

From the Desk of

Santa Claus

How to Get the Most from Your Home Visit

Ready for your home visit? You've made a good decision. Home Visits are the Rolls Royce of Santa visits. The focus will be on the children and entertaining them, something that few other types of visits cannot provide.

However, there are certain things you can do to ensure the best experience possible:

1. Talk to your child or children before hand
Help them decide in advance what they want to ask Santa about the reindeer, the workshops, the elves or Mrs. Claus or anything else that may interest them. Also help them identify what they want for Christmas. They'll be less tongue tied if they are prepared.
2. Ensure you have parking available
Santa is well over 1000 years old. Some believe he is even over 2000. But whatever you believe, Santa is very old. Making him walk long distances, carrying his packs is not wise. Even worse, would be for Santa not to be able to park his sleigh at all! It is important to arrange for Santa to park his vehicle nearby in a pre-arranged spot. Consider asking a neighbour or leave a spot in your driveway. Relying on street parking may result in a last-minute phone call and disappointment. Please note that you will be charged for no parking cancellations.
3. When making your appointment consider the number of children
Nothing is worse than Santa not having enough time to spend with the children. Malls allow approximately 3 minutes per child (most of which is taking photos). You want to allow more than that. Sending Santa home early is easier than trying to extend the time when he is already due at another visit.
4. When making your appointment consider the whole party agenda
Santa's visit is typically only part of the party. What do you want him to do? Hand out gifts? Talk to the children? Take pictures? What will happen before hand? What will happen after?
Remember that the party often ends when the gifts are given out.
5. When inviting Santa, consider his suit
Santa often has different outfits available. While the big red coat is traditional now, a long robe has been in the past. Are you in a house? Maybe a waistcoat and fancy shirt might be better. Are you in the kitchen? Maybe a chef's hat and apron would suit. After all, a gentleman doesn't wear a coat in the house. This is especially true the further you are from the big day.
6. COVID is something you don't want your children to get
You are responsible for protecting your children. There is a download where you found this on some of the things you need to consider.
7. Clear your sidewalks
Having Santa slip and fall would put a severe crimp in the visit. And the more snow that Santa walks through, the more that gets carried into your home.
8. Protect your floors
Normally, Santa is unable to remove his shoes. One of the joys of his advanced age. And shoes

From the Desk of

Santa Claus

gather snow and mud in the winter. Having a mat for Santa to wipe his shoes, and runners to protect your floors is a wise thing. While Santa will try to clean his boots, he cannot be responsible for any damage to expensive floors.

9. Meeting Santa at the door

It is important for an adult to meet Santa at the door. Preferably before Santa knocks at the door. This allows for any last-minute adjustments or for filling Santa's sack etc. If you wish, Santa can call before walking to your door.

10. Have a place for Santa to prepare

This is sometimes referred to as a Green Room or Staging Room. It gives Santa and his escort a chance to prepare before being introduced. Santa often arrives fully dressed. However, in some cases, Santa prefers to partially dress after arrival. But fully dressed or partially, last minute adjustments – a belt out of place or a hat that keeps sliding – is usually required. If the room isn't needed, then you at least have one room that doesn't need to be cleaned after the party.

11. Have someone introduce Santa

A visit from Santa is a big event. It deserves being started with a bang. Just don't scare any of the children.

12. Remember that some children have a problem with strangers

It used to be, children between 2 and 3 would be the most likely to make strange. But the pandemic and lockdowns have changed that. Many children have not seen a stranger in several years. As fun as "screaming baby" pictures might be to you in the future, the child's terror is real. Santa can often provide alternative solutions (such as "photo bombing").

13. Santa is not a babysitter

You are a critical part of the visit. You know your child. Your child trusts you. You need to guide Santa in dealing with the many personalities present. And you need to support your child as they meet a big, red, boisterous adult.

14. Have an adult present in the room

Santa's hearing isn't always the best. And sometimes, little voices need amplification. Also, Santa doesn't know your child. All the little physical signs of boredom may be missed or misinterpreted. Feel free to cut the meeting off if you feel the child has gotten all they can from the visit.

15. Have everyone present

People wandering in and out of the room disrupts the visit. And no one wants to miss their time with Santa. Children often don't realize this.

16. Take lots of photos

Formal or staged photos are nice. They look pretty on the mantel. But candid photos are the ones that people laugh over for years. So, focus your picture taking on the personal interactions between the children and Santa. And take lots of pictures.

17. Don't let the children run around (too much)

In their excitement, children may want to show Santa their room or toys or any number of things. While Santa is interested, time and other issues make it a problem.

From the Desk of

Santa Claus

18. Gifts should be done last

Children often forget about Santa when they get their gifts. So let that be the final act. Santa can take his leave then or even quietly slip out.

19. The best laid plans oft go awry

While your Santa will have a suggested process (see below), the truth is that the children are actually in control. They decide on what will happen and when. Sit back, enjoy the ride, and laugh. This is not a time for micro-management.

20. Please don't forget to review your visit

This helps others to know what to expect, and it also helps Santa improve.

21. Enjoy yourself

A visit with Santa is a wonderful thing that will be a memory forever.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you. I look forward to visiting with you in the future.

Have a very Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays and a very Prosperous New Year!

Santa Glen Ford

From the Desk of

Santa Claus

A Typical Home Visit

A typical Santa visit (if there is such a thing) often goes like this:

1. Preparation Meeting
Meet Santa at the door, help him get his suit correct, discuss any last-minute changes, fill the sack if appropriate etc.
2. Introduction
You don't need a long introduction, but it does need to be boisterous and exciting.
3. Meeting the children
Each of the children should be introduced by name to Santa.
 - a. Rough housing and breaking the ice
Santa will talk to the children, joke with them. And so on, often, we'll play the high five game. The point here is to convince the children that Santa listens to them and is willing to play with them
4. Individual Questions time aka sitting on Santa's knee
This is where Santa gets to listen to each of the children. The point of the questions is to get the children to relax and talk about themselves. The questions often change from child to child
 - a. What do you want for Christmas?
 - b. Is there anything you want to know about Santa or the elves or the North Pole ...?
 - c. What grade are you in?
 - d. What is your favourite subject?
 - e. What do you think about your teacher?
 - f. Etc.
5. Group questions, story time, and carols
This is where the children can ask questions of Santa from the safety of a group. Santa will look for opportunities to turn an answer into a story. Carols may be sung (or not)
6. Gift giving
If the parents have gifts for Santa to give out, this is when it happens.
7. Final questions
In case, some of the children have taken longer to gain courage to ask their question, or if someone has thought of something to ask.
8. Departure
The host announces that it is time for Santa to return to the North Pole. Santa says his goodbyes and departs.

NOTE: Although this is the basic format, changes may come from the customer. More likely the children will determine their own agenda.