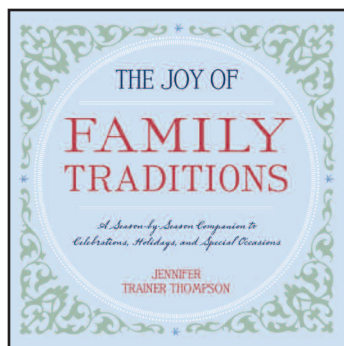


A sampling of ideas from . . .



## THE JOY OF FAMILY TRADITIONS

*A Season-by-Season Companion to  
Celebrations, Holidays, and Special Occasions*

JENNIFER TRAINER THOMPSON

**Family Hibernation Day:** Create a mini-retreat from the world for the whole family by designating the weekend closest to Groundhog Day as “Family Hibernation Day.” Sleep late, stay in your pajamas, play board games, rent movies, and take a collective nap.

**Father’s Day:** Plant a fruit tree together as a family and literally enjoy the fruits of your labor every Father’s Day.

**Summer Vacation:** If travel isn’t an option for your family, try a “virtual” vacation. Have the kids pile on mom’s or dad’s lap and imagine a destination, then sing about and discuss the sights they would see. *If you do travel*, hang a map in your child’s room. After each trip, find the place you’ve just visited and mark it with a sticker.

**Unusual Baby Gifts:** If you were a bridesmaid at a friend or family member’s wedding, take the bridesmaid dress and use the fabric to make a baby quilt for their first child.

**Recording the Years:** On your child’s first birthday, buy a tablecloth that can be used year-after-year. Have your baby leave a handprint along the cloth’s edge thereby creating a “handmade” palm-print border. Ask party guests to sign the cloth or add little drawings with a permanent marker. Repeat this ceremony every year.

**Birthday Rituals:** Share a little history by toasting the birthday of someone famous. On Mozart’s birthday rent *Amadeus*, listen to his music during dinner, or ask everyone to bring one fact about Mozart to the table. You can do this with Einstein, Dr. Seuss, Rosa Parks, Eleanor Roosevelt . . . the list goes on. Or, discover which famous person in history shares your child’s birthday, and make a special connection.

**Giving Thanks:** On Thanksgiving, give each guest a piece of paper and ask him or her to write down something for which they are thankful. If there are children at the table, give them the task of organizing the responses and reading the compilation aloud to the group as an improvised blessing before the meal.

**Harness Curiosity:** When kids seize on a topic (be it trains, trucks, ballet, or dinosaurs) they can’t seem to get enough of it. Take advantage of their natural curiosity by giving them a certificate dedicating their birthday month to their favorite subject. Dinosaur month, for example, might include a trip to a natural history museum, renting *Ice Age*, hunting for dinosaur books at the library, and making dinosaur cookies.

*“The beauty of traditions is that they endure, in our lives  
and in our memories and, long after we’re gone, in the  
memories of our children.”* —Jennifer Trainer Thompson

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