



# WARCRY

CULTURE & SPIRITUALITY

## What's on your list?

Ticking the boxes to make  
Christmas a joy



A bird doesn't  
sing because  
it has an  
answer,  
it sings  
because  
it has a  
song.

Maya Angelou  
(1928–2014)

American  
poet, singer,  
memoirist and  
civil rights  
activist





## The Salvation Army is about giving hope where it's needed most.

### What is The Salvation Army?

The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church.

### Vision Statement

Wherever there is hardship or injustice, Salvos will live, love and fight alongside others to transform Australia one life at a time with the love of Jesus.

### Mission Statement

The Salvation Army is a Christian movement dedicated to sharing the love of Jesus by:

- Caring for people
- Creating faith pathways
- Building healthy communities
- Working for justice

# WARCRY

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Printed and published for The Salvation Army by Commissioner Robert Donaldson at Focus Print Group, Keysborough, Victoria

**Press date** 2 December 2019

 [warcry.org.au](http://warcry.org.au)



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## From the editor

Ticking the boxes at Christmastime just doesn't cut it for me. If I am only going through the motions so I can say I have completed a number of tasks then, for me, I've lost the plot.

Christmas — celebrating the birth of Jesus — is a passionate, thankful time, not a ticking-the-boxes exercise. Well, in my world, at least, that's what it is. But in reading our feature article in this issue I see that, for many, trying to tick numerous to-do lists is what rules them during this magnificent season.

My prayer for us all is that this year we will discover or rediscover the joy of Christmas. Jesus Christ's birth has hugely impacted the world for 2000 years. His life and teaching of love, forgiveness and thankfulness is never out of fashion.

And Jesus' sacrifice on a cross 33 years after his birth offers us direct connection with God.

Laurie Robertson, Lieut-Colonel  
**Editor-In-Chief**

# You're making a list ...

'It's the most wonderful time of the year' — unless you're stressed out.

BY FAYE MICHELSON

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With less than two weeks before Christmas Day, what's left on your 'to do' list. Too much?

We've put together our own checklist to make sure you enjoy the festive fun without being frazzled. So, take a few minutes out of your Yuletide planning to make yourself a cuppa, sit down and reflect on everything you're doing — or think you need to do — to make your Christmas the celebration you want it to be.

### ARE YOU TRYING TO BE EVERYTHING TO EVERYONE?

Colleen Morris, of Watersedge Counseling in Geelong (Vic.) says it's easy to get overloaded with festive preparations during December. Many of us are involved with several events to celebrate Christmas at our workplaces, churches, groups we belong to, as well as the family Christmas Day celebration.

"The sense that we have to please everyone is very high this time of year, so it's best to start by sorting out what you want and need to do, and then get rid of the rest," Colleen suggests.

"Make a list of everything you feel is expected of you this season, add what you actually want to do and the tasks you already have booked in. Then go through the list and ask yourself, 'Do I want to do this? Do I need to do this?'

"If the answer is 'yes', consider if there is any way to make that task or activity easier. You could ask a friend or family member to help you set up or cook, order food in or eat out, or sit something out while the rest of the family or friends participate."

### ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT SPENDING TOO MUCH ON CHRISTMAS?

It's not unusual to feel overwhelmed with the financial and emotional stress of finding the 'right' gifts for people, preparing food, decorating tables and trees, and attending events.

"You may know what is 'expected' of you this month, but what do you actually want to experience?" asks Colleen.

"For instance, you may value family time over giving expensive presents, so instead of spending your cash on individual gifts for everyone, suggest the family does a Secret Santa."

### IS THIS A PAINFUL TIME FOR YOU?

There is a difference between being consumed by your pain and honouring it, says Colleen.

"When our pain consumes us, we feel depressed, lethargic, and allow negative thoughts to cycle in our head," she says.

"This flows into our conversations and we can become the 'negative' or 'angry' family member who always complains and makes everyone else feel sad.

