



theParentLink

Children's Edition

December 2009



Keep Christ in Christmas By Starting Some New Traditions

Traditions are important for families because they provide opportunities to keep your unique legacy going. From the simple to the silly to the sentimental, traditions can create meaningful memories. Perhaps you buy a new ornament for each of your children every year. This Christmas, don't hesitate to try out some new traditions. See what does and doesn't work for your family. You just may create a new tradition that'll keep going for generations!

Make Affirmation Ornaments—Have each family member cut out a large ornament shape from construction paper and write his or her name on the front. On the back, have other family members write (or draw) something special about the person whose name is on the front. Then decorate the ornaments, attach yarn hangers, and put them on your Christmas tree.



Get Crafty—Have a family craft night so family members can make simple homemade gifts for one another. These can include coupon books for help with chores or for special outings.

Share the News—As a family, dress up and put on a Christmas play for neighborhood children. Serve juice and homemade cookies.

Adopt a Child in Need—Anonymously assist a young person in your community through small gifts, money, and encouraging cards. If possible, do these acts of service all year long.

"I Believe..."

According to a recent Associated Press poll, 86% of people believed in Santa as children. More than 60% of parents with young children said Santa is an important part of their Christmas celebrations.

Other findings:

- 47% of people said Santa detracts from the holiday's religious importance, while 36% said Santa enhances the religious nature of Christmas.
- 81% of people said they believe in angels, including more than half of people who say they aren't religious.

PowerSource

Ask God:

1. To help your family keep your Christmas celebrations focused on Jesus.
2. To give your family members positive attitudes about trying new traditions.
3. To help you create strong bonds and lasting memories.

Parenting Insights

The editors of *Parents' Guide to the Spiritual Growth of Children* (Focus on the Family) share these tips for incorporating new traditions.

1. **Make them fun!** When your celebrations are filled with laughter, the real message behind them will be reinforced more positively in your family.
2. **Use Christmas symbols.** Many symbols have Christian origins. For example, St. Nicholas was a shy, generous man who secretly did good deeds for the poor. Decorating with festive Christmas lights also has Christian roots.
3. **Don't ban all secular traditions.** Take a balanced approach to your Christmas celebrations, for your children's sake. Then they'll be more open to receive the true reason for the season.

OpenTheBook

**"Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."
Luke 2:14**

On the first Christmas, the angels announced Jesus' birth. As we celebrate Christmas, our worship and traditions also focus on our newborn Savior, the King of Kings.

Teachable Moments

- 1. Make waiting fun.** Patience is a difficult life skill to learn, especially during December. Harness children's wonder and anticipation by letting them explore their creativity. Keep red- and green-colored paper, as well as other craft supplies, readily available. Have kids make gift tags, wreaths, cards, and more.
- 2. Deck the (stable) halls.** Instead of a gingerbread house, decorate a gingerbread stable with assorted candies. Prop animal crackers inside graham-cracker walls, and use toasted coconut as hay.
- 3. Read all about it.** Many families read aloud the Christmas story before opening gifts. Go beyond Jesus' birth to Luke 2:25-38, where Jesus is presented in the temple. Talk about faithful Simeon and Anna, whose prayers were answered. Then discuss ways you've seen God in action during the past week.



"So commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these words of mine. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are ON THE ROAD, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up." Deuteronomy 11:18-19, NLT

What do traditions—and Christmas—mean to your children? Discover their opinions and insights by asking these questions:

1. What are your favorite things to do around Christmastime, and why? Which do you plan to continue with your own children?
2. How do our traditions help make Christmas more special? How might some traditions interfere with our celebrations?
3. What traditions would you like our family to start or stop, and why? What traditions can kids in our family be in charge of?
4. How would you explain "Christmas" to someone who was unfamiliar with it?

Family Experience: Star-Studded Fun

Brighten up the dark winter nights by trying these joy-filled, Christ-based experiences with your family and friends:

- **Follow the Star**—Hang a trail of stars throughout your house, and at each star, place a nativity-scene figure. Hang the last, largest star over a cake with three candles, and place baby Jesus by it. Then follow the stars. Stop at each one and talk about the role of that person (or animal). At the final star, light the three candles. Say, "These candles represent the star of Bethlehem that shone brightly over baby Jesus; Jesus, the light of the world, who was born into a dark night; and how God wants us to be a light for others and point them to Jesus. Sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus and share the cake.
- **Star Square**—This game, which is ideal for play with extended families, is a reminder of the wise men who followed the Christmas star to find Jesus. With masking tape, divide an 8x8-foot space into four squares. Tape a construction-paper star in one quadrant. Put one person in each square, and have everyone else stand in a circle around the quadrants. The "star" square starts play by tapping the ball into another square. Players tap the ball into another square whenever it enters theirs. Play continues until someone misses, and then that person steps out and a new player rotates in from the circle. Players rotate clockwise toward the star. Whenever a player steps into the star, he or she should share one thing about Jesus or Christmas.



