Bells – bells ring out the good news that Jesus Christ is born. Some churches ring their bells at midnight on Christmas Eve. Bells have also been used by shepherds to call lost or stray sheep to himself.

Candles – used to count the weeks before Christmas. They symbolize Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, and the hope he can bring.

Holly – a plant or tree with prickly green leaves and red berries. They represent the crown of thorns that was forced on the head of Jesus, and the berries represent the blood that was shed by our Savior.

Candy Canes – the shape is like a shepherd’s staff, reminding us of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. The red stripes represent the sacrificial blood that Jesus shed for our sins. There are usually 3 stripes, reminding us of the stripes that were put on The white represents the purity of Christ, and the purification from sin that we experience when we believe in Him.

Carols – songs that express the joy of God entering the world through the birth of Jesus Christ.

Christmas - from two words, Christ and Mass (celebration). Christmas, then, is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Christmas Tree – a tradition that came from Germany, where it was called the “Paradise Tree.” In other countries it is called the “Tree of Life.” The evergreen tree represents the everlasting life for whoever believes in Jesus Christ. The ornaments and lights on the tree represent the stars and the angels of God. The star at the top of the tree represents the bright star that shone over Bethlehem, the city where Jesus was born.

Christmas tree ornaments – represent the stars in the skies, which also represent the angels of heaven, who serve God night and day.

Gifts / Presents – the 3 Wise Men came to Bethlehem from the east, with gifts for Christ after he was born. Gifts are given to loved ones, following the example of the Wise Men.

December 25th – a date chosen by a Catholic Pope in 350 A.D. In the Roman Empire Dec. 25th was the birthday of the “Unconquered Sun.” Non-Christians worshipped the sun. After Dec. 21st the sun began to stay in the sky longer, so it seemed to be “unconquered.” This reminded some Christians of Christ, who conquered death by coming back to life after being killed and then buried for 3 days.

Greeting Cards – Became popular in the 1800’s.

Manger Scene / Creche – the animals’ feeding trough that the baby Jesus was laid in when He was born. The shepherds followed the Star of Bethlehem to see the newborn King.

Poinsettia – a red flower named after the first US ambassador to Mexico, Joel Poinsett, who brought back the red flower from Mexico in 1928. It represents the Star of Bethlehem.

Reindeer – the deer-like animals used by Santa Claus to pull his sleigh as he visits the homes on Christmas Eves. Santa employs 8 reindeer.

Santa Claus – from Saint Nicholas, a Christian leader who lived in the 4th century in what is today called Turkey. He was left a lot of money when his parents died, which he freely shared with the poor children. After he became a church leader he continued his tradition of giving to the poor.

Star of Bethlehem – The 3 Wise Men followed a bright star to Bethlehem. The star was God’s way of directing these wealthy, educated men from the east to worship Christ, the newborn King of heaven and earth.

Stockings – hung by children over a fireplace or by a door. Santa comes down the chimney or through the door on Christmas Eve. He fills the stockings with candy and other goodies while the children sleep.