"Your pain is valid, and the best way to recognise it occurs is when we honour it. This could be as simple as telling a friend that you are struggling with illness/finances/relationships and talking about how to care for yourself over the season."

Colleen adds that if you are grieving the loss of a loved one, or a relationship, it's important you give yourself space to feel this. Consider holding a memorial ►

for someone who has passed on or put their picture somewhere during family festivities.

“Whether you’re grieving someone who has passed on, or a relationship, don’t completely disengage, because in these times you need community more than ever,” she says.

“Let yourself feel the love of the people around you and show your love to them in return.”

### COULD FAMILY DYNAMICS BE A PROBLEM?

Sometimes our biggest stresses come from people closest to us, such as relatives who always upset everyone around them.

“If you feel yourself struggling during particular events or on Christmas Day, you are allowed to remove yourself from a situation,” Colleen says.

“Organise an exit strategy for yourself before the event. This could be scheduling in a certain amount of time for each event so you have an excuse to leave; wording up a friend or spouse with a code word so you can go outside and get some air, or taking an impromptu bathroom break to catch your breath and refocus.”

### LET YOURSELF HAVE FUN

It’s not your responsibility to suffer so everyone else has a perfect Christmas. Make time for activities or events that you will enjoy over the season.

“Schedule in moments of rest where you can go for a walk or nap, and remember



that your wellbeing does not have to be put on the backburner this season,” Colleen says.

“The good news is that you don’t have to do everything.

“If you stop and breathe, the world will keep spinning. People will still enjoy the party. The family will survive. And you won’t fail at being a friend, parent or colleague. So, ask for help when you need to and don’t be afraid to say ‘no’.”

### REMEMBER THE REASON FOR THE SEASON

You’re invited to celebrate Christmas with the Salvos and remember the ‘reason for the season’ — Jesus. Everyone is welcome at their local Salvation Army corps (church) on Christmas Day to join in celebrating the birth of the baby Jesus who grew up to be our saviour.

Christmas is not complete without carols,

so join one of the Salvos' Christmas Carols events during December. As well as festive singing and music, many events include fun activities for whole family.

A festive meal among friends is one of the joys of Christmas. In many areas, The Salvation Army hosts free Christmas meals with all the trimmings, sharing good food and great company. If you would like to join one, go to our website and register early — these events book out quickly.

Christmas is a time of celebration, but for those experiencing hardship, it can be especially challenging and isolating.

Every year, the Salvos give hope to individuals and families in need by providing food hampers and gifts. Hampers are prepared with care using donated goods and shared with those in the community who simply need a helping hand during the Christmas season.

*If you are unsure if you have enough food for Christmas dinner or you don't know how you will afford presents for your kids, please reach out to your local Salvos. You may be eligible for support.*

*Have a Christmas celebration to remember with the Salvos — go to [salvationarmy.org.au/christmas](http://salvationarmy.org.au/christmas)*

## Give the kids in your life an awesome Christmas present that lasts all year!

This special Kidzone Christmas gift pack includes:

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Offer closes on Thursday 19 December.



# Holiday hits with heart

As well as providing special effects and belly laughs, these blockbusters also touch on humility, sympathy and standing up for your beliefs.

BY MARK HADLEY

## STAR WARS EPISODE IX: THE RISE OF SKYWALKER – 19 DECEMBER

The final chapter in the nine-part 'Skywalker Saga' has arrived. It's a year after the events of *The Last Jedi* and all the key cast members unite to battle what director J.J. Abrams calls "... the ultimate enemy". Emperor Palpatine, who appeared to have died in *Return of the Jedi*, reveals he has been playing a very long game indeed.

Lando Calrissian retakes the controls of the Millennium Falcon, Luke Skywalker returns as a 'Force projection' and Princess Leia has a starring role even though actress Carrie Fisher died in 2016. But be prepared — Disney is emphasising this will be the final battle for many characters in that galaxy far, far away.

