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**Emphasizing the Spiritual Side of Christmas with Our Children**

By Lisa M. Hendey

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In these hectic days prior to Christmas, it's easy for us to push aside the precious time we have with our young children in favor of hours spent shopping, wrapping, cooking for guests, and entertaining. We may find ourselves popping in a videotape, permitting one too many "happy meals" or handing our children toy catalogues to keep them occupied while we repeat "Maybe later, sweetie" more frequently than we realize.

As parents, we all strive to build family traditions and memories our children will cherish. The trouble starts when we let ourselves become so wrapped up in creating those special moments that we forget what our children will really treasure - time with their parents. This holiday season, take a few quiet moments throughout the day to emphasize the "sacred" side of Christmas, the "reason for the season".

The following are a few suggestions for helping you to cherish this quiet family time leading up to Christmas:

·Take time to read stories about the real meaning of Christmas: Nearly every home contains a family Bible and Christmas is the perfect time to explore scripture with your child. Simply open your Bible to the beginning verses of each of the four gospels and start reading. Let older children take turns and read a few verses each night in the days leading up to Christmas, or read the entire story on Christmas Eve prior to opening presents.

·Christmas Carols: The malls are filled with songs about Santa, reindeer and chestnuts - fill your home with traditional, religious Christmas carols. Turn on a favorite Christmas CD (my personal favorite is O Night Divine by Cousins in Christ - <http://www.roseofsharonmedia.com>), dim the lights, and snuggle in front of a fire (or candle) with your kiddos - keep CDs in the car for those hectic hours caught in traffic. And most importantly, sing along!!!

·Christmas crafts and activities: For those moments when mom needs some quiet time to wrap, address cards or just unwind, hand your child a Christmas themed coloring picture (with a manger

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scene rather than a wrapped present) and invite her to color a picture for Grandma, your pastor, or a special teacher or friend. A large selection of spiritually related coloring pictures are available at <http://www.christiancoloring.com>

·Go to Church: For many families, attendance at Christmas services is one of the few times all year that they attend a religious service. This year, try visiting Church as frequently as possible prior to the holidays to help your child truly understand the meaning of Christmas as we embrace and celebrate the birth of our Savior. Many churches have beautiful Nativity displays available for viewing - your child will remember his visits with Baby Jesus as a special precursor to the holidays. Please join me and my family in praying for peace in our world as we near Christmas.

The ideas are limitless, but the intention is one we all share - to create special, meaningful memories

for our children as we help them grow in mind and body. Think back to your own childhood and remember those things that stand out in your mind about Christmas. My own family traditions growing up included our family Christmas play, a simple, costumeless rendition of the Nativity, which was performed for family and friends each Christmas Eve. I can't tell you what I received as a present any of those years, but I can recite every line of that play! Treasure your child this season as you cherish the true meaning of Christmas together.

Lisa M. Hendey is a mother of two sons and webmaster of numerous web sites, including <http://www.catholicmom.com> and <http://www.christiancoloring.com>

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### **What Do You Want This Year?**

**By Angie Dixon**

Christmas is all around us, and many people are making up wish lists. Those who aren't doing that are busy setting down their New Year's Resolutions already. But this is a good time to sit down and do some serious introspection.

What do you want from the holidays this year? Do you want to rush around, spend a lot of money you don't have, and yell at the kids for not playing with all twenty of the toys they asked for—at the same time? Is that really how you want to spend Christmas?

We talk about "Christmas spirit," and mostly we mean giving. Giving of ourselves, giving to people who need it. That's great, that's Christmas spirit.

But I think there's another aspect to "Christmas spirit." I think it's spiritual. And don't close your screen on me because I said spiritual. I didn't say religious, because it's not. I think it comes from our souls.

I think deep down, each of us has a spirit that wants to be expressed. And I think at Christmas, when

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we're naturally thinking of others, that spirit is more easily expressed. I think if you want to, you can have a spiritual Christmas. You can feel loving, caring, generous. You can feel like a kid at Christmas, just by opening up to your spirit.

So what do you want this year?

Angie Dixon helps small business owners get their acts together. She is a personal development coach specializing in helping people integrate their home and work lives so they feel less stretched and more balanced. Get her FREE EBOOK on balance at

. For questions or

to discover how coaching can change your life, contact Angie at

.

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What Do You Want This Year?

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What Do You Want for Christmas?

Christmas Tree Ornament Tips

Help Your Child Succeed In School

Christmas Happy Package

The Alphabet of Birds

Bread And Biscuit Baker's And Sugar-Boiler's Assistant

The Art of Kissing



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