

# Offering Themed Christmas Visits

---

This reference is designed to give you an overview and some checklists for creating your own specialty themed Christmas events. Our hope is that Christmas Performers who already have some experience can use this to start designing unique opportunities beyond “the typical Santa Visit.” The examples focus on Mrs. Claus specialty events but can be easily adapted to any Christmas performer—solo or in teams.



Creating Christmas Events requires a blend of both the artistic and business skills of our community. This guide asks you to take some initiative and put in the work behind the scenes, all so that you can be best prepared to be very successful. Clients may never know how much hard work goes into your events, but we see how hard you work. And all that training, planning, and work really pays off—especially when we get a chance to get paid doing what we love.

On behalf of Christmas Performer Workshops, we wish you great success. Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or would like further training on anything to help make your very best events.

## Table of Contents

Defining a Themed Christmas Visit.....	2
Why Themed Christmas Parties? .....	2
Designing the Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How.....	2
Who.....	2
What.....	2
Where.....	3
When.....	3
Why.....	3
How.....	3
Testing and Metrics.....	4
Time.....	4
Costs.....	4
Check Your Metrics .....	4
Other Event Considerations .....	5
Solo Events .....	5
Create a Full Event Outline.....	5
Example Event Outline.....	5
Planning for Event Content .....	6
Other Props or Tricks.....	6
Marketing Presence.....	7
Business Website.....	7
Targeting Your Audiences.....	7
Possible Markets .....	8
Clients.....	8
Detailed Client Communications.....	8
Notes About Contracts .....	8
Event Questionnaires.....	9
Notes for Teams .....	10
Resources.....	10

# Offering Themed Christmas Visits

---

## Defining a Themed Christmas Visit

---

Themed events include parameters like a Princess party, a Super-Hero party, a Tea Party or other focus for the entertainment. Some Christmas themed activities or events could include any of the following. In this list of examples, the party is hosted by just Mrs. Claus. (Substitute your character, such as *Harmony the Elf's Sing-along Party*.)

- Mrs. Claus's Storytime and Tuck-In
- Mrs. Claus's Pajama Party with Cookies and Cocoa
- Mrs. Claus's Holiday Sing-Along Dance Party
- Mrs. Claus's Cookie Decorating Class
- Mrs. Claus's Gingerbread House Workshop
- Mrs. Claus's Tea Party
- Mrs. Claus's Princess Etiquette Class
- Mrs. Claus's Elf School (or Academy)
- Mrs. Claus's Arts and Crafts Workshop (*making ornaments, toys, gifts*)
- Mrs. Claus's Elf, Pirate, and Fairy Fashion Show
- Mrs. Claus's Adventure Treasure Hunt

## Why Themed Christmas Parties?

There are many reasons to create themed events, not the least of which is just to grow your own Christmas business opportunities. What other reasons can you think of?

- Promoting more female performers in the Christmas season
- Showing additional representation to our market
- Options for performers who do not have a Santa Claus partner
- Extra income for performers
- Bringing variety and new ideas to market
- Showcasing creativity
- Making opportunities for unique skills (*language skills, work with special needs audiences, small mobile groups who can travel to new sites*)
- Options to include additional performers as helpers
- Improving your business reputation and word fame in a market
- Chances to bring more magic and fun to the world

## Designing the Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How

---

### Who

Are you performing solo, in a duo, in a team, or in multiple teams? Teams can delegate different roles. And while adding partners may include “many hands make light work,” it also adds complexity in scheduling and splits the income.

When considering multiple performers, are the roles and responsibilities clearly defined? What about code words and hidden cues that you'll use to signal each other for help, moving to the next activity, or dealing with unplanned situations?

### What

Which **one or two services** are your first offerings? What variations can you expand and include later? What future options are on your long-term wish list? Dream big!

# Offering Themed Christmas Visits

---

## **Where**

Take into consideration traffic, fuel costs, and the logistics for any materials you need to bring in advance or use in set up. Define your service area, whether that includes borders, maximum travel, or scheduling impact with other gigs or traffic patterns.

## **When**

On the calendar, are these events limited to November through December, or do you have out-of-season offerings? Are you limited to “after school” hours or weekends? Do you need to end early for children’s bedtimes?