What, then, will survive? The will to resist. The suggestion is there'll always be people with a conscience prepared to stand up for what's right. In the Star Wars universe that 'right' is freedom to pursue your own destiny. There's

no doubt that in an age that praises individualism, yet requires increasing conformity, those who are prepared to speak their mind will be a rare but valuable commodity.



## JOJO RABBIT – 26 DECEMBER

Johannes 'Jojo' Betzler is a 10-year-old living in Germany during World War II. A member of the Hitler Youth, he'd love to see his country's enemies 'crushed into dust', but he can't seem to summon up the cruelty necessary to see the world the Führer's way. When asked to kill to show his commitment, he runs off, earning the nickname 'Jojo Rabbit'. The discovery that his mother is hiding a



Jewish girl in their attic also teaches Jojo some ideas are worth running from.

*Jojo Rabbit* is a dark comedy brought to the big screen by Taika Waititi. Waititi provides Jojo with Adolf Hitler as an imaginary friend and adds other comic elements courtesy of Scarlett Johansson, Sam Rockwell and Rebel Wilson. Don't mistake this as a light-hearted romp, though. The elements that help the young hero evaluate his worldview include suffering, disability and death. What emerges is something much more than a simple 'love over hate' message. Jojo learns that one of the bravest things we can do is admit we've been lying to ourselves.



### JUMANJI: THE NEXT LEVEL – 26 DECEMBER

The Jumanji franchise message remains the same: games are less fun than we think. In *The Next Level*, high school students Bethany, Fridge and Martha arrive at friend Spencer's house to discover he's once again disappeared inside the magical game. They mount a rescue attempt, but two extra players are sucked in as well. Spencer's grandfather Eddie (Danny DeVito) and Eddie's friend Milo Walker (Danny Glover) take on muscular characters, adding a 'cranky old men' vibe.

More confident characters have to rely on the young and unsure. Players who find themselves in bodies nothing like their real-world selves learn what it is to be weak. In *The Next Level* that humility stretches across generations, with the younger competitors realising they can benefit from the older people they were so quick to dismiss. It's a safe watch for the family with a swag of laughs and an easy lesson thrown in.



### CATS – 26 DECEMBER

*Cats* is one of those rare stories that has spanned almost every medium imaginable. Beginning as a book of poetry by T.S. Elliot, emerging as a musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber, the story now has its debut on the big screen.

'Memory', the song at the heart of *Cats*, is placed in the mouth of Grizabella, a once-glamorous feline withered by old age, shunned by other cats for her mangy appearance.

*Cats* appeals to a world that has become enamoured with the talented and the beautiful at the expense of the undesirable with the certain knowledge that we will all one day grow old. It offers a hope that if we can see ourselves in the shoes of those who struggle to belong, we will find a place for them in our hearts.

# Choosing kindness over convenience

In the season of goodwill, let's take the time to be kind.

BY FAYE MICHELSON

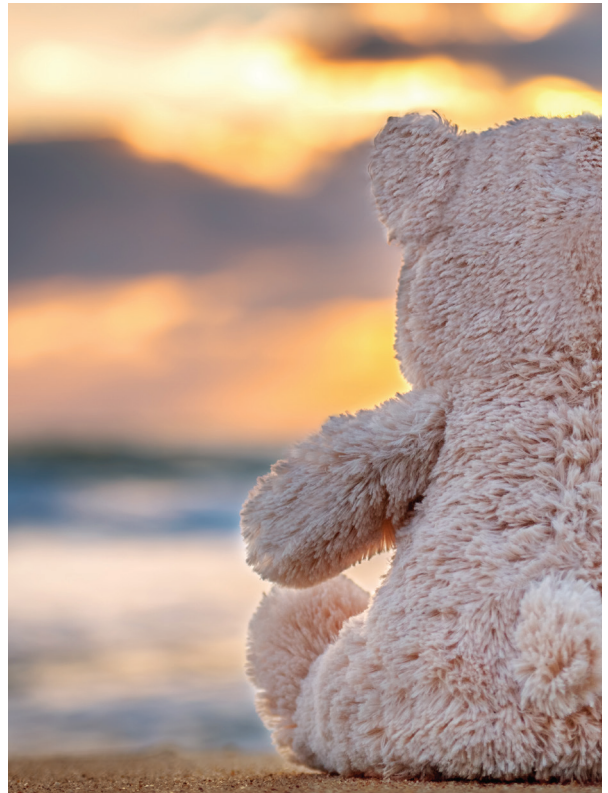
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Having to wait is inconvenient. So is being interrupted, having to change your plans at a moment's notice or seeing something that needs to be done that's not your responsibility.

