A LITTLE GUIDE FOR YOUR FAMILY

Christmas

Photo Prep Guide

Simple, joyful tips for capturing the magic
with your own camera (or your phone!)

A FREE GIFT FOR EVERYONE

with love, TML Studios

The best holiday photos aren't perfect.
They're the ones that feel like your family.

A little prep goes a long way. Pick a calm moment, put on some music, and plan for about 15 to 20 minutes. Stop while everyone is still smiling, and you'll end up with photos you'll treasure for years.

1 Choose Your Light

- **Window light is your best friend.** Place your family near a large window during the day and face the light, rather than standing with your back to it.
- **Turn off overhead lights.** Mixing lamp light and window light makes skin look orange or green.
- **Shooting outside?** The hour before sunset gives soft, golden light. Cloudy days are lovely too, since the light is even and flattering.
- **Avoid harsh midday sun.** If it's all you have, find open shade, like the side of a house or under a porch.

JOY TIP
Light matters more than the camera, the outfits, or the decorations. If you only fix one thing, fix this.

2 Pick Your Spot

- Choose a simple background: a tree, a cozy corner, a plain wall, or a staircase.
- Do a quick sweep for clutter. Laundry baskets, cords, and water bottles love to sneak into the frame.
- Stand a few feet in front of the background instead of right against it. It keeps the focus on your people.

3 Outfits That Photograph Well

- **Coordinate, don't match.** Pick 3 to 4 shades, like cream, forest green, rust, and plaid, and mix textures like knits, corduroy, and flannel.
- **Skip big logos and neon colours.** They pull the eye away from faces.
- **Dress for comfort.** Itchy sweaters and tight shoes show up in expressions.
- **Lint-roll and steam** the night before, so there's no morning scramble.

4 Prep the Little Ones

- Schedule photos after a nap and a snack, never when anyone is hungry or tired.
- Skip the big “photo time!” announcement. Make it a game instead.
- Bring a favourite stuffy, a cozy blanket, or a small treat as a bribe.
- Keep it short. Five great minutes beats thirty frustrating ones.

JOY TIP

Put on a Christmas playlist. Music loosens everyone up, and the dancing usually turns into your best candids.

5 Phone Camera Tips

- **Clean your lens.** A quick wipe on your shirt makes a surprising difference.
- **Turn on the grid** in camera settings to keep photos straight.
- **Tap on a face** to focus and set exposure. Slide your finger down slightly if the photo looks too bright.
- **Use Portrait Mode** for single shots or small groups, but skip it for bigger groups, since it can blur someone.
- **Hold the phone at eye level** or slightly above, never below chins.
- **Use the timer or burst mode.** Prop your phone on a stack of books, set a 10-second timer, and take lots of shots.
- **Skip the zoom.** Step closer instead.

6 The Christmas Tree Shot

Tree lights look magical in photos, but they take a little trick.

- Shoot at dusk or in a dim room so the lights glow.
- Put your family a few feet in front of the tree.
- Turn off other lamps and let the tree be the star, then use a window or a soft lamp off to the side so faces don’t go dark.
- Tap on a face to focus, and stay still so the photo isn’t blurry.

7 Posing Made Easy

Skip the stiff “say cheese” lineup. Try these instead:

- **Snuggle close.** Closeness looks warm, so squeeze in.
- **Tickle fight** or a quick “whisper a secret to your sibling.”
- **Walk toward the camera** holding hands.
- **Read a story** together on the couch or by the tree.
- **Look at each other** instead of the camera for a few shots. These often become favourites.
- **Ask for silly:** “Show me your best reindeer face!” The real smile comes right after.

REMEMBER

Take a lot more photos than you think you need. You’re hunting for one where everyone looks happy at the same time, and that takes a few tries.

8 Your Shot List

Get these and you’ll have a full set:

1. A family photo with everyone looking at the camera
2. A family photo with everyone looking at each other
3. Each child on their own
4. Siblings together
5. Parents together (don’t skip this one!)
6. Close-up details: hands holding ornaments, cozy socks, hot cocoa
7. One silly, wild, anything-goes shot

9 Quick Checklist

- [ ] Phone charged, lens cleaned
- [ ] Outfits ready and wrinkle-free
- [ ] Snacks and a nap done
- [ ] Spot decluttered
- [ ] Window lights on, overhead off
- [ ] Timer or tripod set up
- [ ] Christmas playlist queued
- [ ] A sense of humor, ready to go

WANT TO BE IN THE PHOTOS TOO?

Christmas Mini Sessions

are officially open

15-minute sessions · 10 edited images · $150

Christmas Tree Magic

OUTDOOR · TREE FARM

Wed, Nov 18

Sat, Nov 21

Sat, Nov 28

Vintage Christmas Train

INDOOR · TML STUDIOS

Sun, Nov 22

Fri, Nov 27

Wed, Dec 2

Santa details coming soon!

Book at [link] · [email / social handle]

Happy holidays, and happy snapping!