## **Why**

Consider why the client might prefer these themed events: In-person opportunities for socializing, hands-on crafts, increased participation (*less screen time*). Expand a story event to include elements of history and/or literacy. Educational events may meet the needs of home schooling or private school participation.

## **How**

### **Resources**

Who on your team has which skills or competencies? Who has vehicle space for equipment? Which costumes or props are already on hand? What kind of budget is available to invest in new materials?

### **Market Research**

What similar events have been offered in your region? What are the going rates with party planners and event production companies? Are you offering something new that your market has never seen before?

### **Partnerships**

Setting up the **how** in any team or partnership means defining the roles: Equal partnership, owner and employee, or coordinator and participants. Are you partnering with another business or organization to provide your service? Is there a restaurant that pays you to attend regularly once a week? A tea parlor that hosts the tea party you host? Clearly defining this role is just as important as defining the roles with your performance partners.

### **Business Elements**

Informal or formal business arrangements (DBA, LLC). Bank accounts. Online payment options. Who handles the money? Who takes care of taxes, retainers, expenses? Advertising?

### **Resource Management**

Costumes, props, sets. Consumables at an event (*cookie ingredients, ornaments, paint, brushes, aprons*). Inventory, upkeep, replacements.

### **Business Peers for Advice**

You may already know someone in the Christmas community who does some similar themed-events or traveling events who can give you advice on any of these business elements. Be sure to cultivate peers who you can ask questions and who can help you avoid beginner mistakes. Remember that an open hand receives more than a closed fist.

# Offering Themed Christmas Visits

---

## *Run of Show (ROS)*

There is no such thing as a perfect event, but there is such a thing as a well planned one. How will you enter the room? What comes next? Without a plan, you are constantly winging things and that may lead to a lack of unprofessionalism and undue stress. A good ROS is also helpful to share if someone else has to fill in for a teammate or for you.

## Testing and Metrics

---

### Time

Test how long it takes to shop and pack for an event. Test the time it takes to put everything away after an event, including taking inventory and restocking anything.

Keep records on travel time to the various locations you offer your events, including notes about weekends, holidays, and rush hours. Watch for information about weather and construction, as well as other local events such as stadium traffic.

Test setting up at an event venue. How much set up includes your time and how much needs to be done by the client? Are there any audience members there during your setup? (*Are you telling stories while Mrs. Claus unpacks her cookie supplies?*)

### Costs

**Pre-event Investments:** What supplies do you need to invest in? Can anything be sourced through friends or thrift stores?

- Performance and/or Liability insurance, background checks
- Advertising and marketing, Membership with online event platforms (*like GigSalad and Canva*), Photos for marketing
- Costumes (*new or upgraded*), make-up, wigs, accessories
- Event supplies (*tubs, trays, tea sets, props*)
- Larger venue equipment like sound systems, reliable transportation, any special transportation needed for specialty sets or equipment

### Consumables

- Costs per participant for plates, cups, napkins, and other disposable items
- Costs invested in decorations, gift bags, event gifts (*princess headbands, costume jewelry*)
- Food and drink for events, cookies, gingerbread, food decorations
- Specialty event equipment like baking sheets, baking paper, potholders
- Travel equipment for event goods: Tubs that you can lift and carry, rolling carts to move several tubs at once, tables, tablecloths
- Specialty outdoor equipment (*purchase or rental*): Pop-up day shade, outdoor tables, outdoor chairs, tablecloths to cover up goods

### Check Your Metrics

Evaluate what you've discovered so far in how long these events take (*before, during, after, and travel*), how much these events cost (*long term investments, specific costs for consumables, overall business costs*). Now compare this to the market rate for similar events and/or the event costs that you estimated. What hourly rate can cover your costs and pay you for your time? What changes can you make to improve the numbers?

# Offering Themed Christmas Visits

---

## Other Event Considerations

---

### Solo Events

Storytime and Tuck-In events or Pajama Party with Cookies and Cocoa – these events have smaller demands for equipment or set up. Your host might provide all the food and drinks and handle all the set-up and clean-up.

### Food Issues

- Food allergies and sensitivities (*nuts, dairy, gluten*)
- Food preferences (*low sugar, organic*)
- Refrigeration and/or cooking equipment
- Food safety and food clean-up

### Arts and Crafts Issues

- Glitter is invasive and hard to clean up
- Age-appropriate crafts for the skills of the audience members
- Crafting spaces that are safe and easy to clean
- Scent-free and soap-free wipes, sponges, paper towels, other clean up gear

## Create a Full Event Outline

---

Take the time to write up a full event scenario outline to make certain you haven't missed any preparation or communication that needs to be part of your conversation with the client.