Do you know what else is inconvenient? Kindness — the sort of kindness that is incidental, those random acts of kindness.

Kindness is one of those attributes that is, well, optional. The *Collins Dictionary* describes kindness “as the quality of being gentle, caring, and helpful. A kindness is a helpful or considerate act.” The *Webster* adds that kindness is “contributing to the happiness of others”.

It's nice, but you don't have to do it. There's no law, after all, that says you must be “helpful or considerate”, no workplace agreement that includes a clause saying that “contributing to the happiness of others” is part of your contract. Nor is “being gentle, caring and helpful” a condition of entry into any institution or club.



It's just as well, because being kind isn't factored into our daily calendars and, quite frankly, it takes time.

Those little acts of kindness can be a real impost. One of them, for example, is waving people into my lane when the roads are congested, I'm running late and it's frustrating that it takes so long to drive anywhere. If I let someone in ahead of me, it means my travelling time could be increased by at least several seconds — maybe even a minute. The same applies if I invite a shopper who's got three items in their hands to go through the register ahead of me and my chock-a-block trolley. Who's got time?



Part of the problem is that opportunities to show kindness often occur unexpectedly. They can happen in shopping centres, railway stations, at work, in church, at school and in our homes.

Someone drops a bag of apples, someone trips over in front of you, the person ahead of you in the supermarket line is a couple of dollars short for their grocery bill ... it's this randomness that can make being kind so inconvenient. I'd like to — actually should — help, but I haven't really got the time to stop ... yet if opportunities like these are not acted on straight away, they're usually lost. There have been many times I've regretted letting an opportunity slip away because I've been too busy, tired or simply wanted to do something else. That's the nature of kindness; it's not a rule, it's not mandated — it's a choice.

To “contribute to the happiness of others”, as the *Webster Dictionary* puts it so nicely, means we could lose some of that most valuable commodity, our time. But it also means we could gain something more precious — the experience of being kind to someone.

In the lead-up to Christmas, in this season of goodwill to all, I've been reminded about two aspects of kindness. One is that God extended great kindness towards humanity on that first Christmas by sending the baby who would grow up to be Jesus Christ, the saviour (Luke chapter 2, verses 10-14). Another is that while kindness is not a rule, is it really optional? Micah chapter 6, verse 8 in the Bible asks us this question: “And what does the Lord require of you?” The answer: “To do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”

# Distributing Christmas joy

**Barbara received much more than she expected when she collected a hamper from the Salvos.**

BY NAOMI SINGLEHURST

As Barbara, a Salvation Army volunteer, saw the delight and emotion on the faces of those given Christmas hampers and gifts, she was in tears.

This past Christmas, Barbara and her kids played huge roles as Salvo volunteers. Barbara organised hampers, gifts and a free family fun day (through partner organisations) for local families in need.

Her two eldest children, both in their 20s, packed and distributed hampers at Noosa Salvation Army and her youngest son, just 13 years old, helped with a Christmas community donation drive organised between the Salvos and local fire brigades.

