



SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCE PROJECT

e-newsletter

Things to Think About!



By Brandan Atkin

For more ideas on how to make Christmas special, visit any of the following:

http://www.ehow.com/how_2116643_christmas-more-meaningful.html

<http://www.rd.com/content/how-to-make-christmas-happy-and-hassle-free/>

<http://www.frugallyhappy.com/9-ways-to-enjoy-christmas-with-your-kids-without-spending-a-dollar/>

If there is anything that is not discussed in our newsletters and you would like to see it discussed, or you would like to be added to our newsletter mailing list, please contact us at

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Keeping Christmas

By Linda Jorgensen

We have always wanted our children to be able to enjoy all the sights and sounds of Christmas, including the excitement of Santa coming Christmas morning. Medical bills put a severe strain on our everyday budget and holiday spending was almost impossible. Frantically busy holidays and run-away spending were making us miserable. Learning how to enjoy the holidays without going deep into debt or collapsing into exhausted heaps the day after New Year was a family necessity.

Take Care of Yourself

The Holidays are much more fun if you stay healthy. Get your flu shot early. Eat properly. Wash your hands frequently. Stick to your exercise routine. Take warm baths. Get plenty of sleep and reserve some quiet time. You'll feel better and so will everyone else around you.

Set Priorities and Budget Your Time

Decide early on what it is that you would like your family to do during the holiday season. A Norman Rockwell Christmas may be your ideal but it isn't always realistic. Pull out your main calendar and, with your family's help, list obligations and favorite family activities for the month, starting with the most important activities first. Remain flexible and keep in mind you may need to cancel or postpone a few. If you spend time attending weekly rehabilitation sessions talk with your child's specialists about cutting back on therapy visits during the holidays. Sometimes a break is a good thing. Don't forget to schedule some at-home time, too. If too many things are scheduled they become tasks. You don't have to do everything. Plan nights for Christmas movies and popcorn or just plain quiet time. Think of it as an evening for the family to collectively recharge their batteries.



Tame the Spending Monster

Christmas spending is a real challenge. How to purchase at least a few gifts and not over spend using costly credit cards is the real problem. The solution is rather simple. Set up a special savings fund at your bank designated only for Holiday spending.

Now is the time to begin saving for next year's holiday season. Saving \$10.00 a week will give you \$520.00 in Christmas cash if you begin your saving program the first week in December. Call your bank now and see what holiday saving services they have to offer.

Make a specific gift list. Decide what to spend before you spend it. Rely on cash, not credit. Every family is unique so set limits that work for you. Many families give each child 3 small gifts, one for each of the 3 gifts of the Magi. Others operate on the old adage, "Something they want, something they need, something to wear and something to read". Some families make it even simpler. Santa brings one gift and fills a stocking for each family member. The rest of the money goes into a family pool to be divided up for gift giving to each other. Finding meaningful gifts for each other is the order of the day.

Be Creative

Not all gifts need to be bought. As Winnie the Pooh always says, "Think, think, think". Using supplies found at home use your imagination and make your own gifts. The sky is the limit! Kids could make simple gifts of ornaments, cookies, illustrate a family calendar with their own drawings, or make bookmarks, etc.

Parents could make coupon books good for a trip to the children's museum, sleigh riding, a "No Chores Day" when Mom or Dad does the child's chores for the day, a trip to the park complete with a peanut butter and jelly picnic, etc. Children will remember time spent together much longer than the toys they receive. Be sure to take pictures of your adventures and put them in an inexpensive scrapbook for your child. The list is endless.

Build Traditions

We have many activities that we enjoy every Christmas. Most are free. Attend the annual Christmas Parade in your city, view store window displays, see the lights in your town square or read Christmas stories out loud to each other at bedtime. Have a family Christmas Movie Marathon (complete with popcorn and hot cocoa) or dress in your warmest PJs, grab more popcorn, a warm blanket, pile the family into the car and go jingle jaunting one evening after dark. Family members can vote for the best holiday light display. Whatever you do, make it fun.

By planning ahead, managing spending, being creative and enjoying time together as a family the holidays will become weeks of enjoyment and not merely another budget buster.



**We hope you all have a wonderful
Holiday Season.
Merry Christmas!
Linda and the SNRP Technical Support
Team**