

Zoom Christmas Party Games

If you're looking for fun Christmas games to play on a Zoom or Facetime call, here's what we did for the WOW Class Christmas party when COVID forced us to cancel our in-person party and celebrate via Zoom in 2020.

Schedule (took about an hour with 15 party guests):

- * Welcome by host (ask everyone to update their screen name if it's not correct).
- * Sing "Joy to the World." Due to the audio delay, it works best if everyone mutes their microphone except for the person leading the singing. Then you can see everyone singing along at home but you can only hear the song leader. I arranged in advance for a wonderful singer in our class to lead the music since no one is blessed by my singing voice. We sang acapella.
- * Holiday at Home Scavenger Hunt (instructions below).
- * Sing "Silent Night."
- * Dirty Santa Gift Exchange (instructions below).
- * Sing "We Wish You a Merry Christmas."

Host tips:

- 1) For Zoom, use your computer instead of a phone or iPad because you can see more people on your computer screen. Usually you can only see 9 people at a time on a Zoom call if you are using an iPad.
- 2) Raise your camera to eye level, make sure you are not backlit, and get good lighting on your face.

Holiday at Home Scavenger Hunt:

Host says "I have a list of 10 holiday items commonly found in homes. After I read off the first item, you have to go get the item and bring it back. Once you are in your seat with the item in your hand, call out your first name loudly so that I can hear who found the item first. The 1st person gets 3 points while the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th person each get 1 point. You need to keep your own score so grab a pen. If you haven't found the item in a couple of minutes, come on back because you probably already lost on that item. The person with the highest score at the end gets a \$10 Amazon gift card."

You may need to give them time to get a pen and paper. Half my women forgot to keep their score in all the excitement. If you have a big group of people, you may want to ask another person to not play the game but instead to stay at their computer so they can help you see and hear the order of who finishes 1st through 5th.

- 1) Cinnamon
- 2) Your winter coat
- 3) Clear tape, like Scotch tape
- 4) Butter or margarine
- 5) Postage stamp
- 6) Roll of wrapping paper
- 7) Sprinkles
- 8) Matches or butane lighter
- 9) Ham or turkey anything
- 10) Candle

Dirty Santa Gift Exchange via Zoom:

In advance, we asked party guests to bring a Christmas-themed gift costing around \$10 to the Zoom call. They weren't supposed to wrap the gift and were to keep the gift out of sight of their camera. In the WOW class, we bring good gifts you'd actually want like a Christmas ornament, tea towels, scarves, holiday décor, etc., but you could do White Elephant gag gifts instead. It saves time on the Zoom call if the gifts aren't wrapped.

There is a Participants icon on your Zoom screen. If you click on it, a box will pop up that shows you all the people on the call listed in alphabetical order. I just went right down the list and told everyone their number for the game. So, 1 through 15 for our 15 participants on the call including the host.

We play with these Dirty Santa rules:

- 1) Whoever is #1 and opens the first gift gets one more turn when the game is over. She can choose to keep the gift she has or choose to steal a gift as long as it is not "dead." The game ends when number 1 decides to keep her gift or, if she steals a gift, all the stealing resulting from her final turn ends.
- 2) A gift can be stolen two times and then it is "dead" or out of play. So, the 3rd person to choose that particular gift gets to keep that gift, and it cannot be stolen again by anyone.
- 3) If someone steals your gift, then you can choose to open a new gift or steal someone else's gift; however, you cannot immediately steal back the gift that was just stolen from you. But you could steal it back in the future. You can even strategize with another person to steal your gift back for you. This is why we call it Dirty Santa.

To adapt the game for Zoom, instead of putting all the wrapped gifts in a pile to choose from like we would do for an in-person game, the #1 person chose a person instead. So, Annette might say "Jennifer, I choose the gift you brought." Then Jennifer would bring out her unwrapped gift, hold it up to the camera, and describe it while we all ooh and aah. That gift now belongs to Annette (#1 person) even though it's still at Jennifer's house because we're on Zoom.

Next, the #2 person gets to either choose a new gift to open or steal what Annette just "opened." This continues as you go through all the numbers. We asked the women who had had their gift "opened" to hold up the gifts to the camera when a new turn started so that women could see which gifts were available for stealing.

As the game went on, it got a bit confusing but we managed to keep things clear and had a lot of fun. At the beginning of turns, we had to occasionally call out the names of women who hadn't had their gift "opened" yet so people knew where the unopened gifts still were.

When the game was over, the host asks each woman to say what gift she ended up with and to make arrangements for picking up the gift from the person who brought it. We had volunteers available to pick up and deliver gifts around our city if needed. If your guests live across the country, you could mail the gifts to each other.

Courtesy of Jennifer Degler Ministries, LLC <https://jenniferdegler.com>