

Use the word given in capitals to form a word that fits the gap.

CHRISTMAS BACK IN THE DAY

Most children today link Christmas with receiving toys, plenty of food, (1) _____ [DECORATE], shopping and new stuff. For some adults, it is about spending large sums of money, shopping galore, and plenty of work. For others, it is the birth of Their Saviour in a small town called Bethlehem.

Today, the true (2) _____ [MEAN] of Christmas is lost in the glitz, dazzle and glare, coupled with the hectic activities leading up to this (3) _____ [GLORY] day. After a year of hard labour, many find themselves tired, yet are able to exert plenty of energy during this busy season. But what was Christmas like in 'the good old days'. How did our grandparents and elders celebrate this season of goodwill?

By mid-November, the 'Christmas feeling' was already experienced by everyone, (4) _____ [SPECIAL] the children. All were (5) _____ [COURAGE] to be on their best (6) _____ [BEHAVE] leading up to Christmas, so as to (7) _____ [SURE] that Santa came to their home on Christmas Eve to deliver toys and other (8) _____ [GOOD].

Special shopping began in small amounts. Items were bought and hidden away until Christmas was near. December saw the taking down of curtains or blinds, and the 'putting away' of the house. That (9) _____ [USUAL] meant that all the furniture would be packed away in a corner and covered with old bed sheets. All the walls, windows and doors were wiped clean. Furniture and floors were sandpapered then varnished or lacquered; some were polished. The latter was done one or two days before Christmas Day. Stairs were scrubbed, and some amount of (10) _____ [PAINT] was done. The entire house was 'cobwebbed', and the yard (11) _____ [THOROUGH] cleaned.

Many old things made their exit in these clean-ups, and new items took their places. Many of the toys back then were made (12) _____ [LOCAL]. Dolls and guns were made by (13) _____ [CREATE] people, and this saved plenty of money. Almost all decorations were made at home. New carpets, furniture and dishes were acquired. When the (14) _____ [COUNT] for Christmas was about three days away, every evening could be heard the clamour of hammering as everyone raced to get their house ready for Christmas Day.

At schools, the art and craftwork of students during the year were put on (15) _____ [EXHIBIT] and sold to parents and relatives. Children made all sorts of decorations and Christmas cards back then. Schools also organized Christmas concerts, where children were able to explore the beauty and (16) _____ [PAGEANT] of the Christmas story.

Soon, there was wine making and setting, and drink making and storing. Large old bottles and jars were cleaned and filled with all types of (17) _____ [HOME] niceties. The smell of baking filled many homes. Bread and different types of cakes were baked and stored. All sorts of ingenious ways had to be found to keep these goodies safe from insects such as ants, flies and cockroaches. Pepper pot, ham, garlic pork, cook-up rice, black pudding and fudge were cooked with care.

By Christmas Eve, the house was all fixed up. New curtains were hung; carpets rolled out; floors polished and shined; walls and windows decorated; and the Christmas was put up and decorated. Special dishes, plates and (18) _____ [CUTLER] were brought out. Those were only used at Christmas, and on other very special occasions. Some people made and decorated small cribs depicting the Nativity.

On Christmas Eve night, everyone went to church. All the neighbours went together. All children had to attend. The midnight mass was often long, and many heads nodded through it all. After church, loud and (19) _____ [JOY] greetings were (20) _____ [CHANGE] with everyone on the way home.

(21) _____ [YOUNG] and young adults formed choirs and went carolling. The most popular modes of (22) _____ [TRANSPORT] for this spreading of good tidings were the donkey cart and the feet. All (23) _____ [CAROL] were welcomed, and after singing and greeting their hosts, they were offered goodies, drinks and money. By the time everyone got home, sleep was almost (24) _____ [POSSIBLE]. Every child knew that Santa would be coming that night to leave them something (25) _____ [WONDER]. Some (26) _____ [FORTUNE] kids were taken to see Santa, often kicking and crying. Families went 'window-shopping' to enjoy the fabulous Christmas lights, decorations and toys.