

Building Faith

A Ministry of Virginia Theological Seminary

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Recovering from Christmas

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When you work for a church, it can be an all out sprint from Thanksgiving to Christmas Day from pageant practice to reviewing bulletins and trying to get your own home (and heart) prepared for the season.

This Advent, we asked Christian formation leaders what they do to recover from the lead up to Christmas via the [FORMA Facebook Group \(https://www.facebook.com/groups/EpiscoForma/\)](https://www.facebook.com/groups/EpiscoForma/). We loved the responses we got! Not only do folks take time off during Christmastide, they use this time to rest, restore, and renew. From napping to watching movies, hiking, spending time with friends and family, reading, ice skating, and cooking, the season of Christmas can be an important time for those who work during the lead up to Christmas day to reconnect with God, themselves, and loved ones.

Ideas for Christmastide Renewal

Enjoy Some Music

Whether you go to a show or jam out in your car, music can be a wonderful way to enjoy the Christmas season. One album we recommend is [After the Longest Night: Songs for Advent, Christmas, & Epiphany \(https://stevehorngatemusic.com/\)](https://stevehorngatemusic.com/) by Steve Thorngate.

Get Creative

Many folks mentioned ways they expressed their creativity during the Christmas season from baking or quilting to Kyle Oliver's [12 Days of Christmas cut out cards project \(https://www.creativecommonsprayer.com/12days/12-days-of-christmas-cards/\)](https://www.creativecommonsprayer.com/12days/12-days-of-christmas-cards/). What creative endeavors can you work into your Christmas recovery plan?

Worship Somewhere New

Jennifer Garen shared that she always spends one Sunday in January worshiping at a church where she is not a member. If you cannot miss a Sunday, perhaps you can watch a recording from the [Washington National Cathedral \(https://cathedral.org/worship/service-archive/\)](https://cathedral.org/worship/service-archive/) or worship at home alone or with your family. Here's a Building Faith post about [doing church at home \(https://buildfaith.org/home-church/\)](https://buildfaith.org/home-church/).

Plan Special Activities for the 12 Days

Rather than trying to squeeze in all the parties, gift giving, and seasonal activities into Advent, save some for Christmastide. The Art of Simple provides an alternative 12 day countdown that offers [12 Activity Ideas \(https://theartofsimple.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/12_Days_of_Christmas.pdf\)](https://theartofsimple.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/12_Days_of_Christmas.pdf). These ideas would work well for individuals or families. In addition, A Sacred Journey offers [12 Ideas \(https://www.asacredjourney.net/12-days-of-christmas/\)](https://www.asacredjourney.net/12-days-of-christmas/) for the 12 days of Christmas that gives each day a “sacred” job and incorporates the feast days that occur within the Christmas season.

Play

While we don't often act like it, adults need time to play just like children do. Sometimes it can be hard for us to remember how we like to play, so think about the activities you could lose track of time doing (in a good way). If you like games, try “Name That Christmas Carol.” You can play in a variety of ways, such as using this [video with 21 songs \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eaP_p_Gspk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eaP_p_Gspk) to guess!

Read Daily Reflections

The Church of England has published a resource called [Follow the Star \(https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/features/follow-the-star-2019\)](https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/features/follow-the-star-2019), which offers a reflection for each of the twelve days of Christmas with a short Bible passage, a simple prayer and a challenge to reflect or act differently.

Inventory Your Self Care

Self care is complex, as [this awesome graphic \(https://www.redbubble.com/people/deannazandt/works/41826279-the-unspoken-complexity-of-self-care?asc=u\)](https://www.redbubble.com/people/deannazandt/works/41826279-the-unspoken-complexity-of-self-care?asc=u) shows. As Christmastide winds towards Epiphany, and the season of returning to work, spend some time considering your plan for groundedness, connectedness, and spiritual growth might be for the coming year. You might consider using this [wellness assessment \(https://www.livingcompass.org/assessment-introduction\)](https://www.livingcompass.org/assessment-introduction) from Living Compass.