

## TRADITIONS

This is to make this time you have with them special.

What does your house smell like? If I was to see one of your teenage kids in the hallway what smell would they say. Food is inviting. My daughter's house smells like Scentsy, but it always smells like Scentsy. I have been in homes that smell musty. Homes smell like homemade bread and cookies. What do you remember about the smell. What does your home sound like? Some homes are loud and some are very quiet.

Class member: Music. I have a trumpet, viola, & piano all going at the same time.

Class member: We have Pandora going all the time.

When my kids were growing up they would come home from school and I had "Easy Listening Songs". They would call it the elevator music. That's what our home sounded like. Now it's interesting as I go to their homes...guess what's playing...elevator music.

My kids will say, "this is your season" because I love the fall colors. This is where they look at something and it yells to them "home". You are connecting things to your home. This is what we want to do. This is our goal! These are the ties that bind over time. There has to be something you create. Sometimes it's on purpose.

Radio broadcast Robison...works with healthy and troubled kids. "When I interview kids that are in trouble with the law and those that aren't. Most of them can't tell me something unique in their family."

They are bonding to friends because there is nothing at home.

"Can you tell me some things that are unique about what you stand for? Healthy kids...there are things they can identify that their family stands for something. Kids must have that."

One thing is to feel like they belong. They are part of "this" family. It needed to be unique or different. There has to be something that binds us just a family. This is an important family and what it looks like to belong there.

"These rituals and traditions give them a sense of family identity. They say this is what our family is about, this is what we do to mark these important events in our lives."

If you think back on growing up some of your best memories are attached to a tradition. We need to have traditions that are just part of being part of the family.

Growing up we didn't have family traditions.

Patch Adams "There are so many influences...one try to have a vibrant relationship with spouse....i think if they let their creative aspect fly the kids are going to see that passions. If they are overwhelmed by life they will see that. I'm starting to tell people...is to be happy."

That is a tradition. That feeling of joy in your home is a tradition. Is there a happy atmosphere. Is Mom singing doing the dishes?

Class member: For about a year I was doing good because I wasn't so busy I had 50s music on. My one son refused to participate. Then I stopped doing it because life got too busy. My son said Mom why don't we do that anymore. Those were fun times.

It creates a feeling of joy. They want that in their home.

Traditions...give your family an identity. When they all come together they play the "Remember when..." game. Most of you have photos. How often do you look at them? Your kids need to see those pictures. If you burn them to a DVD and then put it on Sunday's. Let them see themselves being bound in your family. No one ever looks at them. When a child sees himself in that picture it reminds him he is part of it and he puts himself back in it.

My family likes to go backpacking together. I like to go backpacking to the Hilton. I like a shower and a toilet. I went on sheep hunts. My name was drawn. I spent 10 days up there. That's where my kids were. When I'm not there and there is no picture who is missing from the memory....Mom. You want everyone there as part of the memory.

Traditions....Some are planned and some evolve.

When you get married you bring traditions from your family to your new family. Most of us feel like traditions we grew up with are principles not practices because they are concrete. We happen to have a spouse who brings his traditions and you have his and yours and then you have in-laws on both sides. After you have been married a few years and have kids you want to do something for just your family. In-laws are saying you have to keep doing this. The holidays because horrid. You hate them. You can't wait to get them over. You feel that way and it's hard.

In your new family you need to cut all ties. I say that careful. I don't want my kids to tell me to go away. Grandma's can't tell their kids what to do in their families. Pressure shouldn't be related to which choice you make. What you choose to do for holidays. You have to handle it in love. One of those loving things is to say, "Grandma...come to our house and do things with us."

You have to decide what you want! If at Christmas you want to be with extended families make sure it is something you want!

Principles: You have to have traditions. The church will set some...blessings, baptisms, ordinations, cub scouts, YW. That had better not be all. Then you need to set family traditions. They are imperative to bind your family to your family. There is no right or wrong.

Stop comparing yourself!!! This is not competition!!! Stop feeling guilty!!! Be sure that what you do is special for your family. The best ideas you get for your traditions are from other people. I grew up in a non-tradition family. I have created a tradition family for my children. The best source is to go to Relief Society. Ask them what they do. Get lots of ideas and decide what you have the energy and time to do.

I don't do Crete paper. I don't do those things....it's too much work for me. I incorporate things you fold up and get out. It's not major preparation for each event.

4 Kinds of Traditions. Some you will not consider traditions.

Daily Rituals and Traditions:

This is what you do everyday. We think of that as daily life. Do you have family prayer every morning? Read scriptures every day? How you do it is a tradition. Do you smile? We get upset with them, but we aren't mirroring that for them. Tell your face you are happy and tell your face.

HOMEWORK: Smile. Just smile.

Class member: One day I was just quiet and one of them asked me aren't you going to ask me questions?

Do you eat family dinner together? What is your bedtime routine? Tucking children in bed. Do you have couple prayer every night? What is on the walls in your home? How do you decorate your home?

We had a 4' wide hall that went down the main living area. On one side I had all their baby pictures. I said, "I love my babies." Every friend would look at their baby pictures. On the other side of the wall I had my wall of fame. 5x7, 3x5 all hodge podge. None of the frames matched. It was them in every situation of their life...hunting, camping, baby, Grandma's & Grandpa's, volleyball. It was the wall that said this is who you are. They saw them in that family.

Eagle Scout plaque....as they got their Eagle Scout he got it and put it up with spaces for the other boys. Competitive with siblings...to get it up there. It was just one of those good things.