### Example Event Outline

1. Before the event, Mrs. Claus and Sparkle the Elf have a signed contract with the client. The client has paid the retainer. The client has provided information about the children expected at the party. The event should take one hour.
2. Mrs. Claus and Sparkle the Elf have set up gift bags for all the children with their names on each bag. The client has hidden gifts in the home for each child.
3. Before arrival at the home, they text the client to confirm that they are nearby. A parking space and unloading zone has been set up where the children cannot see the gear. Mrs. Claus sees the boxes are brought in while Sparkle heads to the front door.
4. Sparkle the Elf enters by the front door, getting the children excited and setting up the scenario. Mrs. Claus is visiting from the North Pole, and she is in charge of the Naughty and Nice List. Mrs. Claus makes a grand entrance from the front door. All the photos are taken early before the kitchen events.
5. Mrs. Claus and the children gather around the tree after photos for some story time, sing-along, and/or games. Sparkle the Elf has gone quietly into the kitchen to unload the cookies and decorating items, setting up the decorating stations.
6. Mrs. Claus puts on her apron and leads the children to the magical cookie stations. Everyone helps decorate the cookies. Mrs. Claus and the children have cookies and milk (or cocoa) together, lots of time for compliments from Mrs. Claus for their decorating skills.
7. Mrs. Claus and the children clean their hands and return to the living room for the Naughty or Nice list and then they can tell Mrs. Claus what they want for

# Offering Themed Christmas Visits

---

Christmas. Sparkle the Elf restocks the cookie tubs and sneaks them back out to the vehicle. The client gives Sparkle the Elf an envelope with their tip.

8. Sparkle returns to collect letters for Santa in the North Pole mail bag. Sparkle and the Elf on the Shelf have a quick conversation, and Mrs. Claus finds out that they need her back at the North Pole. Sparkle and Mrs. Claus reveal that there are gifts for the children hidden in the house for them to find. A quick high-five with Mrs. Claus, the children are released to hunt for their gifts. The team exit to the packed vehicle and leave quickly and quietly.

Why create an event outline? It helps identify your checklist items, gives you a chance to make changes when you discover ways you'd like to adjust an event. And it provides a way to explain your event to clients who've never done something like this before.

## Planning for Event Content

---

What types of event performing content can you include?

- Call and Response
- Reindeer Macarena
- Reindeer Sync
- Do the Reindeer Pokey
- The Reindeer on the Sleigh (to *The Wheels on the Bus*)
- Christmas Dance Contest
- Laugh Like Santa (*with or without cotton beards*)
- Make Christmas Cookies or Treats
- Christmas Games (*Pin the Carrot on Frosty*)
- Mrs. Claus Sez (*Simon Sez*)
- Write letter to the North Pole (*creative artwork, collages, stickers*)
- Build Gingerbread house
- Puppet Shows
- Magic Tricks
- Play instruments (*Jingle bells with actual bells*)
- Storytelling
- Etiquette class
- Tea Time
- Magic Props (*Glowing Fairy Dust, Magic Key*)
- The Naughty or Nice book (*with hidden chapter*)
- Show and Tell: A North Pole Photo Album, a Reindeer Antler
- Riddles, Puzzles, Santa Jokes
- Bubbles/Snowball fight (*made from a ball of clean socks*)
- Reindeer Food Craft
- Elf Naming Activity
- Christmas Karaoke

## Other Props or Tricks

- North Pole ring tones
- Pre-recorded message that can be played back on a cell phone or iPad

# Offering Themed Christmas Visits

---

- Christmas music on a recorded message
- Fake snow trick
- Magic cookie trick

## Video Scenes

Any Christmas Character could pre-record a Naughty or Nice message, a thank you message, or other event-specific video.

From Santa: *“My little gingersnap, my little snicker doodle, have you seen my glasses? I can’t find them anywhere.”* (He’s wearing them on his head.)

