

„Bei uns ist immer was los!“

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION CUSTOMS / WEIHNACHTSFEIERBRÄUCHE

exchange of gifts: die Bescherung

Christmas Eve is the main day when Germans exchange presents with their families.

Bescherung



This is definite proof that Germans are more precise with their Christmas vocabulary: "Bescherung" concisely refers to the moment during which gifts are exchanged on Christmas Eve. When they add the adjective "beautiful" to that word, as in "schöne Bescherung," it can ironically mean "what a mess." That was the title of the German version of the comedy "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation."

The Christmas countdown continues: only a few days left until the magical day! German kids continue to open their Advent calendar doors as American children eagerly wait for Santa Claus to arrive and make their wishes come true. So what happens on Christmas Eve (in Germany) and Christmas Day (in the United States)? The Bescherung, of course!

The Bescherung is a noun that refers to the traditional custom of the festive holiday gift exchange. This word is used in the context of Christmas – not birthdays or other gift-giving holidays. Children, in particular, look forward to the Bescherung – but even adults eagerly await it. The Bescherung is more than just receiving gifts; it comes with festivities, warmth and togetherness.

This is a very old word that came from Middle High German, but some Germans continue to use it to describe the gift-giving tradition on Christmas.