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**CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS—Manufacturing Memories**

**By Teresa Hansen**

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What are your favorite memories of the holidays as a child?

More than likely those memories include family traditions from, the day you choose to decorate your tree, to the kinds of food you eat at the holidays.

Remember that you and your husband came from separate families with different customs and traditions.

When creating a legacy for your children, it is appropriate to use a couple traditions from each of your families and come up with some new ones for your own family. Don't try to do them all or you'll end up feeling overwhelmed rather than enriched. Here are some ideas.

Kick off the holiday season by attending an event every year. Some suggestions are: The Festival of Trees, attend a play such as A Christmas Carol, or a Christmas concert.

Together, bake a cake on Christmas Eve for Jesus to remind you whose birthday you are really celebrating. Light a candle and even sing "Happy Birthday" to Him.

Sound, smells and tastes can certainly bring back fond memories of past Christmases. The sound that is Christmas to me is Johnny Mathis's Christmas album, which my mother played each year and I still adore now.

The food that means "holiday" to me is a Frozen Fruit Salad recipe. We had it almost every holiday season. What are the sounds, smells and tastes that evoke your Christmas memories? Include those as part of your family's traditions.

This tradition was submitted by Marilyn Brina:

On Christmas morning, the youngest child goes in and opens his stocking. The the other children go in and open their stockings all while Dad is taking movies of us. Then Dad hands out each gift and we all

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watch as each gift is opened. Then after the gifts are opened, we eat scrambled eggs, sweet rolls and hot chocolate for breakfast.

There are several books of compiled Christmas short stories available in bookstores and libraries. Read to your family each night before bedtime.

On the first day of December read to your family "The Giving Tree", by Shel Silverstein. As a family, make an advent calendar in the shape of a tree and determine 25 "gifts" you can share with neighbors, relative, teachers, and friends. The gifts could be things such as shoveling snow from a neighbor's walk, visiting a widow, taking homemade bread to someone. Write each gift on a separate "leaf" and attach it to the tree. Number the leaves from 1 to 25. Each day during December, turn over the corresponding leaf on the calendar and give whatever "gift" is listed there.

Use your children's artwork (which most families have in great abundance) to decorate wrapped packages. Your children will feel pride in the fact that their work is contributing to the holiday decorations.

Each Christmas of my childhood we would go "Santa Clausing". My dad dressing up as Santa we children would dress as elves or reindeer. We would then deliver plates of Christmas goodies to friends and neighbors as we caroled. And of course, Santa had a candy cane in his bag for each child he encountered.

Give a new ornament to each child each year. Store each child's collection in a special box that he can take with him when he leaves the nest. Not only will it give your child a few ornaments to decorate his tree, but it will be a reminder of past Christmases.

Take lots of pictures throughout the holidays. Each year create several new scrapbook pages that can be put into a special Christmas scrapbook album. It is wonderful to have out at holiday family gatherings for everyone to enjoy!

Several years we have been on the giving and the receiving end of "The 12 Days of Christmas". Pick an individual or family that may be having a difficult holiday season, or that you just want to friendship. Each night anonymously leave a small gift with a note or poem on the receivers porch. (It can be exciting and tricky trying not to get caught 12 nights in a row!)

Another option is to compile the 12 gifts all at the same time. Be sure they are small and lay them on a 4 to 5 foot piece of colored plastic wrap. Enclose gifts in wrap and make a long rope separating each gift with ties of ribbon. Each night the receivers can cut off a new gift, and you only have one chance of being caught!

Use traditions to create lasting, happy memories for your family that can be looked forward to every year.

Teresa Hansen is the creator of Moms Making It! <http://www.momsmakingit.com> sharing creative ideas to save time, save money, and enrich your life! She is a wife, and mother of five children, and

always looking for new ideas and products for moms "making it!" Get "Christmas Neighborhood Gift Ideas" ebook FREE by signing up for the newsletter at her site.

## **Need To Recapture The Magic Of Christmas? Try Inspirational Christmas Stories!**

**By Bernadette Dimitrov**

Everyone knows that life today is more hectic than ever before. Families are often very busy and family fun time is at a premium. This is never more apparent than at Christmas. Everyone wants Christmas to be magical and special, but many of us feel that it has become commercial and impersonal. The solution, though, is so simple that many families are surprised. Inspirational Christmas stories can help you recapture the magic of an old-fashioned Christmas, but with a modern twist. Just consider:

- 1) Inspirational Christmas stories for children and adults are quick to read and can be read together at any time. You won't have to rearrange your entire schedule for this Christmas magic - all you need are a few stolen moments here and there.
- 2) Inspirational Christmas stories for children and adults allow you to create special Christmas traditions for your family. Many cultures read the Christmas story aloud during the holidays. Reading favorite inspirational Christmas stories for children and adults together can be a great way to develop special holiday traditions for your own family.
- 3) Inspirational Christmas stories for children and adults are about sharing time - not about spending money. Getting together to read inspirational Christmas stories out loud is about sharing time together. It is not simply another impersonal way to spend money. In fact, inspirational Christmas stories are very economical, no matter what your holiday budget this Christmas season!
- 4) Inspirational Christmas stories for children and adults can help you teach your family what the season is all about. These stories have modern settings and twists and are exciting and fun. At the same time, they are about the miracles and togetherness that Christmas should represent. Without lecturing or moralizing, inspirational Christmas stories for children and adults capture and reveal exactly what this time of year is all about - and they do so in a way that everyone can understand!
- 5) Inspirational Christmas stories for children and adults can create cherished memories for your whole family. Stir up some cocoa and serve some cookies to your audience. Take turns reading inspirational Christmas stories out loud, and put on some quiet Christmas carols in the background. Inspirational Christmas stories for children and adults can be the perfect way to set the stage for a fabulous Christmas celebration.

The magic of reading and the wonder of Christmas combine together in inspirational Christmas stories for children and adults to create a wonderful way to celebrate this most exciting time of year! Why not get some inspirational Christmas stories today and create a tradition that your family will love and cherish for years to come?

Visit

and sign up for our F\*R\*E\*E\* NEWSLETTER FULL OF TIPS,

TOOLS & RESOURCES for reviving the fun, joy, magic and real meaning of Christmas every day of the year.



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