

# 7 Tips for Taking Better Holiday Photos

By Chuck Palmer

Can you believe it? The holiday season is just around the corner. For many of us, it marks a time when we capture some pretty special moments with a smartphone or DSLR while we attend traditional religious services, parties and family gatherings. Let's look at a few tips and techniques that we can use to make our photos truly remarkable this year.



## 1. Get down to the Kids eye level

Some of the best photos that you will enjoy for years to come are those of children. You will cherish looking at how much they have grown and changed over time. Spend some time with the kids, capturing their excitement and wonder, but do it on their level. Squat down, get on your knees, or sit on the floor to get the best shot of children. Putting yourself on their level offers a more interesting view of their holiday and makes the photo much more personable.

## 2. Get Closer

Fill the frame with your subject. You don't have to have the entire Christmas Tree in the frame while photographing your niece opening her special present. People like to look at photos where the subject is unmistakable in the picture. Getting in close helps hide all those distractions that pull your viewer out of the photo story too!



### 3. Turn your flash off indoors.

I like a well-balanced fill flash photo as well as anyone, but with today's technology, low light photography is better than ever. Turn your ISO up instead of turning on your flash to create some of the most remarkable holiday shots. Most modern cameras do a fine job of creating a high-quality image even at ISO settings as high as 6400 or even 10,000 on many cameras. And low incandescent light tends to create a mood your viewers will no doubt enjoy looking at.

### 4. Capture the moments as well as the poses

There is certainly nothing wrong with having people pose for a nice picture (see Tip 5). But be sure to capture a few shots of what people are doing like talking, laughing, opening presents or sharing. The moments you capture can often be much more interesting, preserving those special moments for years to come.



## 5. Take the Group Shot

I am a big advocate of getting the whole family in a group shot. It's a tradition in my family. Some of our most cherished family photos are those taken of the entire group more than 50 years ago. Most of those in the old photos are no longer with us but those photos bring us back to the memories we have of them. A lot of family pictures come and go but I find a large group shot seems to find its way into photo albums and frames, preserving our memories for a lifetime. Line up the entire group and have them do something funny or stand in a random pattern interacting with one another. Some of the best group shots break all the rules of posing. Put your camera on a tripod and get in the photo!

## 6. Give a gift of a photograph

Print your favorite photos and give them to friends and family as holiday gifts. In this digital age, we share our photos on line, but rarely look at them more than once. A print is permanent. Frame it or put it in a magnet frame for the refrigerator. You will be surprised how appreciative people are of your thoughtful gift. Our family tradition is to take the entire family group shot on Thanksgiving. My favorite shot then goes in a Photographer's Edge ( [www.photographersedge.com](http://www.photographersedge.com) ) magnet calendar and everyone in the family gets one as a gift for Christmas. They all go directly on the refrigerator and are there all year.

## 7. Put the Camera Down

This may sound funny coming from a Tips for better Holiday Photos Article, but there comes a time in every holiday gettogether to just be with friends and family. After all, how many photos do you need of your family opening presents. Rather than taking dozens of images, be intentional in the photos you take. Then put the camera down and enjoy the love and fellowship.

I wish you a healthy and joyous holiday season, and may the remarkable photos always be yours.

Chuck