

## **30 ideas for Family Traditions to get your creativity flowing as you think about what would most nurture your soul, and your family's, this winter.**

1. Spread pinecones with peanut butter and birdseed and feed the birds.
2. Write a winter poem together every year; put them in a scrapbook.
3. Go through each child's room with them and create a "give-away" box of gently used items to pass on to kids who need them. Have a family session to clean and repair old toys and clothes and take them to donate.
4. Write "Appreciations" – each person in the family one on each of their gifts.
5. Celebrate snow! Cut paper snowflakes and tape them to your windows and walls. Save them and add more each winter.
6. Make ornaments. Decorate felt trees with glitter, cut foil stars, make paper snowflakes to lure a snow storm. Your box of homemade ornaments will be the kids' favorite box to open every year.
7. Line your walk with luminaria – paper bags weighted with sand, with a candle in each.
8. Make simple, inexpensive, fun presents together for your kids' friends and cousins: homemade bubbles, fingerpaints, clay, dress-up boxes, jewelry-making kits, puppet-making kits, candy-making kits, snowglobes.
9. Invite the kids' friends over for a holiday card making party. Use construction paper, stencils and paint, line them with ordinary white paper with typed or written messages.
10. Have a cookie-baking party with friends. Or invite ten friends to bring over six dozen of their favorite cookies and some empty containers. Parents drink punch, kids drink chocolate, and everyone goes home with a mix of holiday treats from everyone else.
11. Use only recycled wrapping paper, brown paper with kids' drawings, or newspaper decorated with stickers. Wrap them all in ribbons galore.
12. Have an annual Chanukah, Kwanzaa, or tree trimming party. Or celebrate the Winter Solstice with a candlelit dinner, a roaring fire, and a night walk under the stars.
13. Go gift shopping with each child separately for other family members, but make a point of connecting to that child. Take her to lunch, encourage her to try on clothes and buy her something she covets (wrap it and give it later, of course). Make sure your conversation in the car is really special.

14. Invite your kids' friends over for a pie or cookie baking party. Together, take your goodies to your local soup kitchen, home for the elderly, or to the firehouse where folks are hard at work on the holiday.
15. Have a family evening where you make holiday cards, or write them, or make gift-wrap, or wrap gifts together. Put on music and sing while you work. Don't cook that night, have pizza and eggnog.
16. Ask your kids to volunteer with you at a soup kitchen some Saturday. Buy and wrap mittens and gloves for needy families.
17. Give your children a set amount to spend and take them to the toy store where they can pick out a gift for a needy child, and let them personally deliver it to a children's hospital, homeless shelter or charity drop-off point.
18. Dreidel Showdown Night: Your family will have a "geltload" of fun taking part in an annual family dreidel tournament. You don't even have to be Jewish!
19. Go on a nature walk to gather greenery together. Bring a thermos of hot chocolate and enjoy the fresh air.
20. Read a new holiday book with your kids every night of the season.
21. Make a menorah together out of clay, spools, or old bolts.
22. Each year, help each child make a new Christmas ornament with a photo and the year.
23. Take a walk or drive to admire the holiday lights together.
24. Buy and wrap mittens for needy families.
25. Gather your family and friends to go caroling. Afterwards, gather for hot chocolate and potluck dinner.
26. Make a treasure map or clues for your kids to follow to find their loot.
27. Watch a different holiday movie every weekend during the season.
28. Go ice skating (or sledding, or skiing) together. Take lessons if you need to.
29. Deliver Meals on Wheels for homebound folks.
30. Write a holiday letter together. If the idea of paragraphs is daunting, make it in the form of a list of highlights from each family member, or newspaper or newsletter.