



Holiday customs embody the joy of the season

WHEN YOU hear the words "holiday tradition," what comes to mind? Stuffing turkey? The lighting of menorah candles?

"Traditions are formed through meaningful repetition," says Parents magazine. "Even small traditions can take on meaning if they're linked to feelings of joy."

Here are a few suggestions for traditions to enhance your holidays. Each has a history that makes it meaningful.

For this one, the rule is "The more the merrier!" Invite friends to join

your family after dinner one evening before the Christmas Stroll through your neighborhood, stopping to sing "Silent Night," "Deck The Halls," "Joy to the World," etc. Afterward, enjoy warm cider and Christmas cookies.

TOAST EACH OTHER with "Wassail!" This Anglo-Saxon term means "be well." The correct response is "Drinc-heil," which means "drink well." In medieval England during the holiday season, the poor would go from door to door, begging (in rhyme) for cups of heated ale from the wassail bowls of the wealthy. In time, wassailing also came to mean caroling.

Have your children write letters to St. Nicholas, listing the toys they

CHRISTMAS IQ

(Careful! These are as tricky as a Grinch.)



Questions:

1. What is the gift of the fourth day of Christmas?
2. What is Scrooge's last name?
3. What Christmas tradition do we owe to the Pilgrims?
4. Who began as a 1939 Montgomery Ward Company promotion?
5. What does the "X" in "Xmas" stand for?

Answers:

1. Colly birds (a kind of crow). No point for "calling" birds!
2. Scrooge is Scrooge's last name. His first name is Ebenezer.
3. None. Because of its pagan traditions, celebrating Christmas was outlawed in early Colonial America.
4. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer
5. The Greek letter Chi for the first letter in "Christos," according to Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary

Score:

- 1-2 right, resident of Whoville
3-5 right, Grinch-slayer

From our home

We've collected some family traditions that may make the holidays come alive for you and your loved ones:

- Tie tiny wrapped gifts or candles together to make Advent banners for the children. Beginning Dec. 1, they open one each day until Christmas Eve.
- If you have a creche, put the wise men in corners of the room. Move them closer to the manger as Christmas approaches.
- On Christmas Eve, have the youngest member of your family place the baby Jesus in the manger.
- Mount your greeting cards on a wall, forming a tree-shaped pyramid.
- Cut snowflakes out of white tissue paper. Place them in windows with double-stick transparent tape.
- Play tapes or records of Christmas carols while you and your family decorate the tree. Burn pine-scented candles.
- Put crystals that make colored flames in your fireplace (available at hardware stores).
- Have a special red tablecloth you use only during the holidays.
- On Christmas afternoon, have friends and family put together a giant jigsaw puzzle.
- Avoid the post-Christmas let-down by having a Boxing Day brunch on Dec. 26 (This British holiday is named for the custom of presenting gift boxes to service workers).

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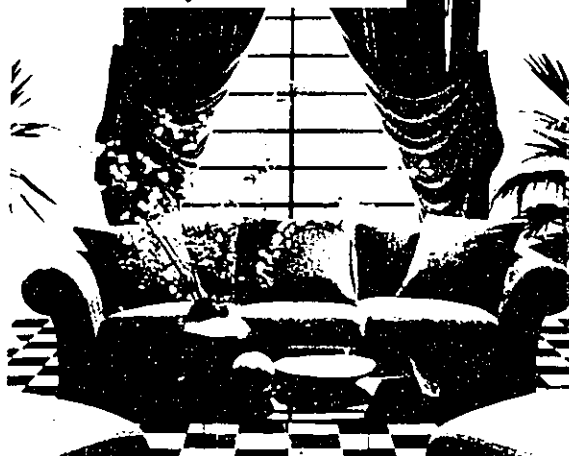


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