What's Playing at the Movies

Movie: *The Princess and the Frog* (Dec. 11)

Genre: Animated fairy tale, comedy

Rating: G

Cast: Anika Noni Rose, Angela Bassett, Terrence Howard, Oprah Winfrey

Synopsis: Tiana, Disney's first African-American princess, lives in New Orleans during the Jazz Age. She meets Naveen, a prince who's been transformed into a frog by an evil magician. Naveen mistakes Tiana for a princess, and when they kiss, Tiana becomes a frog, too. They go on adventures to restore their humanity. (Caution: They seek direction from a voodoo priestess.)

Discussion Questions: What kind of true or untrue assumptions do people often make about you? What can you tell (and not tell) just by looking at someone? Read 1 Samuel 16:7. What do you think God sees when he looks inside your heart?



What Music Is Releasing

Artist: Sara Groves

Album: *Fireflies and Songs*

Artist Info: Groves is a prolific writer of Christian folksongs that contain personal lyrics about faith and relationships. Her tours have benefited several Christian ministries.

Summary: Groves says *Fireflies and Songs* is a candid, confessional album. In the nostalgic "This House," Groves assures her 2-year-old daughter (and her listeners) that "the Lord withholds no good thing."

Discussion Questions: During your life, what are some of the biggest blessings that God has provided for you? How have some of those blessings been disguised at first? Read Psalm 84:11. How might God be using you to be a blessing for other people?



What Games Are Out

Title	Content	Rating & Platform
<i>Cook or Be Cooked</i>	Would-be cooks learn basic kitchen skills and then advance to "real-life" food prep.	E; Wii
<i>LEGO Rock Band</i>	This music-simulation game is more kid-friendly than other popular titles. As the band "travels," some LEGO characters engage in comic mischief.	E10+; Nintendo DS, Xbox 360, Wii, PS3
<i>Adventures to Go!</i>	Young Finn joins a magical training camp for adventurers in this role-playing game. It contains mild fantasy violence and mild suggestive themes.	E10+; PSP

GAME RATINGS KEY: EC=Early Childhood, E=Everyone (ages 6+), E10+ (ages 10+), T=Teen (ages 13+)



Culture & Trends

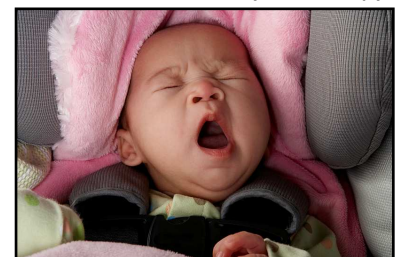
What's happening right now that may affect your children and family:

- More restaurants are trying to lure families with "kids eat free" meals. "Free is magic," says professor Barry Schwartz. "It will seduce people into eating out who shouldn't."
- Preschoolers can have chronic depression, new research shows. Symptoms include persistent sadness (even when playing), trouble sleeping, irritability, and frequent tantrums.

Quick Stats

- In this flailing economy, many pregnant women are rethinking adoption. At a Chicago agency, 30% more women are inquiring about placing a child for adoption than a year ago.

(USA Today)



- The U.S. now has between 1.5 million and 2 million home-schooled students. That's a 75% increase since 1999.

(hslsda.org)

December 2009

		1	2	3	4	5
			KM2 5:00-5:45 pm Portable #2 MPKids 6:00-7:00 pm Portable #3 Zone 56 6:30-8:00 pm Portable #6			
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
SS 10:00 am			KM2 5:00-5:45 pm Portable #2 Zone 56 6:30 - 8:00 pm Portable #6			
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
SS 10:00 am Watoto Children's Choir all 3 services			KM2 5:00-5:45 pm Portable #2 Zone 56 6:30 - 8:00 pm Portable #6			
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
SS 10:00 am CC 11:15 am			No KM2 or Zone 56 Christmas Break	Christmas Eve Services 3pm, 5pm, 7pm, & 11pm		
27	28	29	30	31		
No Sunday School or Children's Church Christmas Break for our teachers!			No KM2 or Zone 56 Christmas Break			

SS= Sunday School

CC= Children's Church: Children's Ministry after the children's sermon for children 4 years to 2nd grade

KM2: Music ministry for 1st thru 4th graders

Zone 56: Ministry for 5th and 6th graders

UPCOMING EVENTS AT AUMC

December 13, 2009 at all 3 services Watoto Children's Choir

December 24, 2009 Christmas Eve Services 3pm Children's Service, 5pm Candlelight Service, 7pm Contemporary Service, and 11pm Candlelight and Communion Service

June 21-25, 2010 Vacation Bible School 2010

Liz Edwards, Director of Children's Ministry

9033 Ft. Worth Dr. Argyle, Texas 76226

940-464-1333 liz@argyleumc.org




This ministry for 5th & 6th graders includes Sunday school and weekday praise, missions, Bible study, snack supper, & fun. We meet Sunday mornings at 10 am & Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8pm in portable # 6. If you have a 5th or 6th grader be sure they come get in the ZONE! Parents, please contact Liz Edwards to sign up as a Zone 56 helper. 940-464-1333 or liz@argyleumc.org

