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News



flash

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Creating a Magical Holiday Season with Children

A Case of the Gimmies

When shopping at the mall and seeing everything on TV has your children's eyes popping, how do you handle it? Here are some tips to help you teach your children about the real spirit of the Holidays.

1. **Set the Example.** Can you pass something up that you truly want? If not, how are we expecting our children to do so? Walk by an item that you want and say "Wow, I really like this. I am going to put this on my wish list", or "Wow, this is something I really want, but I don't need it." It is our job, as parents, to teach our children many things, including patience.
2. **Avoid areas that are hazardous.** If possible, do not take your child shopping with you. Have someone else watch them. Also, limit the amount of TV they watch which has many toy commercials enticing children.
3. **Spend time with children making gifts for others.** Turn off the TV and help your child make gifts that they can give to others. Use their strengths and interests. If your child likes to color, have them color a picture and frame it for someone special. If your child likes to cook, bake cookies with them to give to others. When someone else is watching your children (so you can shop), this is a perfect time for them to make gifts for you. It is truly important to learn the gift of giving without spending a lot of money. The time and energy they put into it will be something they will be proud of. What a great way to build someone's self esteem.
4. **Validate your child's wants.** When you and your child are at a store and your child really wants something, pull out a pad and pen and say you are going to put this on their wish list. This lets your child know you have heard him and you are validating their wants. Later, when you have a list, you and your child can prioritize what they truly want. This also helps you get out of the store without a battle and they generally forget about the item.
5. **Teach compassion and the gift of giving.** Have children buy a small item for Toys for Tots or another organization that gives to children in need. Explain to them the significance of what they are doing. ***Have the children buy for someone of a different age and gender. This makes giving the toy away a tad bit easier.***
6. **Practice accepting gifts.** Knowing how to generously accept even an unwanted gift is an important skill to learn.
7. **Empathize with your child.** If your child does not get something he or she really wanted, expect some disappointment. Talk with your child about this. Let them know that you understand how upset they are.



This information was gathered from the following sources: WebMD "Tis the Season to Be...Greedy?"; Central Connections 2001 Vol. 6 "Cure the "Gimmies" during the Holidays"; Berks County Cooperative Extension - Toddler Topics PLUS 2006 ...BUT I WANT IT!!! Controlling the Gimmies!; Mindworks 2008 "Me First and the Gimmie Gimmies".

HOLIDAY CRAFTS TO DO WITH YOUNG CHILDREN:

Marshmallow Snowman



Materials Need:

- ~Sheet of 9x12" light blue construction paper
- ~White mini marshmallows
- ~2 pretzel sticks
- ~Crayons
- ~Glue

Steps:

1. Use a white crayon to draw a snowman outline on the construction paper
2. Color a hat, buttons, and face with crayons
3. Attach mini marshmallows to the outline by licking the bottom of each marshmallow and sticking it to the paper
4. Glue on pretzel-stick arms
5. Allow to dry

Finishing Touches:

1. Eat a few mini marshmallows for a snack while admiring the finished artwork!!!



Silver Bells

Take different sizes of papercups, wrap outside of each one with foil. Turn up sidedown, hang with pipecleaners.

Christmas Tree Balls

Using small styrofoam balls and tissue wrapping paper, have kids wrap tissue paper around the balls, gathering it at the top. Leave about three extra couple of inches at the top. Secure with rubber band or pipe cleaner. If using a rubber band, tie a nice ribbon around to cover. Tip if younger kids age 7 or less, you may wish to pre-cut the tissue paper.

Sponge Artwork

Get a bunch of sponges and cut them into shapes like trees, bells, stars etc. Dip them into paint and pressed them onto to paper

Ice Cream Cone Christmas Trees

Using the cone shaped sugar cones, some green icing, and holiday colored sprinkles, the kids will have a great time! Turn the cone upside down, have the child cover it in icing, then decorate with sprinkles.

