



Memories to Keep – Ashley Prescod

“So this is Christmas, and what have you done?

Another year over, a new one just begun.

*And so this Christmas, I hope you have fun,
the near and the dear ones, the old and the young.*

*A merry, merry Christmas and happy New Year,
let's hope it's a good one
without any fear.”*

- John Lennon, *Happy Christmas*

Christmas is right around the corner (もうすぐ) and so is the end of the year. This is a great time to enjoy the people you love and reflect on the year. During Christmas, most families gather together to eat, play games and watch movies. Many families have their own traditions that they do during the holidays, too.

For my family, on Christmas Eve, we invite people over and have fun giving presents and enjoying each other's company. When the party is over, our favorite tradition is to watch Christmas movies until midnight. My sister loves *The Polar Express* (my favorite scene is the hot chocolate song). At midnight, everyone is excited to open presents and take pictures. Sometimes we get good presents, other times we get silly presents. No one gets mad because we are too busy laughing.

On Christmas, we sleep in and then enjoy our new gifts. Hot chocolate is always available and music or a Christmas movie is always playing in the background.

As you grow, things will change. Right now, I'm in Japan and this year I won't be going home. But I'm not sad because I can still talk with my family and spend time with new friends! Making memories is important and remembering them can make you happy.

I hope you all make lots of happy memories and don't forget them. Enjoy your Christmas and New Years and stay warm!



When I was 15 years old, my dad got me this as a Christmas gift. He thought it was so funny; I did not.

It's Okay to Be Lost – Katelyn Sondereker

Sometimes in life, when we accomplish (成し遂げる) something big – like graduating from high school or deciding that it's time to move on (進む) from a job that we love – we wonder, *now what?*

The future may feel like we are lost in a forest, like there is a dark place in front of us where we can't see anything at all. We may feel confused (混乱する) and scared and unsure (確信を持っていない) of which way to go. But these feelings are completely natural. We can feel comforted (安心できるように) because everyone who has ever lived has felt these same things. Even if we feel alone, we are not alone in our feelings. So, if you are feeling lost, don't hesitate (ためらわないで) to share how you feel with the people you love and trust.

We are not always going to know what to do next. And that's okay! **If we knew exactly what our future looked like, wouldn't that be so boring?** So, if you are feeling lost, let yourself be lost (迷ってもいいですよ). Just wait in the darkness, enjoy where you are in life now, and give yourself time to think.

However, eventually (結局) you will need to move forward. But if you cannot see the path (道) in front of you, how do you know which way to go?

The answer is simple: Sometimes, we don't need to see the path in order to know where to go. We just need to take one step. And then another. And then another. You can trust yourself to make it out (うまく逃れる) of the forest, one step at a time.

Someone once told me that if you are in the middle of a forest, the only way *not* to make it out (うまく逃れない) is to just stop and give up. If you keep taking steps in any direction, no matter how small, eventually you will reach the edge (際) of the forest, where there is so much light.

So, if you are lost right now, that's okay. Be lost. And when you feel ready, go ahead and take that first step.



A LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT

This is an English pun (ダジャレ)!

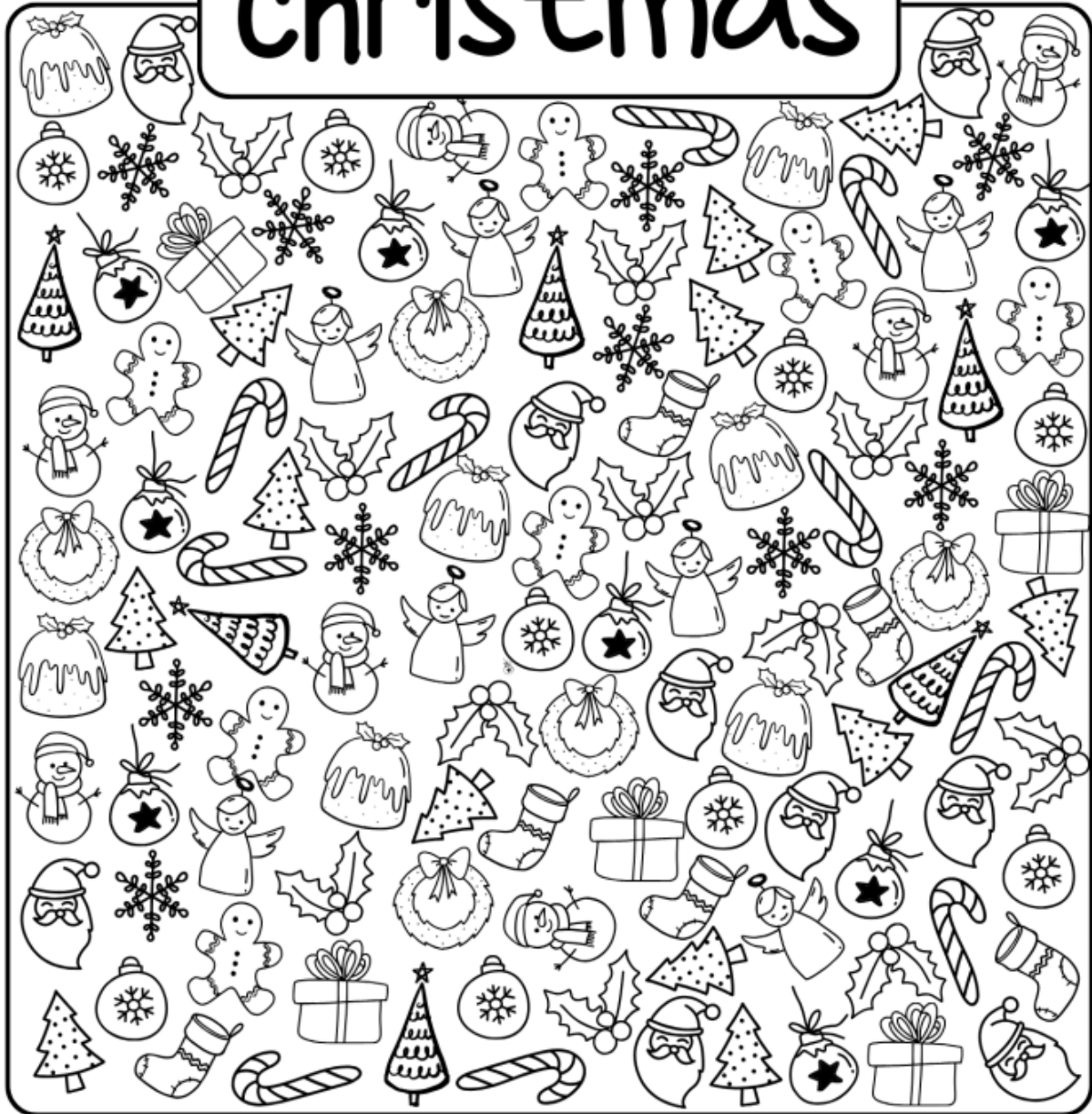
encouragement (激励)

+ mint leaf

= encouragemint ☺

I SPY

Christmas



How many do you see?

First, unscramble the Christmas words and then count how many of each word you see!

<u>Scrambled Word</u>	<u>Unscrambled Word</u>	<u>How many do you see?</u>
HTMRSSICA RETE	Christmas tree	18
SAWMNON		
AWRHTE		5
FASOELWNK		10
NYDCA NEAC	candy cane	
RGAENBRDEIG NAM		7
GNAEL		
ENERSTP		
NTASA		