



# Our Best HOMESCHOOL IDEAS for the HOLIDAYS



**Homeschool Families Share  
Favorite Holiday Activities  
*plus*  
Ideas for Having the Best  
Holidays Ever!**

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*Feel free to pass this ebook along to friends as long as the contents have not been altered in any way!*

We surveyed **over 800 homeschool families** and asked them to share their favorite holiday activities and ideas for helping YOU have the best holiday season ever! This little collection is a selection of some of their **best** answers and advice. Take your time to read through these, learn and enjoy... and have a wonderful Holiday Season!

*Note: The opinions and suggestions offered in this ebook are those of our survey respondents, and are not necessarily those of the publisher. Glean!*



## **Part One: Homeschool Families Share "Our Favorite Holiday Activities"**

We start Thanksgiving with making a "Thankful wreath" to hang up. It's decorated with different colored leaves and in the center we write what we are most thankful for this year. We also love making cookies for the holidays from different countries. We go in search of different recipes that mean different things in other cultures. Some we have found that we've used again and again.

*We listen to some classical music and read about the composers we are listening to. Use oil lamps instead of the normal household lights. Gives more of a comfort, calm feeling. Listen to stories about the Pilgrims, turkeys, Indians, and most important the story of Jesus from the Bible. Anything that gets us in touch with our purpose here on earth. Also, we go on hikes and gather various items, tree branches, oak leaves, feathers, etc and then make crafts out of them.*

We sing a lot of carols, make and write cards and do lots of baking. We prepare our annual family newsletter which takes a lot of writing and editing by the whole family. We discuss content, each choose articles to write. Everyone gets to edit everyone else's work (including child editing parents writing). Then the finished newsletter needs to be addressed and mailed with covering letters. A huge amount of learning takes place.

*We make a big poster of things we are thankful for. We study the Names of Jesus. We make our own Christmas cards. (think handwriting practice, art class, & outreach all rolled up into one!)*

Studying/re-enacting scenes involving pilgrims, native Americans. Scenes/plays/stories/artwork of the nativity for Christmas.

*Cookie baking is usually the one to get the kids excited. I've invited a friend of our boys over to decorate cookies. I then let him take home his decorated cookies on a Christmas themed tray to keep.*

We get books, books on tape and video or DVDs on Thanksgiving. We will read these during the quiet times of the day or listen during the working hours of preparing meals, cleaning or working with our hands as we make gifts for the family for secret Christmas gifts.

*I let the kids write their own "brag paragraphs" to put in the Christmas letter. They remember stuff that I had totally forgotten. It is also nice to see what was important to them the last year. Everyone likes the personal touch of hearing from the kids in their own words.*

HOME ECONOMICS: Making gifts for others like gifts in a jar, making cookies, trying new recipes. ART/CRAFTS: Making scripture verses to go into nice picture frames. Making cinnamon smelling ornaments. BIBLE TIME: Showing them from the bible how we are to be thankful and content with what we have because God will never leave us nor forsake us. And how we give of ourselves to others to tell them of the death, burial, and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

*We have a box with 25 drawers that are numbered with scripture in them and a piece of candy or toy. They read a piece of the story of Jesus's birth and get the "gift" toy/candy everyday till Christmas.*

For Thanksgiving: We make handmade placemats, look for neat decorating ideas online, and make black hats and Indian headbands. We read about the history of the holiday. For Christmas: Make salt dough ornaments, handmade cards, other ornaments, make wreaths. We try not to start the season early like the stores! We do a little decorating each Sunday during Advent, so after 4 Sundays, the house has the winter, and eventually Christmas, decorations up. I don't have the energy to put all up on Christmas Eve. We make cookies to share with those who may not be able to bake and for the neighbors. All of this can be considered Art, Science, Religion, and P.E.--hiking for the evergreens in our woods.



