

Simple Child-Centered Holiday Ideas

By Deb Michaels

Many holidays involve the SHARING OF LIGHT.

Make a holiday candle holder with your child, or roll beeswax candles together.

Many holidays involve ANTICIPATION of the day.

Make a Counting Goblet or start a calendar or a paper chain counting tradition.

Do your counting at the same time of day with your child every day until the holiday.

Many holidays involve MUSIC.

Play music, dance in your pajamas, attend a concert, visit a music store and try out instruments with your child. Or make simple shakers or drums with your child.

Many holidays involve GAMES.

What do you play during the holidays? Some possibilities are dreidel, hide and seek, putting together a big puzzle as a family over several days, and games from your childhood.

Many holidays include SURPRISES.

With your child, make surprises/treats/artwork and a gratitude note for neighbors, friends and community helpers – and deliver them together. What simple or silly surprises can you plan for your child's delight? Think creative, not consumptive!

Many holidays include FEASTING.

Have your child make place cards, place mats from artwork, a centerpiece or nature arrangement, or a banner decoration. What food preparation can your child help with? Ideas might include: finger foods, a fruit salad, fancy ice cubes, a fruit punch or herbal tea medley, or making spreads for breads or crackers. Depending on your children's ages, they can help with washing, chopping, stirring or arranging food on platters. Setting a table with a tablecloth and decorations makes a feast 'special'.

Many holidays include CHARITY.

What activities can your child see and participate in that integrate empathy and sharing with others? Ideas include filing food boxes; leaving gifts at gift-giving trees; calling shelters to solicit ideas and needs; making decorations for nursing homes, hospitals or fire stations; giving food or toys to humane societies (stay to play with the animals!); or sharing in a clothing drive.

Many holidays include REFLECTION.

Make a time to gather thoughts and consider meaning and Spirit. Make time to do this with your children through reading, talks, walks and quiet awe.

Many holidays include RECONNECTION WITH NATURE.

Leave your house, your car and the malls, and get outdoors with your child (in *any* weather) to notice seasonal changes and beauty. Bring some of that beauty indoors in baskets for window decorations or by making simple mobiles with your 'found' treasures.