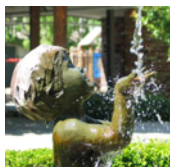
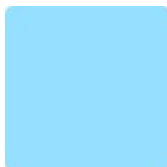
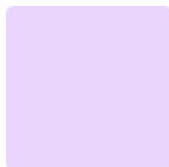




Pearls for Parents

FRC Bi-weekly Newsletter
December 11, 2009



Parenting Pearl #1: *Something to think about*

"And the Grinch, with his Grinch-feet ice cold in the snow, stood puzzling and puzzling, how could it be so? It came without ribbons. It came without tags. It came without packages, boxes and bags. And he puzzled and puzzled 'till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more."

-Dr. Seuss

The holiday season is upon us! However it is celebrated, most people would agree that the frenzied activity common during this time of year can bring added stress to our lives. We get caught up in the excitement of decorating, throwing parties, baking goodies, and shopping. These activities can be fun and important to our family but we are often stretched to our limits, physically, emotionally, and financially. Somehow the things we treasure most about Christmas get lost in the chaos.

Even though it is a busy time of year, don't forget to concentrate on what is important. The holiday season is a perfect opportunity to spend time as a family and celebrate traditions that strengthen family bonds. Traditions are important because they build feelings of closeness, belonging, and connection between individuals and generations. Together families can create memorable moments during the holidays that last longer than the much-desired toy.

Find a new appreciation for the holidays and remember that giving your family "presence" is more valuable than any other gift. Whether you are celebrating old family traditions or making new ones, you will be creating memories that will last a lifetime. Your kids will look forward to the holiday season, not only for the presents but, like the Grinch realized, because it "means a little bit more." Sure kids love the yummy treats and the stacks of presents, but what they will remember and treasure most about the holidays are the traditions you celebrate as a family.

(Tip source: [The Siblings' Busy Book](#) by Lisa Hanson and Heather Kempskie)

Parenting Pearl #2: *Something to do*

Creating Family Traditions During the Holiday Season

Countdown to Christmas: Children love counting down the days to Christmas. Instead of the traditional advent calendar, try creating your own calendar and in each day mark down a special activity to do as a family. You can also do this with a Christmas paper chain and write an activity on each link. Ideas for activities: make popcorn and watch a Christmas video, stamp and mail your holiday cards, read a Christmas story by the fire, bake and decorate cookies, make gift wrap together, or sing carols by the tree. Make it fun and easy for your family to do. The point is not how elaborate or complicated the activity, but that your family gets to do something special together. *(tip source: [Preschoolers' Busy Book](#) by Trish Kuffner)*

Handmade Holidays: Make it a yearly tradition to make homemade gifts with your children. This can help your children get into the spirit of giving and allows them to give gifts from the heart instead of the wallet. Children also take pride in gifts that they can make with their own hands. For ideas on homemade gifts, check out the "Website" section.

Christmas Lights Drive: Set aside a night to take a family drive through the neighborhood to look at Christmas lights. Make it a special event and wear your pajamas, listen to Christmas music, and vote on your favorite lights.

Santa Letter: Many families enjoy leaving Santa cookies and a note on Christmas Eve. Consider writing your children replies from Santa. You can tell a story of Santa's journey or commend each child for his or her good behavior during the year. Your children will look forward to hearing from Santa even after they've grown up. If you want to be inspired, read [Letters from Father Christmas](#) by J.R.R. Tolkien. The book is a collection of letters Tolkien sent his children from Father Christmas in response to their Christmas letters. He wrote tales from the North Pole and even included illustrations.

Reindeer Food: Have some fun with your children and make food for Santa's reindeers. Mix oatmeal (treat for the reindeers) and glitter (reflection for the moon so that Santa can see your house) together and sprinkle outside your house. You can also go outside with your kids and throw sugar cubes on the roof so that the reindeers have something to eat while they wait for Santa to deliver the presents. (tip source: www.babycenter.com)

Christmas Book Collection: Collect Christmas books and as a family, read one Christmas story a night during the month of December. Read by the fire or in front of the Christmas tree. Older children can take turns reading the Christmas stories as well. For book ideas, check out the "Reading" section.

Annual Ornament: Ornaments can be more than decorations; they can also be family memories. As a family outing, go ornament shopping. Chose an ornament that is significant for the family. The ornament can represent a specific event or memorialize the whole year. You can also choose a specific ornament for each child that signifies something special the child did during the year. Write the year and your child's name on the ornament and your children can collect special memories over the years.

Even though these ideas are for the Christmas holiday, you can create special traditions for any holiday that your family will cherish for a long time.

Staff Spotlight



Dee Gray

4's, 3's, and 2's Teacher

I've been working at the Children's Center for:
7 years

My Fun Fact:
My favorite English pastime is "Hashing"

My Favorite Children's Book:
The Mitten
by Jan Brett



Dates to Remember

Thursday Dec 17, 2009
Christmas Performances:
10am and 2pm

Reading Corner

Here are some suggestions of wonderful stories with beautiful illustrations to add to your Christmas Book Collection:



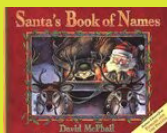
Mr. Willowby's Christmas Tree
by Robert Barry

A delightful tale about sharing and a too-big Christmas tree that gets trimmed again and again and passed on to others.



The Year of the Perfect Christmas Tree
by Gloria Houston

An inspiring story about Christmas and tradition in the Appalachian mountains.



Santa's Book of Names
by David McPhail

A story about a young boy who struggles with reading and ends up helping Santa.



The Little Fir Tree
by Margaret Wise Brown

A touching tale of love and hope about a young boy and a lonely tree.



Night Tree
by Eve Bunting

A story about a family's tradition of decorating an outdoor Christmas tree with edible ornaments for the animals to enjoy.

Other Fun Christmas Stories:

Friday Dec 18, 2009

Christmas Performances:
10am and 2pm

Dec 21, 09- Jan 4, 2010

School Closed: Christmas Break

Tuesday Jan 5, 2010

School resumes

[Online School Calendar](#)

[Dear Santa Claus](#) by Alan Durant

[The Jolly Christmas Postman](#) by Janet and Allen
Ahlberg

[How Murray Saved Christmas](#) by Mike Reiss

Websites to Check Out

Enjoy making presents with your kids! Click on the following links for homemade gift ideas:

[List of homemade gifts from FamilyFun](#): including a list of easy gifts kids can make

[Homemade gifts that other parents recommend](#)

[Homemade gift ideas for different ages](#)

<http://www.elfontheshelf.com/>

A fun Christmas tradition for families!

www.bybaby.com

Another idea for special gifts- two Children's Center mommies own this local company and and make these cute products!

Words to Inspire

"The best of all gifts around any
Christmas tree: the presence of a
happy family all wrapped up in each
other."

-Burton Hillis



This email was sent to you by:

The Family Resource Center

Children's Center Preschool at Los Altos United Methodist Church
655 Magdalena Ave, Los Altos, CA 94024 www.childrenscenterpreschool.org

[Archives](#): link to past newsletters