*Every year we make Christmas ornaments for the tree. These are usually the only ornaments on the tree that year. Each child has their own Christmas ornament box, where we then store the ornaments they have made after the holidays are over. When they move out and are on their own, they then have a special collection of ornaments from throughout their lives of their very own. Some of the ones we have made in the past include paper piecing, applesauce and cinnamon, salt dough, beaded, buttons, paper pinwheels, vellum stained-glass looking ornaments and many more. We also enjoy making handmade and homemade gifts for friends and family. From knitting to jar gifts to canning, the children love participating in the creation of a homespun gift from the heart.*

Our hands-down favorite has been our nightly reading of one of Arnold Ytreeide's Advent books (Jotham's Journey, Bartholomew's Passage, Tabitha's Travels). We cycle through the series by reading a different title each year. We read lots of related literature and poetry, do related crafts and cooking projects, listen to related audios (music and stories), and watch related videos. Some things we do each year while others are new.

*Oct. - local Pumpkin Patch activities for kids Oct. - Autumn Festivals, Carnivals, & County Fairs at local churches Nov. - Thanksgiving at-home crafts, cooking, decorating, reading special books about the 1st Thanksgiving, Pilgrims, Indians, and relevant historical living books, coloring pages and more for several weeks leading into Thanksgiving. If you have any resources available with crats, activities, coloring pages, and stories for elementary kids, then let me know. Dec. - Haven't started doing Advent yet with our family, but we would like to start an Advent calendar, and have a little treat or gift each day, and a story for each day until Christmas.*

We love the Cinnamon Bear and coloring pages and maps! *(Editor's note: In our survey, 64% of our respondents said "The Cinnamon Bear" was their kids' all-time favorite holiday program. See our Holiday collection at <http://www.homeschoolradioshows.com/Christmas2007> for sample programs if you haven't heard this show already.)*



Going to the Corn mazes, the local museum does a nice job of what a Victorian Christmas would look like, making cookies and treats, we also like to play on holiday websites.

*We have a Thanksgiving tree. Each year each person traces their hand and writes what they are thankful for that year. The hands are "leaves" on the tree and they keep getting bigger with the passing years (except for Mom and Dad's). Some day our tree will be really big!*

Inviting people to join us for Thanksgiving dinner that have no family in the area. Inviting friends over for hot cider and singing around the campfire. Making homemade Christmas ornaments together. Sponsoring a less fortunate family. Driving around and looking at the Christmas lights. Christmas Craft Day with our support group.

*Reading from "Of Plymouth Plantation" and listening to our Homeschool Radio Shows! We do more with Thanksgiving in our homeschool, as our church (made up of almost all homeschooling families) does so much with Christmas. Since we are doing high school now, I don't alter my curriculum too much. We do, as a family, volunteer at an 1890's living history farm, and that's ALWAYS an educational activity! There are holiday events there that we participate in.*

The few weeks before Thanksgiving we focus our Bible time on subjects like rejoicing in the Lord, being thankful, and God's sovereignty and provision. We also do an overview of the Pilgrims again and build models out of card stock that I printed on from activity books. We also normally take a field trip or two to a pumpkin patch, apple farm or corn maze that also have gardens, talk about how God provided plants for us to eat and how he made them grow. Those days are also normally a wonderful day out experiencing God's creation and enjoying friendships he has given us. The Monday after Thanksgiving we start a devotional of some sort to celebrate Advent. Most writing and art activities become things like making and writing cards, making gifts, and making Christmas decorations. We also talk about serving others and what we can give as little gifts to most everyone that has served us in some way in the past year. During this time I pull out all of our books related to Thanksgiving and then to Christmas. We especially have quite a good selection for Christmas now. We read from these books before bed time during these months and often during the day as well.

*Write or Recite Poems, Songs or Quotes for dictation and journaling Watch a few choice "good" movies about Christmas "The Christmas Box or Christmas Shoes" or "The Christmas They Never Forgot" Little House- etc.*

For Thanksgiving: We bring in some discussion about the tremendous faith and reliance on God needed by those believers to begin and continue such an enterprise. We will probably also plan our own menu.

*We do a Thanksgiving devotional for Thanksgiving that starts at the beginning of Nov. We also do a Thanksgiving unit study starting a week before the holiday. For Christmas, we usually shift our reading to holiday themed titles. Also, we incorporate holiday crafts and music in our school days. We also do a Christmas devotional.*

We have done "Names of Jesus" Unit Study, Symbols of Christmas Unit Study--etc...By far my favorite was the Names of Jesus.



