



10 Ways to Prepare for the Holiday Season



Here it comes, right on cue! It's November already, and the Christmas commercials have started appearing on television, stores are all decked with holly, and your kids are probably already begging for new "stuff" under the Christmas tree.

For many of us, the holiday season is a time that is anticipated with both joy and anxiety. Sure, we love the celebrations, the family traditions, and we cherish the memories of holidays gone by; but along with them, we add the stresses of preparation, expectations and the fear of letdowns, or family squabbles that we have experienced in the past. In a real sense, many of us are looking straight into the face of the holi-daze, not the holidays. With this in mind, here are 10 tips that can help restore some sanity to your family, and hopefully make for an enjoyable, meaningful holiday season.

1. Set manageable expectations.

Spend some time now setting realistic and manageable expectations for your holiday season. So, be realistic and upfront about what your family can do. Make a list of what is possible and prioritize your most important events and activities for you and your family. Then, pace yourself. Organize your time. Keep in mind that it's the holiday "season" (not "day") and spread out your activities to lessen stress and increase enjoyment.

2. Remember the holiday season does not eliminate sadness or loneliness.

Old problems and difficulties continue, and new ones can arise

during the holiday season. And for some, the holiday season evokes painful memories from recent events or the loss of loved ones. Give room for yourself and your family to experience and express these feelings. But try not to let them become a consuming focus. Make an effort to work through present challenges and conflicts.

3. Acknowledge the past but look toward the future.

Life brings changes. Each season of life is different. Determine to enjoy this holiday season for what it is. Acknowledging the past, whether it was good or bad, is appropriate. But, if you find that this year has been a rough one and you don't anticipate having the best holiday season ever, try not to set yourself up for disappointment by comparing today with the "good old days." Take advantage of the joys the present holiday season has to offer.

4. Develop and encourage a life of gratitude.

Gratitude is an attribute that transcends circumstances. No matter what your circumstances, I believe there is reason to be thankful in them. Your circumstances may never change, but your attitude toward them can change . . . and this can make all the difference. For Christians, giving thanks should be an everyday occurrence, and not just something we do on Thanksgiving Day. We have a special reason to adopt the attitude of gratitude, because we know that whatever comes, our times are in God's hands. It was Jesus who said in effect, "So don't be anxious about tomorrow. God will take care of your tomorrow, too." (See Matthew 6:34.)

If you want to help your kids develop an attitude of gratitude, I encourage you to try an experiment that might radically influence your family, and it's a great exercise in the days leading up to Thanksgiving or Christmas for that matter. It's called "Thank Therapy." Thank Therapy is simply focusing on the many things in your life for which you can be thankful. Get started by having each family member create individual lists of "Twenty Reasons Why I'm Thankful." Share your lists as a family on Thanksgiving or Christmas Day.

5. Do something for someone else.

One of the ways we can demonstrate that we are grateful to God for His many blessings is to help others. Even if this has been a difficult year for you and your family, helping others will help you too, as your focus will move from your own circumstances into serving others. There are always people who can use a helping hand. So, enrich this holiday season for your family by getting involved in serving others.

6. Enjoy activities that are cheap or free.

There are many good holiday-related activities that will add to your

family's enjoyment that are either free or low-cost such as driving around to look at Christmas decorations, decorating your home together as a family, baking Christmas cookies, going window-shopping, or playing in the snow (or on the beach if you live in Southern California like me).

7. Enjoy a family holiday tradition.

Traditions provide opportunities to keep your family's legacy going. They create meaningful memories. So from the silly to the sentimental, if your family has established Thanksgiving and Christmas traditions, be sure to include them in your holiday activity plans if possible.

8. Try something new.

Traditions are great, but sometimes families find themselves in a rut, celebrating the holidays in exactly the same fashion, year after year. This can result in your family experiencing a holiday funk. Think about finding a new way to celebrate the holiday season this year. You may just create a new tradition that will keep going for generations!

9. Spend money responsibly.

Thanks to our culture and the well-thought out marketing strategies by retailers, the holiday season always brings with it a big temptation to spend lots of money, especially when it comes to purchasing Christmas presents for your family. Don't be afraid to say no to this temptation. The following is simple but good advice for every family: Don't spend beyond your means and don't rack up significant credit card debt! While your family may be thrilled by expensive gifts on Christmas Day, don't forget that come springtime, your kids may have laid aside or forgotten those gifts, even while you're struggling to make the payments. Decide now to be financially responsible this holiday season!

10. Carve out some time for yourself!

Don't take on all of the responsibilities of your family's holiday celebrations by yourself. Share the load. For example, assign responsibilities to your family members for preparation and clean-up of your Thanksgiving and Christmas meals. Create some space during the holidays for you to recharge your own batteries.

theparentcue.org - Part of the Orange Curriculum Dr. Jim Burns

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Advent Event

Charlie Brown Christmas

December 4

6-7:30pm

Dinner, Games, Crafts

Families Welcome!

Youth



Sunday Night Youth

Dec. 1 Bonhoeffer Movie

St Joe at 3:30pm

Movie 4:15pm

Discussion & Dinner

Return 8pm

RSVP to Teah

December 15

5-7 pm

Youth Christmas Party

Enter at Door F

Families



Performances:

Sun Dec 8 10am

St. Joe at the Y

Sun Dec 15 9am

St. Joe UMC

BTW NERF BATTLE

Beyond the Walls
Youth Croup Event

December 29 5-7pm
Dinner Provided

Please bring a Nerf if you have one!

All Church Nerf Battle

CHRISTMAS MOVIE
Pajama Party

DECEMBER 22 | 5-8P | FREE DINNER
JACKSON R LEHMAN YMCA

RSVP REQUIRED: STJOEMIN.COM/EVENTS

A cooperative event by:




ST. JOE UMC
It's Christmas Time!
6004 REED ROAD

CHRISTMAS CANTATA 12/8 9a and 11a	JINGLE JAM 12/15 9a	NEW MILLENNIUM JAZZ BAND 12/15 3p	COMBINED SERVICE 12/29 10a
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Christmas Eve Services | 12/24 | 7p, 11p



St. Joe UMC:
Sunday School 9 am & 11am
Preschool 2nd & 4th Sun. 9a
St. Joe @ the YMCA:
Breakout 10 am

Spend
Christmas With St. Joe @ Y
5680 YMCA PARK DR W

JINGLE JAM 12/8 10a	CHRISTMAS CAROLS 12/19 6:30p	CHRISTMAS MOVIE PJ PARTY 12/22 5p
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Christmas Eve Service
12/24 | 4p

Where Everyone Belongs, YOU are Celebrated & God's Love Makes Us Fearless!

GET INSPIRED



YOUTH RETREAT 2024

A whole weekend of friends, fun, food and faith. We watched "The Princess Bride" discussed finding, loving and living with our "twu lub". We decorated very large swords and had a great time having duels all weekend. We grew closer as a youth and laughed a lot during karaoke, night time frisbee and "is it poison" whipped cream eating contest. A weekend to remember!



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