

CREATING FAMILY TRADITIONS

It's tradition. This is Us. This is who we are. This is what we do.

Memories have to be made memorable *on purpose*. Holidays may be printed on the calendar, but it's up to you to turn those special days into precious memories.

HOLIDAY TRADITION IDEAS

NEW YEARS EVE

Decorate lunch sacks for each hour counting down to the New Year, beginning at 8:00 p.m. The kids anticipate opening a bag of sparklers, poppers, fireworks, noisemakers, candy or treats every hour. Turn up the music and have a freeze dance party until there was only one winner left each time. As the kids have gotten older and cooler, we've pivoted to a tradition of playing Left-Center-Right with quarters instead of dance-offs. *How do you ring in the new year?*

ST. PATRICKS DAY

Crazy Leprechauns visit our home on St. Patrick's Day bringing glitter, coins, and other green paraphernalia. Chairs are overturned and scattered, and a big box of Lucky Charms cereal is left on the table for all to enjoy for breakfast this one day a year. Why not set out a homemade trap to try and catch the Leprechauns even or go a step further than boxed cereal and make green pancakes and eggs for the morning breakfast.

MOTHER'S/FATHER'S DAY

Once a year, the family makes me breakfast in bed for Mother's Day. Every year they grace me with Betty Crocker boxed blueberry muffins along with their annual homemade cards and creative gifts. I always take an annual photo with the kids to add to my mother's day photo album.

How do you celebrate Mother's and Father's Day each year?

CHRISTMAS

Christmas brings many favorite family traditions. Candlelight Christmas Eve service at church. Baked cookies. Our annual Christmas card photo tree. Our Magic Elf flies around telling us year after year about the real reason for the season- the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. Perhaps you let the children open one gift of new pajamas on Christmas Eve.

What do you do at Christmastime that is unique to your family?

BIRTHDAY TRADITIONS

Our kids wake up on their birthdays to a decorated table with the same coffee cake with candles every year. They always received the number of gifts as their age until they turned 13. My parents have always given our daughter a "Putting up with Brothers gift" on her triplet brothers birthday. My parents also always send our kids cash in the exact amount of their age.

Hailey Joy Scrandrette, the author of *Belonging and Becoming*, looked forward to her birthday as her Mom let her skip school on that special day and would have breakfast in bed while they looked at baby pictures.

Paul Buck, who lost his wife and two youngest sons in a tragic auto accident, continues the birthday traditions that Jill had created for their family. The birthday table decorations are highlighted by a carved Jamaican giraffe named Isiah who makes his way to the celebration in some unique fashion year after year. Even though Jill, Branson, and AJ are gone, their lives and legacy still live on through traditions that the rest of the family continues to uphold today. Paul has restarted the annual birthday video interviews and continues one-on-one special dinner celebrations.

How do you celebrate birthdays in your family?

BACK TO SCHOOL

Take your child's first day of school picture in the same location year after year so you can see how much they grow. Start the day off with the same table setting and breakfast every year. *This is how we go back to school.*

TOOTH FAIRY

Lose a tooth? Get out the tooth fairy pillow and wake in the morning to a special \$2 bill or gold dollar coins in its place. Be intentional in stocking up on your tooth fairy loot so you can be consistent in this childhood tradition.

FAMILY OUTING RITUALS

If we're headed to the beach, I take along Ziploc bags for us to collect sand and sea glass, a bouncing moon ball to throw in the ocean, postcard stamps, and small games for the hotel room. We always haul peanut butter and honey to make lunch sandwiches no matter where we travel as well. *What does your family always travel with?*