From Head Reindeer trainer: *“Mrs. C, the team did really well, and we beat all our times. If it okay with you, we are going to let the Reindeer stay up a half our late and play Minecraft.”*

From the Sugarplum Fairy and Tooth Fairy: (Sugarplum) *“Just a heads-up Mrs. C, we are a little behind on Candy cane production, so you might want to hand out more chocolate.”* (Tooth Fairy leans into frame) *“Or toothbrushes! I got plenty of toothbrushes!”* (Sugarplum) *“Hey, this is my call!”*

## Marketing Presence

---

### Business Website

The best way to provide information to your clients is your own website (not just a Facebook page). Describe your event offerings, rates, availability, and contact information. Feature your photos and video of events (*be certain to have client permission if you use photos or videos from previous events on your website*). We highly recommend classic, clean images and information, avoiding animations and automated music playing.

Have a gallery of photos, including watermarked images that clients could use in their own promotional materials. Credit your photographers.

Provide questionnaires or other event downloads in a central location. You could use Google Forms for clients to send information to you or provide a downloadable PDF.

If you offer a team of players who could perform, include their performing resumes and notes about insurance, background checks, and performing history. Include membership with any professional organizations. Demonstrate various costumes that you could use, offering different looks.

Be certain to have a featured section with rave reviews from previous clients and events. Link to your other online information, such as a Facebook page, GigSalad profile, or Instagram account. If you work with other performers, you might include links to their additional resources.

### Targeting Your Audiences

Understand what your focus offerings are. Establish your sweet spot, your best niche, and expand from your successes. You might start with a single family, or 2-3 families max, for home visits and specialty events. You might expand to corporate or community events. Perhaps Mrs. Claus has a special event room at a larger corporate Christmas event.

# Offering Themed Christmas Visits

---

## Possible Markets

- Family homes
- Children's community clubs (Boys' and Girls' Club, etc.)
- Country clubs, golf clubs, HOAs
- Hotels that do events, corporate events, resorts
- Museums, libraries, zoos
- Children venues (gyms, etc.)
- Schools (both public and private schools), PTA after-school fundraisers
- Pre-schools, home schooling groups, after-school care, tutoring groups
- Restaurants, Caterers
- Special Event Organizers
- Churches
- Community Organizations (Kiwanis, etc.)
- Fundraising and Pro-bono events

## Clients

---

**Key Client Questions:** What do you offer? How much does it cost? Are you available on this day and time?

## Detailed Client Communications

- Event type, Date, Time, Cost
- Contract signed, Retainer paid
- Client/Host questionnaire sent (*with **deadline***) and returned completed
- Tips for a Smooth Event sent to client
- Follow-up questions confirmed and answered
- Event logistics for setup, entrance, load/unload, parking confirmed
- Event held
- Payment complete, tips received
- Event review requested from client, review posted
- Event photos or videos requested, received, shared
- Thank you communication from event team

## Notes About Contracts

Why do you need a contract? Why does it need to be so detailed? This is to keep you safe. You want to ensure that no one takes advantage of you or your good will. Cancellation policies ensure that you get paid. Liability clauses keep everyone informed for the safety of all. Having everything in writing protects you from misrepresentation. This is not legal advice: CPW is not a legal advisor. But we have picked up a few tips along the way.

- **Event Specifics:** Itemize your event program specifics, spelling out who is responsible for what. Include the full who, what, where, when, and how items.
- **Event Location Requirements:** Do you have a list of requirements such as access to safe parking, escorts if parking is dark, locked bathrooms or storage spaces for your gear? Do you cover issues like shade, air conditioning, or heat and



# Offering Themed Christmas Visits

---

shelter? Do you describe needs for seating, lighting, crowd control, meal periods, breaks, or other unique event requirements? Do you have a pet policy?

- **Photography and Video Rights:** Does your contract discuss your photography rights at the event? Do you request photos and/or videos from your client if at all possible?
- **Liability Language:** Does your contract address limited liability with any food, drink, or give-away items for children? Do you specify there should always be an adult client representative in the room when there are children at the event?
- **Payment Language:** Does your contract specify how clients should pay and deadlines? Does it address any *Right of Refusal* if payment is not received on time? Does it describe that retainers are non-refundable?
- **Bad Behavior or Misconduct:** Do you a zero-tolerance policy for harassment or drunken misconduct? Spell out what happens in these cases (*immediately leave, full payment still due*).
- **Unexpected Cancellations or Postponed Events:** Consider adding language about “force majeure” (*when “acts of God” intervene and make an event unable to happen*). Do you have a policy if you are sick? Can you find a fellow performer who can fill in for you? Does the client know to cancel if someone tests positive for Covid or other illness? Do you have a cancellation policy or a rescheduled event policy?