*Thanksgiving we get several different books from the Library on Squanto, Pilgrims, Mayflower, etc. Find related craft and art projects to make. Look up old/ traditional recipes and also try a new recipe or two (cooking). Several homeschool support groups have a pilgrim day. Christmas we enjoy weekly advent activities on Sundays and we also gather biblical Christmas books from the library & Christian book stores. Cooking, crafts, art, singing, play acting, etc. Bake cookies for the neighbors and go visit them.*

We always enjoy Thanksgiving dinner table discussions of what we are each thankful for. As far as homeschooling we usually get books on Thanksgiving or good clean videos to give detail to why we celebrate Thanksgiving. Also, we try to downplay the getting of gifts each year and have read and reread the story of Christmas.

*I really enjoyed our "blessing tree." I used brown craft paper to cut out the trunk and branches of a tree and taped it to the wall in the dining room. I then used construction paper in various fall colors to cut out different shaped leaves. Then, each time we thought of a blessing we enjoy (family, friends, God's forgiveness, a dishwasher, our gifts, etc), we would write it down on a leaf and tape it to the branches of the tree. By Thanksgiving day we had a tree that was covered with blessings/leaves!*

Making holiday crafts, holiday baking, planning holiday celebrations, reading holiday-themed books we do a lot of arts and crafts to give away as gifts. we decorate wooden ornaments, needlepoint, and of course bake cookies by the dozen. All of this while listening to appropriate Christmas music, stories, and poems.

*We make peanut butter pine cones to feed the birds (this is a traditional thanksgiving day project at our house). If we have invited another family over for a meal that day, we sometimes decorate a gingerbread house while waiting for the turkey. this year we have pressed a lot of leaves and flowers. So we are going to use these to decorate favorite poems and scripture verses.*

It depends on the ages/developmental stages of our children. When they're younger, we like to use late fall as a time to go on nature hikes, apple picking, visit living museums, etc. before the weather gets too cold. Nature centers are great places to go hiking and learn science at the same time, and we love following up our orchard visits with stories of Johnny Appleseed, How to Bake an Apple Pie and See the World, and of course lots of baking! Of course we read every year about Thanksgiving, and we read the biblical account of Christ's birth, and each year the children gain a new and deeper understanding.

*Caroling, plays, & skits – acting out classic Thanksgiving and Christmas stories is great fun for young folk!*





## **Part Two: Homeschool Tips & Advice for Making the Most of YOUR Holidays!**

Don't start decorating for Christmas until after Thanksgiving is over. Otherwise, Thanksgiving will be "drowned" in the Christmas preparations, and won't have much meaning for your young ones.

*Do what is important to you and your family. Don't stress yourself if you can't do it all. I don't think Martha Stewart homeschools! Just enjoy what you can with your family, even if it's just one thing.*

Start off simple, share memories and traditions from your childhood. Ask the "Grands" what they did in their day. You will hear many precious stories!

I think it is important, regardless of your belief system, to have ritual and routine in the year. Kids love it and it gives them a sense of the passing of time. The more rituals you can incorporate into your family routine each year, the better. But only try adding a couple at a time. See how they fit your family and then next year add in a little more. Find special food, songs, activities, stories, even clothes your family would enjoy and do it year after year; because those years fly by quickly and your children will remember those traditions always.

*A whole unit study could be made using the subject of colonial America. You would be teaching history. You could find some of the music of the time and learn about that for music. A sampler could be made for life skills. Math skills would be used by building something of the era. PE could be done by playing games of the time. If the child could make up a story of a fictional family of the time, they would be using language arts.*

Teach math through baking and measuring. Remember that learning cleaning skills is a life skill and needs to be taught as well as academic skills.

*Take time to enjoy the season together. Don't be compulsive about finishing academic subjects to the point that you ignore the opportunities for making memories. Teaching our children to be giving to others at this season is of major importance. Even if they don't have money to buy gifts, they can make gifts, or give of their time. Teach children to really listen to others, especially lonely elderly folks. They can also do yard work or housework to help these folks.*

Definitely get the Homeschool Radio Shows "Great Old Time Holiday Stories for the Family." We got them last year and they were a hit. It really set the mood for the holidays. Never got tired of listening to them. It really brings the past into the here and now.

Also, start making placemats, napkin rings etc., early so you won't be in a rush when Thanksgiving comes around. The children won't be tired either and it will be a joyous occasion when it is time to decorate, not a burden.

