

THE ENRICHMENT PROJECT

Badge Program

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CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

Steps

1. History.

Christmas is a religious holiday which has evolved over two millennia and incorporated not only Christian traditions, but pagan and others as well. Find out about the history of this holiday.

2. World celebration.

Over 100 countries celebrate Christmas. Explore how others celebrate this holiday. If you see anything that you might want to incorporate in your own traditions, discuss it with other family members.

3. Religious observance.

Many people include religious ceremonies in their traditions. Try observing a religion different than yours to see other traditions.

4. Community events.

Does your community host a Christmas parade? Do they have a tree lighting ceremony? Are certain historical sites or museums specially decorated for Christmas? Find one or more community events where you can participate. Is the community event one you'd like to make into a tradition for your family?

5. Travel.

If your family is far away and you like to spend Christmas together, you may find that travel becomes part of your traditions. Many families do this. Some people travel to get away during the holidays. Look at the possibilities for travel during the holiday season.

6. Christmas tree.

The tree is, arguable, the single most recognized symbol of the holiday. They can be living, artificial or recently cut and relocated. Evergreens were once believed to be magical. Supposedly, a monk named Martin Luther began the tradition. Find out more about the Christmas tree.

7. Decorations.

Whether you're decorating a tree, a window or even your entire yard, there are unlimited ways of doing this. Examine your decorations. Fix those that need it. Donate those you no longer want. Make sure you have space and packaging to store your decorations safely.

8. Cards.

Sending cards to people you don't see regularly lets them know they are in your thoughts. Make your own or purchase some to send. Be sure to leave additional time for delivery.



Christmas Traditions

Traditions come from families, culture, communities and more. We'll explore the traditions in the United States of this popular holiday.



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larajla@gmail.com



9. **Giving gifts.**

Commercialism is rampant during the Christmas season. Black Friday and Cyber Monday highlight how spending money has become a part of the holiday. You'll see stores carrying Christmas items before Halloween. Look at how gift giving has become big business. Explore options to purchasing gifts this season.

10. **Music.**

From special holiday songs to caroling, Christmas is alive with music. Explore Christmas songs and share your favorites with others. Alternatively, go to a Christmas concert or play that features music of the season.

11. **Stories.**

Christmas stories are enjoyed by all ages. We used to read "The Night Before Christmas" on Christmas Eve. Unfortunately, this tradition at our house has changed into watching Santa delivery gifts via NORAD. Don't forget to include stories that are in a Christmas setting. Ask your family to join you enjoy a Christmas story.

12. **Movies and television.**

During the Christmas season, movies which are holiday-themed are prevalent. Look through the listings and / or your collection. Which did you watch as a child? What do your children watch? Share some of your favorites with others. Perhaps you'd even like to host a movie night featuring a Christmas classic.

13. **Stockings.**

Hanging stockings on the mantle for small gifts is often associated with Christmas. Stockings are filled with treats and small gifts. Find more about the story behind the Christmas stocking.

14. **Edible traditions.**

Are there certain items that you have to make for Christmas? Do you have recipes that you used to make for the holidays, but no longer make? Make a list of these. Recipes can be passed down to future generations to keep your family traditions alive. Discuss the possibility of making a family cookbook to save your traditions.

15. **Parties.**

Parties are huge. This might be office parties, school parties, family and friend parties, etc. Some are themed, such as the ugly sweater party. You can also do a craft party to make cards, wreaths or ornaments. Track the parties you attend and / or host this year. Which do you enjoy the most?

16. **Santa.**

Santa is a big part of Christmas in the US. Kids might write a letter to him or visit him at a local shopping center. Family members might dress up as Santa to deliver gifts. Explore traditions involving Santa. Are you interested in adopting one of these?

17. **Boxing Day.**

Boxing Day is the day after Christmas, though it is not celebrated by everyone who celebrates Christmas. Learn about this holiday and the traditions that surround it.

18. **Other traditions.**

What other traditions come to mind when you think of Christmas? As you work through this badge program, track the traditions that interest you. Try one or more.



Sites to Explore

www.history.com/topics/christmas

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christmas

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boxing_Day

www.whychristmas.com/customs

www.the-north-pole.com/around

www.theholidayspot.com/christmas/worldxmas

www.noradsanta.org

fun.familyeducation.com/christmas-activities-and-traditions/73029.html

www.timeout.com/london/music/the-50-best-christmas-songs

www.huffingtonpost.com/evan-bailyn/the-top-20-christmas-songs_b_4459862.html

www.celebrations.com/c/christmas-party-ideas/all

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