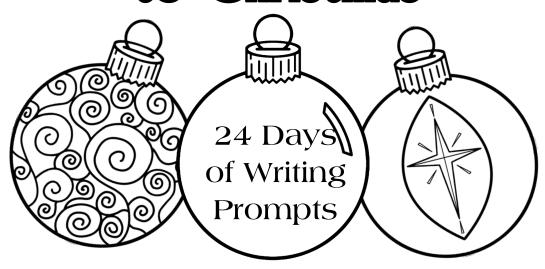


## A Writer's Countdown to Christmas



The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart.

(Psalm 19:8)

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	1	I turned the page and, suddenly, I was transported into the Christmas story.
; ;	2	The clip-clop of the horse's hooves echoed on the cold, damp cobblestone. The street lamp shone bright in the dark wintry sky as perfectly shaped snowflakes swirled through the air.
•	3	I'd really like to help, but I don't know if I have the time or skills.
:	4	The smell of freshly baked cinnamon rolls, delicious hot cocoa, and crisp bacon came wafting up the stairs.
<b>.</b>	5	Include these words to write something great! shiny, ornament, gift wrap, receiving, giving, tradition, His Great Name, remember, world, life
•	6	"But, what about, " character #1 started to protest. Character #2 interrupted, "All you really need to do is learn to be a candle in the dark."
	7	Did that really just happen?! This seems just like a scene from
	8	Character #1 and character #2 loaded up the last of the boxes and bags filled with toys to deliver to the children.
	9	I thought for sure it would ruin everything when the plate of warm cookies tumbled to the floor. Boy was I wrong.
•	10	The old woman sat in her well-worn chair looking blankly out the window. Children were just walking home from school, giggling and giddy about the first day of Christmas break. She slowly turned her gaze to the empty space near the fireplace. For the first time in 60 years, there was no tree nor sparkly lights.
•	11	The snowball whizzed just past my ear. I turned around and
•	12	"All of the commercialism, rushing around, and stress Maybe I'll just skip Christmas this year."

13	Include these words to write something great! candles, garland, popcorn, gingerbread, Bible, grandma, tree, knock on the door, crying, kitten		
14	Joy is contagious!		
15	"Hark! The herald angels sing, 'Glory to the newborn King! Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!' " As I mouthed the well- known words, the meaning finally penetrated my very soul that night.		
16	Suddenly, I woke up with a tingling sensation all over. It was finally Christmas morning! But, as I went to hop of bed, I noticed that		
17	I opened the mailbox and began flipping through the letters. Then, I saw it. I gently fingered the name and return address.		
18	What is <i>this</i> doing on the Christmas tree?		
19	Staring at the large unopened box, Jodi was yearning		
20	Include these words to write something great! memories, joy, Christmas carols, bakery, elderly, Jesus, missing glove, snow, family, gift, church, street corner		
21	The warm, flickering glow from the fireplace brightened the room like never before.		
22	I thought it was the best gift I could ever receive		
23	We tromped through the woods, inhaling the refreshing morning air and the smell of fragrant spruce trees. My dog scampered up beside me.		
24	Character #1 struggled to keep alert as it reached later into the evening. He was supposed to be tending his father's sheep, but he felt so sleepy. Suddenly, a bright light shone around him.		

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