

Poll: Most in U.S. celebrate Christmas, but not all for religious reasons

By Lois M. Collins, Deseret News

QUEENS, N.Y. – Stafford Gregoire and his wife, Linda Chandler, love Christmas. They love getting gifts and giving gifts, and they'll happily greet you with a "Merry Christmas." But the season is, to them, a secular American holiday.

For Rachelle and Don Glenn of Holladay, Utah, Christmas is what the name says: A day to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. And while the family enjoys Santa and the gifts, the day's meaning will always revolve around its religious significance.

"We try to do the Sunday before with worship at our church," said Rachelle Glenn. "And Christmas Eve is more religious. We read the Christmas story from the Bible. We enacted it when the kids were younger, talked more about Jesus and read Luke 2. We keep (the religious and the secular) a bit separate."

With their eight kids, now 29 to 19, they let Christmas Day revolve around the Santa, gift-giving, playful side of the holiday.

These two families represent the two main approaches Americans have to celebrating Christmas. A poll by the Pew Research Center says most Americans do celebrate the holiday – nine out of 10 of them – but only half see it as a mostly religious holiday. A third see it as a mostly cultural holiday.

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