*For memorization have each child take a verse in turn. Work on them every day and by the time each child hears their sibling repeat their verses they seem to automatically learn the other children's as well! It also helps to act them out at least with hand motions.*

Think about what you might do now. If you wait until December, you'll never do it. Also, don't plan so many things that you don't finish any of them.



*We use an advent calendar from which we pull out some fun, quick activities ideas that don't require a lot of work, but reminds us of the season. Perhaps one says, "sing a Christmas Carol--all verses!" We may read a story, wrap a gift, make a phone call, or decorate the front door. We spend an hour or so on a Saturday coming up with ideas to put inside our calendar.*

Make your preparations part of your school day instead of in addition to your regular school day.

*I would say to place the formal books and schedule that you have been using completely aside. Please don't worry about feeling like you are "falling behind" or "off schedule." The spirit of the season is about love. This means spending time with your family. This means you must be extra careful at this time of year not to overschedule yourself with outside activities. Why not just take an afternoon and spend it with grandmother (or other family members) over coffee, hot chocolate, and cookies? EVERYONE would enjoy that more than anything else. Why? Because you are giving each other the gift of TIME. This is the greatest give that we can give each other in this world. I know that this is much easier said than done. So, I would say to stop, slow down, and think seriously about the time you spend and how you spend it, especially during this busy holiday season. Remember, PEOPLE are more important than anything. The people in our lives are GOD's GIFTS to us, and we should treat them as such. And, don't forget to keep GOD in your activities...*

Don't homeschool very long into December. Take the entire Thanksgiving week off.

*Use family traditions and stories, or make up your own new ones. Involve the whole family. Make it fun. Ask your children what they would like to do.*

The kids always help with the food prep for Thanksgiving and Christmas, making goodie baskets for neighbors and making our Christmas cards to send to friends and family. It's a good way to incorporate doing things for others while working on measuring skills, art skills and hand eye coordination.

*1. Start small! 2. Choose one or two things that can become a "Family Tradition." 3. Read inspiring "holiday" stories aloud to the family. ( My kids look forward to the extra story on Friday nights.) 4. Choose a "family song" to sing that is associated with that "holiday."*

Make notebook pages on the history of, or all about a holiday. Find great books to read aloud on the holiday.

*A lot of traditional family activities can be geared toward homeschooling with a little added emphasis on the learning aspect of each tradition and activity.*

Make them fun and age appropriate. A fourth grader doesn't want to make a dancing turkey anymore and a first grader doesn't want to find the true meaning of Christmas.

*Take time to share God's love with those around you by doing what God enables you to give even if it is your time to a shut in or an elderly neighbor or babysitting for a young mother. This has been the best way for our children to learn to give of themselves and to give even when we don't have much. Make the whole holiday preparations your home education for the month of December at least.*



Making Christmas cards is language arts/writing. Baking is math and science. Reading great read-alouds focused on the holiday. Memorizing scripture pertaining to the holiday. Making gifts as art. Caroling-music Card making-Art Buying Gifts-Math Baking-HomeEc/Math Christmas in Other Countries-Geography Giving to those less fortunate-Community Service You don't have to take days off over the holiday season in order to get it all done. You just have to incorporate it into your "school" day! Make it fun and they'll never know they are learning and think they are not even doing school.

*The biggest tip I have is one I was given by a fellow homeschooler, and that is to take the entire month of December off of regular homeschooling so you can concentrate on the fun family activities of the holidays without getting overwhelmed by all of the choices. Even if it means extending your regular school year a little, I think you and your children will find it well worth it. Christmas should be a relaxing time of family celebration of the Greatest Gift ever!*

Work ahead of time so that you can take the entire month of December off. Nothing says 'Scrooge' like a grouchy homeschool family flying through the holidays in a frantic hurry!

*It's important to foster the feelings of Thanksgiving year-round -- not just in November. Same with Christmas. If we focus on Christ's birth only in December, then is it any wonder that our children grow up to segment their Christianity instead of living it as a whole.*

tip - relax about santa claus. at least where i live, parents get really wigged out over this. i explain to them that there is no circumstance where a well-meaning adult telling a child that there is no santa ever successfully did that child a favor. i then encourage them in our faith - that, when practiced, our religion is so rich that santa can't help but fade into the background.

