

Why “Christmas” Matters

Keeping Christmas references in the marketplace and public square

We at Focus on the Family – and millions upon millions in our nation – deeply value the great truths of Christmas and the holiday’s inspiring place in American life and culture.

Christmas is a national holiday named in federal law and recently affirmed by a U.S. House of Representatives resolution which formally acknowledged the “*international religious and historical significance of Christmas and the Christian faith.*”

Yet, the trend is pervasive to preempt “Christmas” with generic terms like “holiday” or belabored euphemisms like “Merry gift-giving” – and especially among retailers. Why, we ask, in a religiously free society would American industry and publicly-held entities retreat from ever naming this nationally (and globally) celebrated day?

In addition to being respectful of the religious and cultural significance of Christmas, promoting this holiday *by name* is good business. According to a December 2008 online MSNBC.com survey, more than 76 percent of Americans think retailers should include “Christmas” in how they mark the holiday season. With more than 225 million Americans counted as part of the Christian faith (that’s over three-quarters of the U.S. population) this statistic comes as no surprise.

What’s more, beyond the holiday itself, citizens who value free speech and religious freedoms feel legitimate concern about overzealous “political-correctness” which censors any mention of God from our public lives. However well-intentioned, this is simply not American.

In our great land which welcomes all and provides treasured liberty, we can encourage genuine mutual respect and diversity without offensively minimizing or denying the prominent place Christmas holds in national, cultural and religious world history. Such commonsense respect is our aim in reaching out to retailers which play a shaping role in cultural and public dialogue – especially as it relates to the tradition of shopping and gift-giving surrounding Christmas Day. Our appeal is not to encourage retailers to be exclusive but to be more *inclusive* by notably featuring the word Christmas with other possible labels such as “Happy Holidays” or “Season’s Greetings.”

We hope we can count you among those whose marketing demonstrates clear regard for the traditions and purchasing motivations of the vast majority of Americans who spend their dollars at **Christmas.**