Barbara volunteers at her local Salvos-Connect, which provides emergency relief to those in need. Her eldest son is a youth leader in the local Salvation Army corps (church) and her youngest son is about to become a junior leader.

She finds it incredible, because only a year earlier she was totally broken and her family life was unbearably chaotic.

Then she came to the Salvos for support at Christmas and everything changed.

Barbara's struggles began 12 years earlier. She was deeply depressed and one day found herself on auto-pilot starting to steer her car off a bridge. Worried about the black thoughts plaguing her, she went to see her doctor. It was then she found out that what she was feeling was much more than the postnatal depression she thought she had.

Following a serious family rift, Barbara was alone, depressed and exhausted. She had gone through a pregnancy suffering severe undiagnosed pain and then, after giving birth, was diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer. She underwent major surgery and treatment while caring for two children and a three-month-old baby. Despite seeking help, her depression never really lifted.

She eventually found a rewarding job in education and managed to raise her kids as a single mother. But for medical reasons, her doctor suggested she resign.

"Just before Christmas I stopped working and how I wished I hadn't," she says. "I became really stressed, depressed and lonely, feeling like I had nothing and was nothing.

"I was experiencing suicidal thoughts daily, thinking I had nothing to live for." Barbara says her worries and fears increased as it drew nearer to Christmas.

"I was in a panic," she says. "My kids don't get many things through the year, but they do get something for birthdays and Christmas." It was at that point a friend suggested Barbara see the Salvos.





*Barbara and her family*

"I don't do that kind of thing. I never ask," says Barbara. But, because she knew someone associated with the local Salvation Army, she sent a text asking if she might be able to have a small hamper for Christmas.

"I still get teary when I think about it," she says. "They brought out a brand-new mountain bike for my youngest son and a hamper, gifts and food. They gave me movie tickets and a voucher to get my hair done. "They were crying, and I was crying. I don't think I'll ever forget it. It was just overwhelming."

The family was also invited to a Salvation Army outing day at a local theme park.

In response to the generosity she experienced, Barbara began volunteering at her local SalvosConnect, eventually building up to three to four days a week.

She says the journey of the past year has been "amazing". Her family is now more settled, and she says she feels a greater sense of belonging and purpose. Barbara has also rejoined the workforce.

"When I came to collect my Christmas hamper I received a lot more than I expected," she says.

"I was overwhelmed by the generosity of The Salvation Army. I received so much love and support. And I noticed they had something that was missing in my life, something I and our family needed."

Barbara says the people at SalvosConnect truly believe The Salvation Army's vision statement: "Wherever there is hardship or injustice Salvos will live, love and fight alongside others to transform Australia one life at time, with the love of Jesus."

Barbara believes helping others has not only been a joy, it has taught her to count her blessings.

"I am telling my story in the hope of encouraging others to seek assistance if they need it," she says. "The Salvos have taught me patience and kindness, and that it's okay to seek help and look to God for help. They have restored my faith."

## Pearl couscous salad



### Ingredients

250g pearl couscous, 400g can chickpeas (drained, rinsed), 200g feta (chopped), 6 fresh dates (pitted, chopped), ¼ cup chopped fresh coriander, ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley, ¼ cup fresh mint leaves, ⅓ cup extra virgin olive oil, 2 tbsp lemon juice, salt and pepper

### Method

Cook the couscous in a large saucepan of boiling water for 8-10 minutes or until al dente. Drain and rinse under cold running water.

Combine chickpeas, feta, dates, herbs, oil and lemon juice in a large bowl. Season well.

Add the couscous to the chickpea mixture and toss well to combine.

## Have a laugh

A woman asked a boy if he could name Santa's reindeer.

"I know two of them," he said confidently. "Rudolph and Olive."

"Really?" said the woman, surprised.

"Yes," the boy continued. "Just like in the song."

He took a deep breath and sang: "Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer, had a very shiny nose, and if you ever saw it, you would even say it glows. Olive the other reindeer..."