Homemade gifts are the high spots of our homeschool lessons. We learn about all kinds of things depending on what type of project we decide upon. For example, we are going to be making Nativity scenes with polymer clay this year. We will learn chemistry by studying how the clay is made and the changes it goes through to harden. Math is used to determine how much of each color clay is needed, and how much money will be spent on each project. History and art when we discuss the artistic style that we used to create the nativity, etc.



*To either find ways to incorporate it into what they are doing - (fractions = baking) or take a short break from some other lessons to do the holiday stuff instead. I don't like to add it on top of everything else - too much stress at this time of year. Try to make less work for yourself, not more. For example - instead of your regular art lesson, let your children make homemade wrapping paper. If they are old enough to handle scissors, let them wrap for you. Grandma and Grandpa (and your child) will long remember a homemade wrapped gift that was not wrapped like you would do it over one that looks like a picture. Let the little things go and enjoy your children in this Blessed Season. And - this is the one time I follow the lead of the public school and take a break. We will be "off school" from a few days before Christmas to a couple of days after New Years.*

Just about any hands-on project that ties a historic event to a holiday will be remembered. Especially if the project can be shared with one or more other families

*It would be a good social studies unit to study other countries by starting with the holidays and how they celebrate them, trying out different foods, etc. (Also a great way to "convert" a picky eater!)*

Make a Mummy and Daddy tape/cd containing a host of material relevant and helpful for each child narrated by parents and personalized for each child. Can include scriptures for memory work, exhortations, songs, stories, love and praise notes, teachings (particularly on character issues), and educational content. Variety of material and vocal quality of M&D (enthusiasm, sincerity, loving, gentle...) are two key points for success. Children will treasure it.

*Make a blessing tree, for thanksgiving. We draw a tree on poster board and everyday we put leaves on it, that we have written what we thankful for.*

Don't try to do a 'regular' schedule & dump holiday studies on top of it. You will stress out yourself, your kids, AND your spouse! (after all, they have to listen to you trying to figure out WHY this isn't working!) Relax & try a more 'unit study' approach. We aren't 'unit study people' but from November 1st through Epiphany, this works the best --- we're still reading, we're still studying history, we're still getting some math & science & grammar ~ BUT ~ we're much more relaxed about it & more able to focus on the season!

*It is a time of giving to others (getting involved with an organization that helps the needy), witnessing about the love of Jesus (caroling at a nursing home), inviting a family over (maybe a family who doesn't have close family around them) to decorate gingerbread houses or holiday cookies.*

Plan early or the time flies by.

*When teaching Special Needs, as I imagine is the case with 'Neurotypical' students, look for and you will find teachable moments. Social Studies/Community Skills: Volunteering is import as it takes the focus off of self and directs energy in the ministry of helping others. Functional Academics (Math & Science) and Self-Care Skills are learned and reinforced in the kitchen. Shopping, measurement, writing, reasoning skills, etc are all necessary to independence. History: Using hands on (we use Unit Studies - In the Hands of a Child) We all learn from history. It gives the special learner a sense of belonging, to family, community, nation. It is important God's truth be a reality in the heart - that we are each uniquely created and important - And God given each and every one of us a ministry.*

Keep a notebook for ideas that occur to you throughout the year. Make a few pages for each holiday and jot down ideas as you run across them on the net or think of them. This can include anything, from craft ideas, to baking, to decorating, and more. You'll be amazed at the number of ideas you come up with, and having them all in a notebook means you don't have to sit and try to come up with something the day before a holiday. What are some of the traditions you remember as a child? What do you want to pass along to your children, and why? Write them down and plan to include them.



*We especially like celebrating the Advent season, complete with candles, hymns and Bible readings; keeps us focused throughout the whole of December.*

Holiday unit studies are a great way to incorporate the Holidays into school. Jewish Holiday studies are very interesting, the life cycle of an evergreen tree can be studied, astronomy can be tied in, cultural studies (how other cultures celebrate), etc.

*Relax and enjoy the season. Make worshiping our Savior the #1 priority throughout the season. Academics can be incorporated into all the aspects of preparing for the celebration of God's love for us. Rather than thinking of lost "school" time during the holidays, think of specialized education as you have the opportunity to teach meaningful eternity-lessons and timeless memories.*

it's the simple things like reading the Christmas story together or making ornaments or decorating the house with paper snowflakes that the children made, that really mean the most. It gives you an opportunity to teach without "teaching".