#### FAMILY TRADITIONS:

What do you do together as a family? What do you do for the summer? Do you plant a garden? Every family needs to do something fun together! Some families like to bike. Some water ski. Some people like to backpack. Family reunions. Musical instruments. Service projects. You do things together.

Example...every summer Tracy's family takes on a widow and they keep their yard all summer.

Birthday traditions fall in this one. My favorite is Christmas, birthdays are a close 2<sup>nd</sup>. We need to be excited about focusing on each individual. Birthdays were a big deal. Birthday tablecloth....piece of fabric that can be folded up.

This year for Christmas I'm doing a "It's my day" birthday chair back with a place mat, with a pocket to leave a love note from each person in the family. They pick their cereal, meals.

Class member: They had a chair back cover. It was plastic. He thought it was great.

Have them fill out that page of favorites every day on their birthday. They will have fun looking backwards at what they said.

On their birthday or sometime close...what was your greatest achievement this year? What is your goal for next year? Record those on the birthday sheet. It makes the birthday person kind of think and set some goals.

#### HOLIDAY TRADITIONS:

This is where some of you shine. I am a holiday decorator. I decorate for all holidays. I take today all pictures in October and they stay down until January. A little bit of decorating for holidays gets kids excited.

Halloween Ideas....

We had Halloween party last Saturday because it's Spencer's favorite holiday. We did donuts on a string. We bobbed for bones. Bought a package of plastic bones and floated in the cauldron. As the kids would go to grab them they would sink down. All the kids were doing it. We do Halloween pillowcases that they put on. On Halloween night they take the pillowcase off and it becomes their trick-or-treat bag. When they get home they get a sandwich size bag. They can put whatever candy they want in that bag. It's theirs. The rest of the candy goes in the pillowcase. It goes out on the porch. During the night the Halloween witch comes and takes all the candy and leaves them a book. If you are a frugal person and self-disciplined...you put it away and it becomes stocking stuffers. We would take the kids and make cookies and deliver cookies to the fire stations in their costumes.

Class member: We do the great pumpkin. We leave a movie ticket.

Class member: We put up window clings.

Tracy gave the younger ones \$5 and took them to the dollar store. They could buy anything they wanted to decorate their own rooms. It is a fun thing for them to think about.

Class member: This is our 9<sup>th</sup> year in our cul-de-sac...we do a pumpkin carving contest. We "Boo" houses...we knock on doors and run after leaving treats.

THANKSGIVING:

I don't think we use Thanksgiving to it's advantage. I am talking about practices!!! We usually have a big family dinner. You end up playing and/or watching football. Those are good things. I would throw something else for you to think about. I feel like Thanksgiving is the door to the Christmas season. I think that it should be focused on teaching gratitude. It is a period of time to focus on "giving thanks". If we are going to give thanks what are you going to give to do it. It's more than listing ideas.

If I was having a FHE with my kids. One of them would say...the scriptures. Because you are grateful for the scriptures what are you going to do for a month. I'm thankful for food. What will you do to show your thankfulness for food? Invite people over to eat, make pies and deliver, serve at food bank. It's creating a feeling of Thanksgiving that is

the door to the season of Christmas. We get too bogged down in doing stuff and miss the Spirit.

I've had them make a chain for each day of Christmas. Something they are thankful for. Take a link off and talk about it at dinner.

Class member: I got a box. It's our treasure chest. The kids write something on the slips of paper. We read them and put them in a book.

Create a MAJOR service project to do for Christmas. This service project needs to hurt. It needs to require sacrifice. Sometimes I've had people that say they take a family. Mom & Dad give the kids money to go out and shop for that family. The kids need to earn the money to buy for that family. From Thanksgiving to Christmas you go to the nursing home each week and adopt a Grandma. It needs to be something that hurts.

Class member: On Christmas Eve we go to the nursing home. We make crafts. Then we sing Christmas carols. My daughter dressed up like "Cindy Lu Who".

Stretch it a little more. Encompass the season from Thanksgiving until Christmas. That's not the gift.

We had people that took on school needs. They needed 150 coats for kids. They went out and got donations for the kids. It's amazing what you can do if you seek to do a project.

If you choose to do this service project....you will have a Christmas like you have never had before. It will change your season. It needs to be something the whole family is involved in.

Maybe you tie 15 quilts for a nursing home. Maybe you do blankets for the NICU. Get creative and make it hurt. That doesn't sound very "Christmas-y". I have had people who have come and said my family just won't get on board. They are hurting because they want to do it. If that is the situation then you do it, but share your experience with your family and bear testimony to your family and what it's like.

This is not an easy assignment. It's a ponder and pray about thing. Discuss it in your family.

4. Once in a Life-time Traditions---baptism, graduation, mission calls, weddings.

## HOMEWORK:

1. Smile!
2. Look at your family traditions...think about are they just busy or are they bonding?
3. What can you do to make Thanksgiving more a reflection of gratitude and Christmas more a reflection of Christ? (You have to plan ahead)
4. Ask someone you admire how they celebrate a holiday and get a new idea.

Class member: One year you said I should ask your children. It was some of the things that you do that made them feel special that they are things you have done for different reasons.

When all my kids were home and we were poor, I couldn't bring myself to buy boxes to wrap things in. I saved cereal boxes. I wrapped every present in cereal boxes. My kids wonder what cereal box they get.

Anyone interested in the prophet magnets you can order online. Tracy does them.

Part of the reason Jewish Tradition is strong is because it was based on tradition. The power of traditions can be seen in that history. We want to create traditions so that when your "Spencer" leaves he is still tied to home.