## Tip for the race of life

"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means 'God with us')"

Matthew chapter 1, verse 23.

4			7		5		6	
	3	5				8		
		3		6				5
	5		2					
		2				6	9	
5		8		9				3
		6	8		4			9
	9	7						

## Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

## Tum-Tum

On which page of this week's *Warcry* is Tum-Tum hiding?



**Answers:** 1. The Nutcracker  
2. Ebenezer 3. Candy canes 4. Jingle Bells 5. Caesar Augustus  
Tum-Tum: is hiding in the table of contents on page 3.

2	9	7	1	5	3	4	6	8
6	1	8	9	2	7	5	1	3
4	8	6	9	7	2	3	5	1
1	7	2	5	3	8	6	9	4
6	4	3	2	7	9	1	5	8
8	3	4	6	1	2	5	7	9
9	6	1	5	4	2	3	8	7
7	5	8	1	6	4	2	3	9
4	2	9	7	8	5	3	6	1

## Quick quiz



1. What Christmas-themed ballet premiered in Saint Petersburg, Russia in 1892?
2. In Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, what was Mr Scrooge's first name?
3. What sweet treats were shaped to resemble a shepherd's staff as a symbol of the shepherds who visited baby Jesus?
4. What well-known Christmas song became the first song ever broadcast from space in 1965?
5. Who told Mary and Joseph to go to Bethlehem? (Luke chapter 2, verse 1)

## Want to know more?

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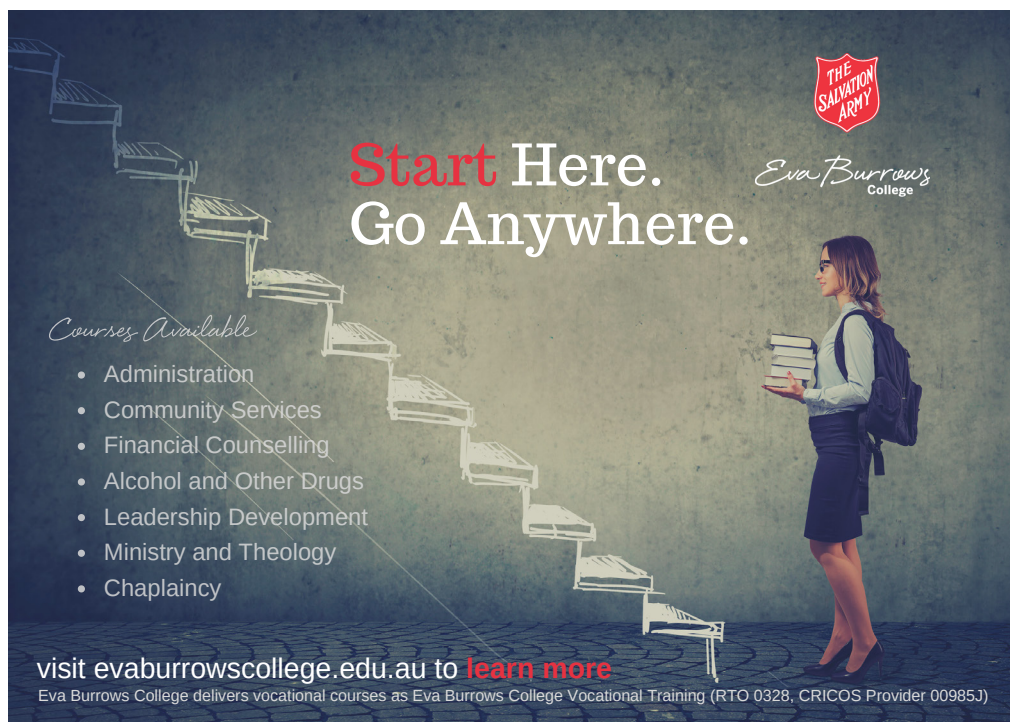
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