Don't forget ABC Family 25 days of Christmas – which have already started on November 16th with a countdown to the 25 days of Christmas. (<http://community.abcfamily.go.com/forums/general/25-days-christmas/2008-schedule-25-days-christmas>)

Chanukah jelly doughnuts - Sufganiya

The word sufganiya comes from the greek sufgan, meaning "puffed and fried." Every bakery in Jerusalem makes these jelly doughnuts for Chanukah. They used to consist of jam sandwiched between two rounds of dough. The jam always ran out during the frying, but today, balls of dough can be deep-fried first and then injected with jam before being rolled in sugar.



- 2 scant tablespoons (2 packages) active dry yeast
- 4 tablespoons sugar, plus sugar for rolling
- 3/4 cup lukewarm water or milk
- 2 1/2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour, sifted
- 2 large egg yolks
- Pinch of salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 1/2 tablespoons unsalted butter or parve margarine, at room temperature

1. Sprinkle the yeast and 2 tablespoons of the sugar into the water or milk and stir to dissolve.
2. Place the flour on a work surface and make a well in the center. Add the yeast mixture, egg yolks, salt, cinnamon, and the remaining 2 tablespoons sugar. Knead well, about 5 minutes, working the butter or margarine into the dough and kneading until the dough is elastic. You can also use a food processor fitted with the steel blade to do this, processing about 2 minutes.
3. Put the dough on a greased bowl, cover with plastic, and let it rise overnight in the refrigerator.
4. Sprinkle flour of the work surface. Roll out the dough to an 1/8-inch thickness. Using a 2-inch cookie cutter or floured drinking glass, cut out circles. Let the dough circles rise 15 minutes or more.
5. With your hands, gently form the dough circles into balls.
6. Pour 2-inches of oil into a heavy pot and heat until very hot, about 375 degrees.
7. Slip the doughnuts into the oil, 4 or 5 at a time, using a slotted spoon. Turn them when brown, after a few minutes, to crisp on the other side. Drain on paper towels.
8. Using a turkey baster or an injector available at cooking stores, inject a teaspoon of jam into each doughnut. Then roll all of them in granulated sugar and serve immediately. You can make larger sufganiyot if you like.

Yield: twenty-four 2-inch wide sufganiyot Recipe taken from STARchefs.com Holiday Baking

Should we tell our children the truth about Santa Claus?



This is a question that has come to many people as a moral dilemma. We teach our children not to lie, but is telling them about Santa Claus a lie? Where did Santa Claus come from? Is he still with us now?

The History of Santa Claus

Santa Claus originated in New York city in the early 1800. It was derived from the Dutch word Sinter Klaas, meaning St. Nicholas. St. Nicholas was the favored saint in Holland.

Nicholas was born in the 400 century in an area we now know as Turkey. He was born to wealthy family, but orphaned at an early age. He went to live with his uncle. His uncle taught him many things, including kindness and generosity. Nicholas was well educated. He became a Bishop.

Nicholas was left a handsome sum of money. Upon receiving his inheritance, Nicholas decided to live his life with generosity and kindness. There are 2 stories that are associated with him. The 1st story is of a young boy who attended the school that Nicholas taught at. The boy was lonely and homesick. To cheer him up, Nicholas made a wooden horse and snuck in his room late at night and left it in the boy's shoe.

The 2nd story is when he helped 3 sisters with dowries in order to save them from a life of unfavorable work. The donation of money was done secretly at night. There are 2 versions of how the money was left. First, it was thrown through a window and landed in a sock that was left drying over the fireplace. The other version says that Nicholas dropped it into the chimney and the family found it in the fireplace. When the last daughter was to be married, the father decided to stay up all night to see who was leaving the money. He found it was Nicholas.

As Nicholas became older, he was grieved over the poverty in the world. He sought to help a family and hoped in turn that family would help another family.

Soon St. Nicholas' reputation of generosity spread throughout Europe where he became a favored saint. His reputation crossed over to America, where he became known as Santa Claus.

So, is telling your children about Santa Claus a lie? Or is teaching your child about Santa Claus an opportunity to teach the gift of giving? Is Santa Claus alive in our hearts as we reach out to others in need? I believe it is an opportunity we shouldn't miss.



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