

A Simple Act of Kindness

Although Christmas is a long way off, it's never too early to start preparing. Teaching your children the true spirit of Christmas is the best thing. They should be taught that acts of kindness and charity come first.

When I was little, we took gifts to the local church for the needy. During the holidays we helped people who were less fortunate than we were. Yes we didn't have much ourselves, but there is always someone who has less than you do.

My mother always lent her time to others. She baked cupcakes, cookies and stollen. She volunteered at my school and hosted the bake sales. She worked at the local soup kitchen. She always made hand made gifts for my cousins who visited from out of town. Most popular were the felt hats with faces.

As I grew up and saw these acts of kindness I only wanted to pitch in and help too. I volunteered at college to wrap and deliver free gifts to the local children. Now I am sharing these values with my children and family. My Christmas' are filled with opening gifts, a warm fire and a delicious home cooked meal. Then we go to a nursing home and sing carols and help distribute gifts.

We also visit during the spring, especially Easter time.

So as Christmas approaches start planning.

1. make a gift list
2. make a Christmas card list
3. find your favorite recipes
4. make a short to do list
5. plan all your shopping early (early November is good)
6. clean the house in October
7. start to decorate day after Thanksgiving
8. stick to your plans, write them down
9. sort through the stored decorations and get rid of the broken ones
10. decide how much you can afford and don't spend more than that

Every thing can't be perfect, so don't stress over the small things. If a smaller tree is easier, then get one you can easily trim in a few hours. Give your kids the same number of gifts each. This was no one feels cheated. Let them play in the snow, sing carols, and spend time with you. That is a truly special Christmas celebration.

So get your holidays started ven earlier this year. Say around October 31! Make sure you save time for yourself. Always space out your shopping days, this way you won't be overly exhausted. Keep to your budget. Set aside enough money for Christmas now so you won't have to go into debt.

Maybe not using all your old decorations is a good idea. Save some for next year.

We always decorate for every holiday, but don't overdo it. So have some fun, start early and Merry Christmas!

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

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