*I'd say just start small--one favorite book or activity, and enjoy that to the fullest. Then add something else if time allows. We tend to feel we have to go all out on everything we do, and often don't start important things if we can't spend a whole bunch of time on it.*

Also, don't forget about an elderly or disabled neighbor or friend - even a struggling single parent. You'd be surprised how a little remembrance brings such joy. Can you shovel their walk, mow their

yard, trim their bushes, take out their trash, fix an appliance - give of yourself? Giving of yourself means so much more, and we all need to remember this.

*Finish all your workbook type lessons in the morning so you can have the afternoon to work on holiday crafts and curl up on the couch with all the kids to read "A Christmas Carol" or work on holiday handicrafts while listening to Cinnamon Bear or other holiday radio theater/books on tape.*

I would keep my eye on the newspapers and small museum websites. I find that the smaller museums may hold off on activities until the holidays but they may have actors as authors, storytellers, etc. I like to hold off on really heavy duty holiday stuff until close to the holidays so the kids don't get burned out by the time mid Dec rolls around. Plus here in the Northeast, Jan and Feb are colder (and sometimes more boring) than December so having a few ideas "leftover" from the holidays gives us a good pick-me-up when the doldrums hit.



*I think that we have a wonderful opportunity to blend school with History and the Holidays. I start with fall and we talk about the abundant blessings we have in harvest. We look for the needy and give to bless them. We do poetry and talk about the changes in the season. During Thanksgiving we remember all that took place for us to have our freedoms. We take time to realize that God had His hand in everything. It sure helps us be even more thankful. The day after Thanksgiving we start reading the Christmas story from the Bible. We also begin using the Christmas story for our copywork. It's really amazing to see all the really great conversations that evolve from this activity. My children actually look forward to it every year. We also use The Jesse tree which is a type of advent. It's full of scripture. There are so many things to do. Basically it's just taking the time to plan and make some really good memories putting tremendous foundations in your children's lives.*

Pick one major activity (history pocket, lap book, celebrating Advent, whatever) and do only that - don't go crazy trying to do it ALL.

*When my kids were young, too many Christmas-y activities meant that they got over excited and couldn't learn. I found that a balance is needed!*

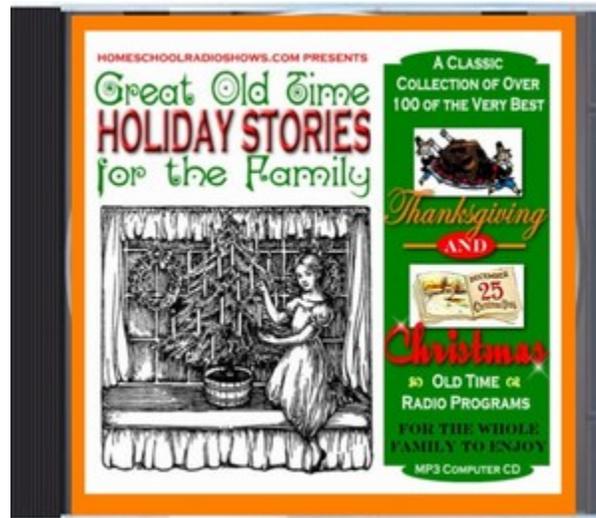
Pray about it first. Ask God to point to those additions or replacements that would be most beneficial in developing your family's faith and growing relationship with Him. Ask for His insight into whether a change in routine would be helpful or harmful for your children at this point and ask this frequently through the year. Then, start where all are comfortable. Maybe you simply add some singing to your day. This may end up being a new habit for the year!! Or take the opportunity to teach hospitality with an open house or by gathering those who have no family near to celebrate with yours. Teach some home ec with Christmas treats or math by figuring how long to cook the turkey. Take walks as a family to experience the changing weather and talk about how we are blessed by the seasons or how we see God's constancy in the seasons. Or just set aside your entire normal routine to dig into how God moved in human history to advance His purposes and we end up with holidays and stories and songs to celebrate this. Enjoy!

