Christmas Party Plan (90 Minutes)

A ready-to-run schedule for a senior living holiday party.

0:00 **Welcome and music**
Greet residents at the door, play familiar holiday music and hand out hats or name tags.

0:10 **Icebreaker**
Musical hat or this or that, so everyone speaks once early on.

0:20 **Seated game**
Left-right story game or pass the gift, with prizes for everyone.

0:35 **Refreshments**
Cookies, cocoa or punch, matched to each resident's diet order and texture.

0:50 **Active game**
Snowball toss or reindeer ring toss in teams.

1:05 **Sing-along**
Three or four favorite carols with large-print song sheets.

1:15 **Raffle or gifts**
Hand out a small gift to every resident, then a group photo.

1:25 **Toast and goodbye**
A toast with sparkling juice and wishes for the year ahead.

Party themes

1950s Christmas: Vinyl records, Bing Crosby, tinsel trees and classic cookies.
Winter wonderland: White and silver paper snowflakes, cocoa and snowball games.
Ugly sweater party: Staff and residents wear festive sweaters, with a vote for the most colorful.
Christmas around the world: A simple holiday tradition, song or treat from a few countries, including residents' heritage.
Hot cocoa bar: Cocoa with whipped cream, warm rather than hot, plus sugar-free options.
Holiday movie afternoon: A short classic holiday film or a few favorite scenes, popcorn-free snacks and a sing-along.

Party Games for Seniors: Quick Rules

1. Pass the gift

Wrap a small prize in one layer of paper per player, with a joke or fun question tucked between layers. Pass it around the circle while music plays and stop the music often; whoever is holding the parcel unwraps one layer. Whoever removes the last layer keeps the prize, and everyone else picks a small gift from the prize basket.

2. Left-right story game

Read a short holiday story full of the words “left” and “right.” Each time a direction is read, everyone passes a wrapped gift that way. At the end, everyone opens the gift in their hands, and anyone without one picks from the prize basket.

3. Holiday picture bingo

Use bingo cards with large pictures (snowman, bell, candy cane, reindeer) instead of numbers. Call each picture slowly and hold it up for everyone to see.

4. Name that tune

Play the first few seconds of holiday songs or hits from the 1950s through the 1970s. Teams call out the title, and everyone sings the chorus together.

5. Musical hat

Pass a Santa hat or party hat while music plays. When the music stops, the person holding it puts it on and answers a fun question such as “What was your favorite gift as a child?”

6. Guess how many

Fill a clear jar with large shatterproof ornaments or pinecones and let everyone write down a guess. The closest guess wins a prize.

7. Snowball toss

Toss large, fist-size pom-pom “snowballs” or balled-up white paper into buckets set at different distances. Each bucket is worth a different number of points.

8. Beach ball volleyball

Sit in two rows facing each other and keep a beach ball in the air over a low ribbon “net.” Count the hits out loud together.

9. Ornament toss

Toss shatterproof plastic ornaments into a decorated basket or laundry hamper. Move the basket closer for players who need it.

10. Reindeer ring toss

A good-natured staff member wears a reindeer antler headband while residents toss pool-noodle rings at the antlers. Expect lots of laughter.

11. Party bowling

Set up plastic pins in the activity room (keep hallways and exits clear) and bowl with a lightweight ball, seated or standing with support. Decorate the pins as snowmen or elves for the season.

12. Gift wrap teamwork

In pairs, each partner uses only one hand to wrap a small box together, with pre-cut paper and tape strips (no scissors). The funniest-looking package wins a prize.

13. Who am I?

Tape the name of a famous person (Elvis, Lucille Ball, Frank Sinatra, Santa Claus) to a card. One player holds it facing the group without looking at it, and the group gives clues until that player guesses.

Party Games for Seniors: Quick Rules

14. Party charades

Act out holiday and everyday activities such as decorating a tree, building a snowman, wrapping a gift or shoveling snow. Residents can guess from their seats.

15. Carol title scramble

Hand out large-print sheets of scrambled Christmas carol titles and race in teams to unscramble them (see the printable).

16. Price guessing game

Bring everyday grocery items with today's store receipt. Players guess the price of each item, and the closest without going over wins.

17. Team trivia

Play a round of holiday trivia in teams of three or four. Our Christmas and New Year's trivia posts have ready-made questions with answers.

18. This or that

Ask quick choice questions such as "Fruitcake or pumpkin pie?" or "Snow or sunshine?" and have residents raise a hand for their pick, then share why.

19. Guess the baby photo

Collect baby or childhood photos from staff and display them numbered on a board. Residents guess which photo belongs to which staff member.

20. Birthday memory round

Go around the table and invite each birthday resident to share a favorite birthday memory or the best cake they ever had. Everyone else can share too.

21. White elephant swap

Everyone brings or receives a small wrapped gift, then takes turns choosing one from the pile. Keep it simple: skip the "stealing" rule if it causes stress.

22. Toast and wishes

Close the party with a toast with sparkling juice and invite each person to share one wish for the new year or for the birthday guest.

23. Dice game

Play a simple dice game such as Left Center Right with jumbo dice and large chips. It needs no strategy, so everyone can play.

24. Party freeze dance

Dance in your seats to upbeat music and freeze when it stops. The person with the most creative pose picks the next song.

25. Draw a snowman dice game

Each number on a die stands for one part of a snowman (body, head, eyes, nose, hat, scarf). Everyone rolls at once and draws that part, in any order; if you roll a part you already have, wait for the next roll. The first finished snowman wins.

Christmas Carol Scramble

Unscramble each word to find the name of a Christmas song.

1. **SLETNI IHGNT**

2. **NEIGJL BLSLE**

3. **JYO TO ETH OLWRD**

4. **TOFRSY HET MWONSNA**

5. **CKED ETH LLSAH**

6. **HWIET SMSCRIATH**

7. **O CEOM LAL YE AULTFFIH**

8. **WE HIWS YUO A RRYEM MHSSCAITR**

9. **HET TILLTE MURRMDE BYO**

10. **EHT FRTIS ONLE**

11. **O CRTAMISHS EERT**

12. **HEER COESM TAASN AUSCL**

Carol Scramble — Answers

1. Silent Night
2. Jingle Bells
3. Joy to the World
4. Frosty the Snowman
5. Deck the Halls
6. White Christmas
7. O Come, All Ye Faithful
8. We Wish You a Merry Christmas
9. The Little Drummer Boy
10. The First Noel
11. O Christmas Tree
12. Here Comes Santa Claus

Party safety checklist

- ☐ Snacks and drinks match each resident's diet order and texture.
- ☐ No popcorn, nuts, hard candy or whole grapes for residents at risk of choking.
- ☐ Hot drinks served warm, cups half full.
- ☐ Brakes locked; games seated or standing with support; exits clear.
- ☐ Battery candles; tree, lights and decorations follow fire safety rules.
- ☐ Hand sanitizer at the door; staff serve food; shared items wiped.
- ☐ Prizes are large items, not small objects, in memory care.