Praise creativity, not neatness.
- 

#### 3) Display or eat:

- Arrange finished cookies on a festive plate.
- Enjoy together with tea, cocoa, or holiday music.





# CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS:

**LET THIS CHRISTMAS BE GENTLE, MEANINGFUL & SUPPORTED**

**You do not need to handle dementia and the holidays alone.**

Remember The Carer offers:

- Dementia communication coaching
- Behavior guidance
- Holiday stress support
- Activity planning
- Caregiver wellbeing coaching
- Communication tools for family visitors

## **Why Engage a Dementia Care Specialist & Coaching Team**

Caring for someone living with dementia is emotionally, physically, and mentally demanding. Research shows that caregiver wellbeing is one of the strongest predictors of patient stability, reduced hospitalizations, and delayed residential care placement (Alzheimer's Association, 2024; National Alliance for Caregiving, 2020). Yet most caregivers receive little training or ongoing support.

**This is why partnering with a Certified Dementia Care Specialist, Neuroscience Coach, and Caregiver Wellbeing Coach through Remember The Carer can be transformative.**

## **CHRISTMAS RITUALS**

### **Create simpler, slower rituals**

- A morning carol while having coffee
- A daily Christmas story
- A gentle walk to see one neighbor's lights
- Decorating a small tabletop tree
- Ending each evening with hot cocoa and soft music





# HOW REMEMBER THE CARER SUPPORTS FAMILIES

Our integrated, evidence-backed approach helps caregivers feel confident, calm, and supported by providing:

## 1. Dementia Care Expertise

- Practical strategies for:
- communication and de-escalation
- managing behavioral symptoms
- safety and environment planning
- building soothing daily routines
- understanding progression and next steps

## 2. Neuroscience-Informed Coaching

- Caregivers learn to:
- regulate their nervous system
- respond instead of react
- manage stress, triggers, and overwhelm
- maintain patience and emotional balance

## 3. Caregiver Wellbeing & Resilience Support

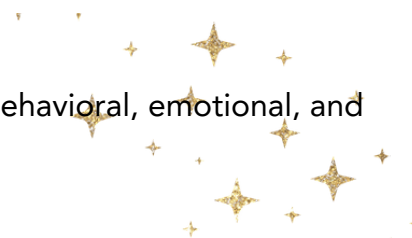
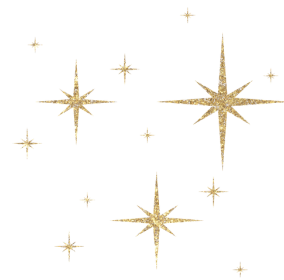
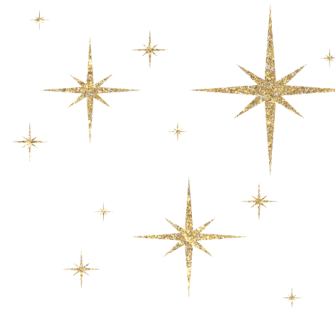
- We help caregivers:
- prevent burnout
- maintain emotional and physical health
- process grief and ongoing change
- build realistic self-care rhythms
- stay resilient throughout the journey

## 4. Ongoing Problem-Solving & Guidance

- Families gain access to real-time support, reducing:
- emergency department visits
- crisis-driven decisions
- caregiver collapse
- preventable long-term care placement

## 5. A Valuable Partnership for Medical Providers

Remember The Carer complements clinical care by offering the practical, behavioral, emotional, and educational support that providers often don't have time to deliver.





# CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS:

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS ALONE**

**Dementia affects the whole family — but the right support changes everything.**

**Remember the Carer is here to help you:**

- navigate daily challenges
- improve communication and reduce stress
- prevent crises before they happen
- build resilience and emotional wellbeing
- plan confidently for the future





# Take the Next Step...

## For Families & Caregivers:

**Schedule a consultation  
or access caregiver resources today.**

Get personalized, evidence-based support from a Certified Dementia Care Specialist, and wellbeing support and a self-care plan for caregivers.



## For Medical Providers:

Partner with Remember The Carer to strengthen patient outcomes, reduce caregiver burnout, and help families avoid preventable crises.

**Schedule a consultation or access caregiver resources today!**

**Phone:** +1 813-426-5494

**Email:** [info@rememberthecarer.com](mailto:info@rememberthecarer.com)

**Website:** [rememberthecarer.com](http://rememberthecarer.com)

**EIN:** 61-2245834

**Together, we can improve care, strengthen families, and build a dementia-capable community—one caregiver at a time.**



# CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS:



**Schedule a consultation or access caregiver resources today.**

**Book a session with our Certified Dementia Care Specialist,  
or Neuroscience Coach for Self-Care Wellbeing**

 **Providers:** Refer families for expert dementia support

**Phone:** +1 813-426-5494

**Email:** [info@rememberthecarer.com](mailto:info@rememberthecarer.com)

**Website:** [rememberthecarer.com](http://rememberthecarer.com)

**EIN:** 61-2245834

**Together, we can make Christmas calmer, safer, and full of meaningful connection.**

**[rememberthecarer.com](http://rememberthecarer.com)**