We start our school year in January, and we school year round. We got our 180 days completed in late September, so everything we do for the rest of this year is for fun. The week of Thanksgiving, we put the books away and plan fun activities for the rest of the year. This year, we're planning lots of cookies and candies for present platters, as well as a gingerbread house and serving in our church's Living Nativity.

*I think looking at the history of holidays and their celebration is great. Also, trying to better understand the true significance of holidays is also great. Using readings and just discussion has been our best way of understanding holidays.*

Family Readings in the evenings. Take turns reading aloud. Christmas snacks, cuddled up in a special place - a wonderful family (educational!!) activity!!

*KISS -- Keep It Simple Sweetie!! Remember whose birthday is being celebrated (Jesus' birthday--not yours or that of all those around you) and celebrate Him, not ourselves in our gift giving.*



**Be sure and check out our wonderful Holiday Collection to fill your home with great holiday stories and music this year!**

<http://www.homeschoolradioshows.com/Christmas2007>

**"We have all your holiday CDs... and we love them!"**

In November, we listen to Thanksgiving stories all month. I wish there were more Thanksgiving shows! We listen while we make Thanksgiving crafts, while we do art, while the children are building with blocks, spool knitting or sewing, etc. We listen while we eat lunch too; we don't want to miss out on hearing a single great Thanksgiving show!

The day after Thanksgiving, we listen to Christmas stories while we put up the Christmas tree and decorate it. And we listen every day in December, just like in November. We have a Playmobile nativity set, and my daughter loves to play with it and act out the story of Jesus' birth, while listening to the shows about it.

And of course, who can forget The Cinnamon Bear! We listen to an episode each night before bed. We have done this every year since we got the CD. We love it so much we have never ever gotten to

Jonathan Thomas and his Christmas on the Moon. Each year, it's a hard choice, but the children both end up voting for The Cinnamon Bear. This year, we are all determined to listen to both of them! We don't know if we're going to hear one episode a night of each, or if we're going to hear two episodes a night of one, then when it's finished do the same with the other. Or maybe we'll listen to one show during the day, and one at night. Whatever we end up doing, we've decided that this year we will hear both shows!

My son (9) uses the holiday CDs all year! He loves Burns and Allen, and when he has some free time, he often gets a holiday CD and listens to all the Burns and Allen shows. I think he may have them all memorized. <g>

I must confess that sometimes I listen without the children. I like to listen while I'm working in the kitchen, wrapping gifts, or just sitting still with a cup of tea. I especially love listening while I am sewing. I usually end up with company before I'm through; once they discover that I am listening it doesn't take long before they join me.

To tell you the truth, I don't think that any of us can imagine the holidays without these CDs. They have become an integral part of our family holiday observances just as surely as turkey and pumpkin pie. The first question is, who is going to be the first one to grab a holiday CD on November 1st? And the next question is, can we wait that long?

I think these collections are just wonderful. Not only do they help us remember the true spirit of the holidays, then take us back to a time when America was a nation that worshiped God, and when families were the cornerstone of our society. I think they inspire us to keep that spirit alive in our own families. Thank you for offering these great holiday collections." -- Kelly



"There were many delights as we listened to your Holiday Stories Collection... We listened starting as soon as it arrived and continued on into January.

One of the greatest treasures we found on the MP3 was a version of "A Christmas Carol" featuring Lionel Barrymore. I sat utterly amazed when I first heard his voice. The first few seconds of the program brought back such a familiarity to me -- I had previously thought I would NEVER hear that version again and have missed it every Christmas since getting married and leaving home.

My parents had an old LP record of the very same show that we would listen to on our family's old stereo when I was growing up. We listened to it "to death," helping bump the needle whenever it got stuck on scratches. =^ ) That old record has long been lost.

How excited I was to tell my two children that this program was the VERY SAME ONE their mommy and her siblings used to LOVE listening to every Christmas when they were young! I thought there was no way to ever hear that program again, but thanks to you, we are carrying on the tradition of listening that that old favorite, along with many new ones, during the holidays!

(By the way, my daughter was in a thrift store this spring and found a paperback copy of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." She insisted she was old enough to read it and bought it with her own

money (she was then 6). Your radio shows spur on much love, familiarity, and reading of original classics at our house. Thank you!" -- Karla

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