

## Think outside the square you live in!

Adapted from "Working with Women" Australia Eastern Territory

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### Preparation:

Print individual sentence prayers on 'traditional' Christmas shapes, e.g. tree, star, Santa, snowman, snowflake. Have one sheet of colored paper for each lady. Draw 10cm square in the centre. Also, a copy of the 'Outside' suggestions, and poem, "Step Outside" for each. Have a number of scissors, and glue sticks or sticky tape handy.

**Introduction:** Share family Christmas traditions. Every family has traditions that have special meaning. Allow time for the ladies to share and feel encouraged by the ideas of others.

**Prayer:** Have ladies read out their sentence prayers

**My Favorite Carol:** Choose one or more ladies to speak about an old favorite, and then sing it... Others can be chosen to speak about a more modern carol. E.g. "Mary's Boy Child", "When a child is born", either sing or listen to it. (Origins of carols are readily available on the Internet, if needed)

### Game:

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| It is customary to exchange kisses under a sprig of which plant?                      | (Mistletoe)              |
| How many sides does a snowflake have?   | (6)                      |
| In what language does 'Noel' mean Christmas?  | (French)                 |
| What were the very first Christmas tree decorations?                                  | (Fruits)                 |
| Which 2 New Testament books of the Bible record the birth of Jesus?                   | (Matthew & Luke)         |
| The world's largest Christmas cracker (bon-bon) was made and pulled in which country? | (Australia)              |
| What is the biggest selling Christmas single of all time?                             | ("White Christmas")      |
| Which country has a city named "Santa Claus"?   | (USA)                    |
| Counting Rudolph, how many reindeer are there?  | (9)                      |
| Which Christmas song contains the line: "Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation"  | (O come all ye faithful) |

**Devotions:** "Think" or "Step outside the square you live in". What does it mean? It simply means to..... GET OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE!

Why would we want to do that?

### 1. Because Jesus did

- John 4:5-10 (Woman at the well: traditional taboos)
- Luke 10:30-37 (Good Samaritan: ritual cleanliness)
- Matthew 5:43-44 (Love and forgiveness: Jewish teaching)

Even though Jesus grew up observing Jewish law, His life and ministry showed that He was willing to step outside the “norm” when it became necessary. He showed His follower’s that it was more important to BE what God wanted them to be, then to do what man expected them to do. Jesus’ whole life was an example of this. In Philippians 2:1-8, we are told that Jesus, King of Creation, left the glory of Heaven to live on earth as a man. This is the message of Christmas: **God lived with man, so man could live with God.**

## 2. Because others need it.

At Christmas time many of us tend to be almost selfish in that we concentrate mainly on our own families needs and plans, often forgetting the many people for whom this season brings loneliness, sadness and need. Jesus stepped outside the square (left His comfort zone) for us on that first Christmas Day, dare we do the same.

### Quiet Reflection:

Choose a Christmas carol and take a few minutes to listen to the words and music. Invite the ladies to ‘Be still’ before the Lord. Listen to His voice speak to their hearts and conclude with a time of silent prayer.

### “Outside” suggestions:

Purposefully make a new friend, befriend a lonely person.

Buy/make a gift for someone you do not get along with.

Surprise neighbours with Christmas cards.

Visit an elderly person and ask about Christmas long ago (and really listen)

Phone a forgotten relative

Renew a friendship, mend a relationship

Baby-sit for free for a young Mom, delight the child with your time and interest

Discuss the meaning of Christmas with a teenager.

Leave an anonymous food hamper at a needy house.

Ladies cut and glue the suggestions outside the square on their paper. Encourage them to think about ways in which they could “step outside their square” this Christmas.

### Poem:

#### Step Outside

“Think outside the square that you live in,  
Step outside and take a leap of faith.  
Push aside the trappings of tradition  
Just long enough to gaze at Jesus’ face.  
For as you stand and look into the stable  
Containing such a treasure in this Child,

You’ll see the King of Glory straight from heaven,  
And much more than a baby meek and mild.  
For Jesus ‘left the square’ that He lived in,  
For you He stepped outside His ‘comfort zone’.  
For you He traded glory for a manger,  
So He could one day take you to his throne.  
So, “step outside the square that you live in”,  
Take a risk and follow Jesus’ lead



Prayer: For courage to not only “think”, but also to “step” outside our square.