



Treasuring Christ in Our Traditions

Building Family Traditions By Julie Woodall

Definition of family traditions:

"Those little rituals passed down from generation to generation that help shape your family by creating a sense of unity, warmth, and closeness."

Benefits of family traditions:

1. Discipleship tool. (Ps. 78:6,7 and Deut. 6:6,7)
2. Contributes to the spiritual foundation of your home (Prov. 24:3,4)
3. Family traditions help to establish continuity and closeness in a family. They can focus on holidays, rites of passage, or make ordinary days special.
4. Gives parents and children a chance to share connection time that has special meaning within the family. Helps create camaraderie among siblings and gives children something to look forward to!
5. Opportunity to build memories as a family! (John 10:10) Enjoy the life God has given you and the family He has blessed you with! Have fun!
6. Prepares your heart to be others-focused during an occasion when the temptation may exist to be self-focused. (Luke 10:27)

Holiday Tradition Ideas:

Thanksgiving:

Verses to work on or memorize:

- Ps. 106:1 "Praise the Lord! Oh give thanks to the Lord for He is good; for His loving-kindness is everlasting"
- Ps. 103- make your own psalm as a family
- Ps. 100:4,5 "Enter His gates with Thanksgiving..."
- Ps. 92:1 "It is good to give thanks to the Lord."
- I Thes. 5:18 "In everything give thanks"

Ideas:

- Have a thankfulness tree/turkey
- Thankfulness jar/box
- Write thank you notes to neighbors and deliver with a treat
- Have kids dress up as pilgrims/Indians on Thanksgiving
- Kernels of thanks at Thanksgiving meal
- Autograph table cloth
- Kids tablecloth - have them write/color what they're thankful for
- Place cards with finger print turkeys
- Read Bible stories about people who were thankful

- The 10 lepers that Jesus and only one returned to say thank you (Luke 17:11-19)
- Mary Magdalene anointing Jesus feet oil (Luke 7:39-50)
- Make a cross cake (stress thankfulness for Jesus sacrifice so that we may have eternal life available through His blood!)
- Fall hike
- 20 questions "I'm thankful for..."
- Activity jar
- Day after Thanksgiving shopping
- Noodle making day (for Linda Evans ☺)
- Volunteer at a local shelter/mission/soup kitchen
- Bring a bag of groceries to a family in need
- Have people over for Thanksgiving who are alone or don't have family nearby.

Your ideas:

Christmas:

Verses to memorize or focus on as family:

- Luke 2
- Isaiah 9:6

Ideas:

- Bake cookies/candy to bring to neighbors with an invite to Christmas program
- Be part of an outreach that your church has
- Christmas for Everyone: budget for each child to pick out gifts for a child their age and gender. Go shopping as a family
- Have a birthday party for Jesus
- Make worshiping in church a priority
- Go caroling as a family to visit older folks
- Christmas Eve give a family gift (video or game) to be played as a family
- Sleep by the tree Christmas Eve
- Give each child a meaningful ornament symbolic of that year and each Christmas let them put up their ornaments
- Memorize Luke 2 as a family
- Wordless Wreath
- Let kids play with the Nativity
- Adornments
- Samaritan's Purse
- Re-enact the Nativity
- Keep a puzzle on a card table and work on it throughout the holidays
- Pray for people who sent Christmas cards
- "gift of time"-ex. Child can vacuum/dad take son fishing...hang envelopes on the tree
- Present of Praise - Place a bookmark in the Bible where the Christmas story begins (Luke 2). Give each member of the family a pencil or crayon and a sheet of paper. Each write or color a letter of praise and thanksgiving. Place letters with

- the Bible in a box and wrap as a Christmas present and open it on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day
- Advent calendar

Your ideas:

Birthday:

Verses:

- Ps. 139
- Jeremiah 29:11
- 2 Cor. 5:14,15

Ideas:

- Make the birthday party about celebrating life and the family and friendships God has blessed the birthday child with
- Child chooses the menu for the day
- Hang streamers on their door after they've gone to bed
- Have one gift ready for them at their place at the breakfast table
- Annual birthday interview
- Have them think about the people God has blessed them with in their life and have them think of one way to serve or thank them
- Double Daddy Daughter Date
- Have every family member go around the dinner table and tell the birthday boy or girl why they thank God for them.
- Read Ps. 139 to the child before bed and talk about God's great plan for their life. Point child to Jesus!

Your ideas:

Tips for implementing family traditions

Evaluate what you are doing now:

1. Have the freedom to stop some traditions that aren't working or aren't really fulfilling your purpose.
2. Can you be more intentional about what you are already doing?
3. Choose just a few things and do them well and have fun!

Closing: By building family traditions you are using windows of opportunity to creatively point your children and others to Christ. May God bring you great joy as you intentionally seek to love Him and others while making great memories along the way 😊