## Event Questionnaires

In addition to confirming your event specifics, your questionnaires will help improve client communications and alert you to any possible issues. We like to recommend that your questionnaires include details like the following.

### All Events

- Confirm the DAY and TIME of visit
- Confirm the NAME of the host or hostess and their CONTACT information
- Client should provide a NAME and CELL PHONE of someone expecting your call or text when you arrive on site
- Include YOUR CONTACT information and your preferred communication
- REFERRAL: How did the client hear of you? Did they visit with you in the past? Did someone refer you to the client?
- MULTI-PART EVENTS: Are there other characters or activities at this event? (*Avoid surprises, ask up front.*)
- ACCESS: Are there any gate codes or security gates to check in with? Are there any issues with parking? Is parking outside the view of any children or event participants? Are there any pets on site?
- RETAINERS: Not a deposit, but non-refundable retainer to hold time/date (*Holidays have limited schedules, filling cancellations often not possible*)

### Events that Include Children

- CHILDREN expected at the event: Children’s names, ages, special requests from the children, secret knowledge for the North Pole staff
- OTHER HOUSE INFO: Names of the pets, is there an Elf on the Shelf?
- GIFTS: Will there be gifts hidden inside for the children? Are you expected to

# Offering Themed Christmas Visits

bring in gifts from outside somewhere? Will there be anyone to assist with names or gift distribution?

- Suggest labels marked clearly in PRINT, with a sharpie marker, directly on the wrapping paper (*since tags and labels almost always fall off*).
- Client should ensure that there are no attendees missing gifts, or have a few extra just in case.
- FOOD RESTRICTIONS: Client must be certain there are no allergies or food restrictions that you need to be aware of. Little hands need wipes to keep sugar off your outfits.
- SPECIAL NOTES: Will anyone in the home have special disabilities, language limitations, or allergies?
- MAJOR LIFE CHANGES: Have there been any family changes this year? (*moves, change in job, death in family illness*)

## Events for with No Children Present

- ADULT ONLY: Will there be alcohol served at the event? Will there be a smoking area? Will you have assigned assistants or escorts? Will you have anyone helping with security around your gear?
- GIFTS: Will there be any gifts distributed to the event attendees? Will there be any helpers or assistants?

### Notes for Teams

When working as a duo or team, be certain everyone has backup info for each other.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Performer Info</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name</li> <li>• Performing Name</li> <li>• Mobile Phone</li> <li>• Home Phone</li> <li>• Back Up/Emergency Contact</li> <li>• Email</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Facebook</li> <li>• Physical Address</li> <li>• Make/Model of Vehicle used</li> <li>• Make payment out to</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Event Specifics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name of Gig</li> <li>• Who booked the lead?</li> <li>• Who serves as point of contact?</li> <li>• Name of Client</li> <li>• Point of contact/on-site handler (<i>phone, email</i>)</li> <li>• Address Location</li> <li>• Gate Codes/Security issues</li> <li>• Parking Requirements (<i>car passes, parking fees</i>)</li> <li>• Key people on site (<i>sound person, security</i>)</li> <li>• What time must everyone arrive on site?</li> <li>• How long is the Event?</li> <li>• Expected Start Time</li> <li>• Expected Finish Time</li> <li>• What time is the Performer Big Entrance/Exit?</li> <li>• Are there multiple performances (<i>how long are each, when, and how many?</i>)</li> <li>• Type of Gig (<i>Tree lighting, parade, etc.</i>)</li> <li>• Goal of Event (<i>bring in customers, fundraiser, entertain</i>)</li> <li>• Expected Audience size</li> <li>• Expected Audience (<i>families, children, adults only</i>)</li> <li>• Arriving in costume or dressing on site?</li> <li>• Type of Venue (<i>home, business, outdoors, restaurant</i>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
--	---

### Resources

Please feel free to check out these links. (*Copyright articles from Santa True, hosted on GigSalad*)

<https://www.gigsalad.com/blog/home-visit-from-santa-claus/>

<https://www.gigsalad.com/blog/book-santa-claus-for-your-corporate-event/>