



## How Parents Can Simplify the Holidays

By: Katrina Kenison

December 2024

As much as we love the winter holidays, by the time Thanksgiving has come and gone, many of us are feeling a little anxious as well. We want so much to create memorable celebrations for our families. It can be hard to separate our sense of duty from our own sense of what our children really need. And, what we most want for ourselves during this hectic time of year.

Christmas carols ring from every storefront. Fat catalogs arrive in the mail, urging us to hurry and place our orders before it's too late. The children produce lists of must-haves. Meanwhile, an insistent inner voice whispers, "You should do this. . . You should do that..."

We can quiet that voice and embrace the season. We can do this by seeing the month of December as an opportunity for connection. It doesn't have to be a series of things to do and go buy. As the holidays approach, it helps to pause and ask: What part of this season is most meaningful to me? What message do I want my children to absorb from our celebration? What brings us true joy? What activities and expectations are we ready to let go?

The holidays invite us to change the pace of our lives. It asks us to slow down and focus on what matters most. This is to draw loved ones close as we share good food and cherished rituals. We can choose simplicity over complication. And there is a real sense of relief in saying, "This is enough." We can decide whether it's enough holiday parties, enough guests at the table, enough presents, or simply enough activities for one December Saturday.

When I find myself wondering, "Can I pull this off?" rather than looking forward to a special day, chances are it's because I've allowed an event to become more complicated than it needs to be. But when I opt instead for the kinds of simple, heartfelt celebrations that really do enrich our lives, I feel joy instead of stress. My children relax as well, finding contentment with what is, rather than demanding more. In our quiet times together, we make room for the true spirit of the season. You can too. Here's how:

**Downscale holiday plans and expectations.** Keep the focus on family. Keep the focus on meaningful traditions and simple activities that replenish rather than exhaust.

**Have a family conversation about why fewer gifts doesn't mean less of a celebration.** It might even mean allowing more time to enjoy a couple of special things. A gift of a sled could also include the gift of an afternoon of sledding, followed by a picnic dinner in front of the fireplace.

**Ask your children what they most love about your family's holiday.** You may be surprised by their answers. For my sons, it was: reading our Christmas books aloud, opening the doors on the advent calendar. Also, our annual carol singalong with the next-door neighbors, lighting the ting-a-ling on Christmas Eve. . .

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Please check Procure updates every day. There is important information there!  
Also, make sure your child always has a change of clothes and/or diapers/pull-ups, if necessary.  
Thank You!

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## Caterpillars/Buttercup Butterflies



Starting this month our first objective will begin with books to provide an experience to increase the child's language and literacy skills by introducing them to books and stories. Also, in the month of December, we will be using visual art materials. We will be working on a holiday surprise for parents.

Happy Holidays to all!

-Meme

Happy December! The Buttercups will be growing through exploration! As we continue to talk about animals, this month we will focus on ones we may see in the forest. The Buttercups will be exploring and expanding their understanding of the world through music, language and literature. We will also facilitate activities to learn how to manipulate large balls and practice kicking, tossing and rolling.

- Ms. Denisse & Ms. Yaxi

## Pixie Butterflies

Happy holidays! This month Pixies will be getting ready for winter and exploring our different senses through tasty science and body awareness activities. We will also be investigating different animals and what makes them special. Mark your calendars for our Winter Showcase on December 13th! Happy Holidays!

-Ms. Ashlynn & Ms. Victoria



## Elf Butterflies



In December, the Elf Butterflies will be working on identifying letters and their sounds. They will also work on writing their names and how to identify numbers in quantities. Elf Butterflies will complete these skills through various activities that will be centered around the winter season. As children develop these skills, they will also learn about the winter months, how animals prepare for them, how *we* prepare for them and things you can do in the winter. These activities will not only expand their knowledge but will strengthen their fine motor skills and critical thinking skills.

-Ms. KeAna & Ms. Morgan

## Julia Butterflies

Hello Julia butterfly families, This month we look forward to finishing learning about letters, N n, M m, and H h. The introduction to geometry, the exploration of animal habits, and hip hop music. We are excited to start learning about letters K k, L l, and U u, country music exploration, learning about trees and season exploration. As the seasons and weather are changing please be sure that there are weather appropriate changes of clothes in your child's cubby in case of spills or accidents.

-Mr. Kaliq & Ms. Paige





Winter Showcase—December 13th  
 Ms. Keyanni's Birthday—December 14th  
 Ms. Paige's Birthday—December 21st  
 CLOSED for Christmas—December 23rd– 27th  
 Ms. Heather's Birthday—December 27th  
 Ms. Annese's Birthday—December 28th

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**Set a limit at the outset on holiday activities.** One Christmas party is enough.

**Don't feel guilty about skipping events that everyone else attends.** Your children need you and your attention, not more activities. It is not written anywhere that children need to attend the tree-lighting ceremony downtown. They also aren't required to sit on Santa's lap at the mall or go to the midnight service at church. . .

**Whether you're decorating the Christmas tree, baking cookies, or making gifts for grandma, remember that the process is more important for your child than the outcome.** Keep it simple, and you and your child will enjoy it more.

**Create small special moments every day.** Open the advent calendar at breakfast time. Turn off every light in the house at dinner time. Light candles, and invite everyone to be perfectly still and perfectly silent for a minute. Go around the table and ask each family member what they feel grateful for. Before bed on December nights, gather as a family around the Christmas tree to sing one song or read one Christmas story.

**Celebrate the holidays as a season of giving and doing for others.** Grab the kids and head next door to shovel an elderly neighbor's walkway. Make Christmas cards together for the newsboy and the mailman. Deliver soup to a friend with the flu. Keep a stash of chocolate Santas in the car, and hand them out to the gas station attendant, the doorman, the barber, or the dry cleaner. And watch as your children begin to discover the secret pleasure of small kindnesses, offered with love.

Remember, once we take the pressure off ourselves to do things in a big way, we find more reasons to celebrate life's little moments. And it is in these moments that the gift of real joy is offered and received.

**What part of your family's holiday celebration embodies the spirit of the season for you? What are you choosing to let go of this year?**



## Toilet Paper Roll Christmas Tree

Turn your recycled toilet paper rolls into an inexpensive Christmas craft!

### Supplies Needed:

- 2 Toilet Paper Rolls
- Assorted Paint Colors
- Q-Tips
- Glue Gun
- Twine or String



### Instructions:

**Step 1:** Cut each toilet paper roll in 1/2 longwise, so you have 4 equal pieces

**Step 2:** Leave one piece as is. Holding the pieces horizontal, cut a little off each of the other 3 pieces, cutting a little more as you progress through the pieces. The idea is that when you lay them down, they progressively get shorter to the top of the tree.

**Step 3:** Take the piece you cut off the last piece and use it for your tree stump.

**Step 4:** Lay the pieces out to form a tree. Use a hot glue gun to attach them.

**Step 5:** Paint the tree green and the stump brown and allow to dry.

**Step 6:** Once dry, take q-tips and paint lights on the tree with various colors of paint.

**Step 7:** If you want to make this into an ornament, make a loop with a piece of string or twine and glue the ends to the back of the top of the tree, forming a hook, to hang it from the tree.



### Super Supper

Ms. Shirley's  
Chicken  
Salad

Pick-up days  
are

December  
18th—20th

**\$7.00 each**

**Payment is  
due before  
pick-up.**

**741 S. Pennsylvania Avenue**  
**Winter Park, FL 32789**  
**Phone: 407.647.0505**  
**reception@wpdaynursery.org**

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#### Vision:

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