



Surviving CHRISTMAS

a Da's Guide

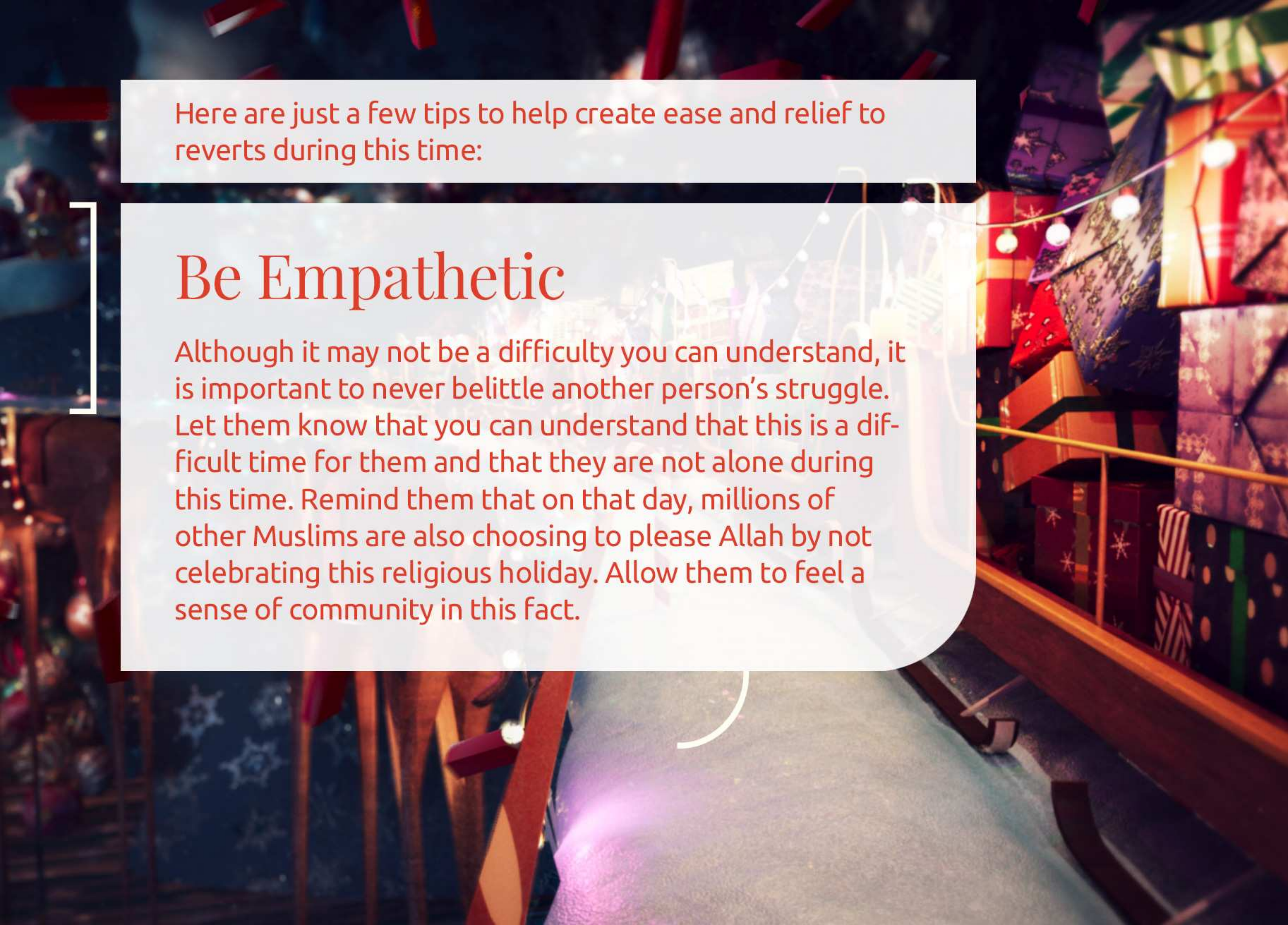
To Supporting Reverts During
The Holidays



Christmas can be a difficult holiday for many reverts to Islam, regardless of how long they have been Muslim. It is often a holiday that they have celebrated with their family for the majority of their life, for religious reasons and cultural reasons.

Someone doesn't necessarily have to be a 'practising Christian' to celebrate Christmas, even atheists, agnostics and people of other religions celebrate it. It is a struggle for many reverts to be alone on this day when they know their family and friends are together, laughing, enjoying delicious food and creating new memories.





Here are just a few tips to help create ease and relief to reverts during this time:

Be Empathetic

Although it may not be a difficulty you can understand, it is important to never belittle another person's struggle. Let them know that you can understand that this is a difficult time for them and that they are not alone during this time. Remind them that on that day, millions of other Muslims are also choosing to please Allah by not celebrating this religious holiday. Allow them to feel a sense of community in this fact.



Get Together

The struggle with holidays is almost always about the social aspect. Gathering with friends and family, laughing, joking, playing games, sharing food, etc. Try to organise many gatherings around this time to ensure Muslims are not alone at home, feeling isolated during this time. Organize a small gathering in the Masjid if possible. Go out to eat together or organise a small Halaqa in your house and encourage them to do charity work. If you're not able to be there physically, find people in his/her area to connect with. Having long distance companions is good, but it can't replace friends in person. If you are not in the same area as the revert, try to find trusted Muslims in their area who they can be with.

Get Online

If you're unable to be there physically, the next best thing is online. Create a small gathering online via Skype and ask a knowledgeable person to deliver an online halaqa. Avoid talking about Christmas and rather remind them of their purpose and talk about our Covenant with Allah. Make it light hearted and fun and encourage the other participants to interact with each other.

4 Be Patient

Everyone deals with situations differently. What may take one person a week to adjust to and accept, may take another six months. What may be a big deal to one person may not bother another at all. By being patient, you strengthen your bond and connection with the revert.

This allows them to cope and adjust to their new lifestyle and all the changes in a healthy way, not feeling rushed or inadequate because they're not getting over things quickly.





Don't Be Forceful

Although it is important to advise a revert that they should avoid celebrating this time, it is important to not be forceful in your approach. We are only advisers and during sensitive situations it is important to not use words such as 'if you celebrate another religious festivals you will go to hell'.

Rather it is better to empower each other by using advice such as 'as Muslims we worship Allah alone and we should avoid celebrating any festival which is based on the worship of others.'



Provide Remedies

It's good to be present, supportive, understanding and helpful. But at the end of the day, the most important thing to remind them is about Islam, Allah and their commitment and submission to their Creator. Type or write out important Ayahs in the Quran and Hadiths that comforts and encourages the new revert. Give links to beneficial lectures about how to deal with missing the holidays. Recommend books, especially for new reverts that advise and encourage them to hold tight to the rope of Allah and continue to obey Him, no matter how difficult it may be at times.