



3 Ways to Improve Holiday Celebrations with Family

Sharing time together doesn't have to be stressful, especially if you're willing to make a few adjustments to longstanding traditions. Consider these options.



1. Celebrate Early

When extended and blended families have to be several places in a matter of three or four days, the stress adds up! **Talk to your family about other options**, including setting up an earlier visit in November or October. It may work even better to plan a half-year celebration in June or July, when kids are out of school, plus a video call on the day of the traditional holiday.

Coordinating a new schedule gives everyone time together while offering the young parents in your family more time and energy to create new at-home traditions with their young children.

Be flexible and find ways to thoroughly enjoy time together when they AND you aren't quite so stressed, rushed, and over committed.

2. Reduce Shopping Stress

If family gift giving has become burdensome, consider ways to lighten the financial load, along with the mental battle for good gift ideas. If you can't bring yourself to eliminate gift-giving, try drawing names, so everyone only needs to purchase one gift.

Another option is a gift-swap table, where everyone brings one gift within an agreed-upon spending limit. Assign each gift a number and draw numbers to select gifts. Or, use the numbers to play a grab-bag game, complete with "gift-stealing" rules.

You can also reduce spending by giving gifts you already own, that you know someone would like. For example, give your daughter the family china she's always loved, or your friend the painting she's frequently admired in your foyer. Gifts like this are meaningful and rich in memories!

3. Gift Giving for Adults

Perhaps your family wants to continue giving the little ones small gifts to unwrap. **However, do the adults need (or even want) gifts?** Shopping for others is a joy when it's something you want to do, versus something you feel obligated to do.

If there is something you want to give an adult family member, why wait until a holiday? Why not surprise them when you find that perfect thing? It's a great way to feel joy, instead of an obligation, when giving.

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