

5 Ways to Create Family Traditions

And 5 Reasons Why We Should

Life today is so fast-paced and demanding, it's important that we find ways to reconnect with each other on a daily basis. Establishing family traditions helps us do just that. Traditions are those special times that bring families together, allowing us to express unity as a family and to create bonds that last a lifetime. Since every family unit is unique unto itself, the traditions created by each family are sure to be unique and special to the whole family unit as well as to each of its members individually.

Traditions of daily family life

You can utilize every day rituals, the activities and routine of daily living, to establish family traditions. These might include rituals surrounding bedtime. Talking, reading, snuggling up together, and saying a prayer are things to look forward to on a regular basis.

Spending time alone with each child, such as having dinner with individual children or doing a hobby or project together personalizes experiences and affords [parents](#) the opportunity to recognize and encourage each child's special qualities. Weekly family meetings (perhaps with a favorite dinner) allows for discussion of upcoming schedules and activities for each family member and provides a forum to air differences, raise important issues, and plan ahead for the family.

Annual family days

These outings can include camping, hiking, or going fishing at the first sign of spring. The first ballgame of the season is often an event anticipated weeks ahead of time. A picnic to a favorite place or a backyard BBQ for friends and neighbors can create an atmosphere of [cooperation](#) in the

planning and preparation for the event.

The entire family can participate in a “spring cleaning” day around the house, or perhaps a day annually or monthly to lend a hand within the community.

The annual family vacation

Family trips can include traveling to reunions to visit with extended family. An annual vacation may be purely for rest, relaxation, and fun, or may have an educational bent, such as a visit to a cultural/historical site or one that reflects a specific place or event that is being studied in school.

What’s important is that each family member has an opportunity to weigh in on choosing where the family should go. Family trips can also have themes, such as ecology, learning about the [environment](#), working on a farm or ranch, or “service trips” such as helping a community at home or abroad.

Family traditions that connect us to our past

These traditions provide a sense of continuity and cultural [identity](#) and allow us to explore the similarities, the things that resonate within each of us individually, with our ancestors. Visiting the cemetery to the gravesites of family members is common to many cultures and affords the family a time to honor and remember those who have gone before us.

Beyond hearing stories about one’s ancestors, making a trip of “discovery” to the mother country, the home of one’s ancestors, puts families up close and personal with the land and landmarks of one’s relatives.

Family objects and artifacts, things inherited from family members (Bibles, wine cups, candlesticks, baptismal outfits, Christmas ornaments, etc.) can be incorporated into family rituals and ceremonies.

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Holiday traditions

Birthdays, anniversaries, and other personal family events are occasions to establish any number of traditions, such as a favorite cake or meal, or visiting a place closely associated with the event.

Annual [religious](#) and national rituals and ceremonies provide unity in community, celebrating with those who share ideas and beliefs. Beyond what we have in common, though, families can learn together about other [spiritual](#) traditions by visiting local houses of worship and participating in holidays and celebrations of other traditions. This practice encourages tolerance, acceptance, and diversity.

There's no doubt that the benefits of establishing family traditions go well beyond spending time together.

- Traditions establish and strengthen family bonds by providing a solid structure, a sense of continuity, and a feeling of belonging.
- Family teaches values. Traditions support and communicate a family's belief system. They instill faith and convey the family's perspective on life experiences.
- The immediate family serves as your witnesses through life's transitions, sharing and committing to each other in times of joy and celebrations and lending support and comfort through crises, disappointments, and losses.
- A healthy family unit is a vital force in the nurturing and molding of a child's identity. Family traditions are a sound way to foster a sense of stability and security and this contributes to the emotional [health](#), [self-esteem](#), and self-respect of family members.
- The family serves as the model for all interpersonal relationships. The way an individual is cared for, supported, encouraged, allowed to express and be themselves in the family, or not, enormously influences the choices and

decisions an individual makes moving into the future.

Family traditions are part of the “language” of a family, a short-hand, symbolic way of relating that everyone understands. As life moves forward and people grow and change, family traditions keep us connected. For sure, they create [memories](#) for everyone to share for a lifetime, and even beyond.