ZONE 56 FALL/WINTER SCHEDULE 2009

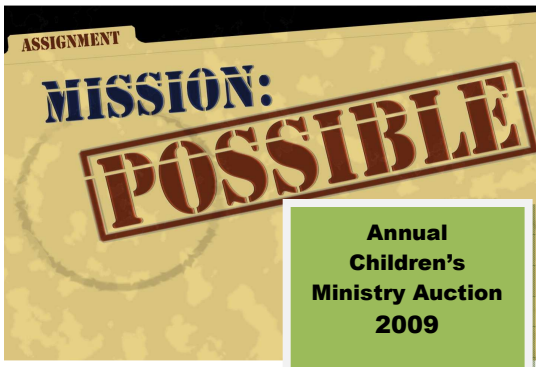
Date	Event	Lead	Helpers	Snack Supper
12/2	WOW night	Kelli Stoops		Suzanne Pilawski Brenda Mooney
12/9	Missions	Elaine White	Adrienne Austin	Dana Ratcliff Kay Graff
12/16	Christmas Caroling			
12/23	No Zone 56 – Christmas Break			
12/30	No Zone 56 – Christmas Break			

CHILDREN'S CHURCH DECEMBER SCHEDULE

	11:15 Service CC
December 6	Communion
December 13	No Children's Church Watoto Children's Choir in worship
December 20	Mike Livingston 940-725-3188
December 27	No Children's Church Christmas Break for our wonderful teachers!



We are blessed to welcome back the Watoto Children's Choir from Uganda to perform at AUMC on **Sunday, December 13th** at all three services. Watoto means "The Children". The children of the choir are among the 1.8 million boys and girls in Uganda who have had the tragic experience of losing one or both of their parents to AIDS or war. The Watoto "Concert of Hope" is an energetic fusion of contemporary gospel and traditional African rhythm – truly a colorful and lively demonstration of the life-changing love of God. Come experience the hope and joy of the Watoto Children's Choir. For more information see www.watoto.com
If you and your family would like to be a host home to 2 children and one adult on Saturday, December 12th, please contact Liz.



Thank you to all the many people who helped in a myriad of ways to make our 2009 Children's Ministry such a wonderful success, not to mention a great time! Our gross for the auction is close to \$18,000.00!

We are overwhelmed this year by the generosity of local vendors and church members. We want to thank everyone that contributed auction items, donated time to setting up and preparing for the auction, and for all of you that participated in any way. Special thanks to our awesome emcees, Nathan Bryant & Joe Stobaugh; Chad & Melissa Miller who transformed pieces of the old church into beautiful collectibles; and our auction team - Kim Hand, Kristy Johnston, Elaine White & Tonya Newell.

AROYLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Our awesome Mission Possible Agents are having their monthly meeting on **December 2nd from 6-7 pm** in Mission Possible Headquarters, aka Portable #3. We will be working on our Candy Cane outreach project. On **Wednesday December 16th** we be Christmas caroling and distributing the goodies we have made to invite our neighbors to our Christmas Eve services. All kids in grades 1-4 are invited to join us as we help change the world. For more information contact Beth Ward at 940-725-0291 or cbem@verizon.net



Christmas Around the World

This Advent Season we will be looking at the ways Christmas is celebrated in different countries and cultures around the world. As the Gospel spread throughout the world, people took to heart the message that "God is with us" and the scriptures were then interpreted in reflection of the local cultures. We have a special treat on December 13, when the Watoto Children's Choir from Uganda will be our guests. They will be singing in the worship services and coming to Sunday School for part of the 10 am hour to visit with our classes. Be sure on the 13th to take your child to either the 8:30 or 11:15 worship service so they can hear the service as well as visit with these special guests.

Scripture: Matthew 1:1 - 2:23 and Luke 1:1 - 2:38.

Memory Verse: *Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.*
Luke 2:11

Rotation Schedule

	K	1 st & 2 nd	3 rd	4 th
Nov. 29	Movie-108	Games-105	Drama-106	Computer-100
Dec. 6	Games-105	Movie-108	Computer-100	Drama-106
Dec. 13	Drama-106	Computer-100	Movie-108	Games-105
Dec. 20	Computer-100	Drama-106	Games-105	Movie-108
Dec. 27	No Sunday	School Today	Worship with	Your Family!

Teachers: Older 2's and 3's (3 by Dec.31, 2009), Rm. 103, Kelly Perritt, Kelly Hawkins & Carly Hawk. Pre-K , Rm 104, Cyne Hindman & Jennifer West. Rotation shepherds: Kindergarten, Nicole Hackett & Kristy Johnston; 1st grade, Dona & Bill Perkins; 2nd grade, Jo Ellen Bergstrom; 3rd grade, Kathy Wright & Tammra Allison; 4th grade, Tracey Portz & Chris Funck. Movie: ,Darren & Stacie Schnabel, David & Jennifer Bullock, Steve & Shannan Christo, Roger & Sue Santone; Computer, Steve & Mary Betzhold, George & Kelly Dunham, Drama, Harold & Dana Ratcliff, Jeff Bergstrom; Game, Steve & Adrienne Austin, Allen & Bonnie Bundens; Zone 56, Portable 6, Tom & Pam Keenan, Julie Sheridan.