



12-Days of Christmas Scavenger Hunt

Your Elf on a Shelf has Stolen Christmas!

The family wakes up on December 13th to a ransom letter/email/voicemail (or use fake caller app to get a call) from your Elf on a Shelf, along with a photograph of the ransomed presents (optional). Option to remove decorations from the tree leaving it bare. This really convinces kids that Christmas has been stolen!

The children must bring back Christmas cheer to get their presents (and tree decorations) back. Can they do it in time?

What parents need to do in preparation: Hide all presents, possibly in a trunk with a big padlock/chain or away in a locked room or closet; it all depends on how carried away with this you want to get. Hide all, except one small box for each kid under the bare Christmas tree that contains a key and a clue.

Or bury boxes outside (works in some climates) and leave a clue to find them under the bare Christmas tree. Use invisible ink to hide part of the treasure hunt map with clues. Or get a blank puzzle, write clues on it, and have them collect the pieces and then put them together. There are plenty of option for you to get creative with.



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Have the kids complete certain tasks to regain Christmas cheer (the clues lead you to the tasks). There are 12 tasks – one for each day.

Tasks for 12 Days:

1. Write and mail a Christmas card to a family member
2. Donate to the needy (go through old toys and clothes for donation box)
3. Make an ornament for the tree while listening to Christmas songs
4. Make hot cocoa and watch a Christmas movie as a family
5. Put together a gift basket of toiletries for a local homeless shelter and deliver
6. Make a gift for someone special
7. Offer a meal to a needy family or serve at a soup kitchen
8. Hug a family member or FaceTime with one
9. Drive around to see the pretty decorations in your neighborhood – or one nearby
10. Make and decorate cookies for Santa
11. Go caroling and drink hot apple cider (or mulled wine for the adults)
12. Put out carrots for reindeer before reading *Twas the Night Before Christmas* and heading to bed.



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Once the tasks are all completed, Christmas cheer - and the presents - will be restored.

On Christmas morning, the cookies/milk and carrots are gone/eaten, and all the presents magically appear back under the tree.

Or, if you went with the trunk option, have that near the tree. They get the final puzzle piece on Christmas morning, on the plate of cookies, left by Santa. It says they've restored Christmas cheer and have been placed on the nice list.

The kids can unlock the trunk with a key OR a final code from all of the clues (numerical on a lock or a final word if you have one of the word combo locks).

The final clue (number/code) will be with the parents on Christmas morning - they have to wake up the adults before opening their box (so you don't miss out on the fun).

What an exciting and active way to experience Christmas with young ones!

Impress upon the kids that part of Christmas is spending quality time with friends and family doing great things for other people, and that's how they restored Christmas cheer and got back on the nice list. After all, isn't that the true meaning of Christmas?