

# Family traditions: 10 ideas to get you started

by [Tsh Oxenreider](#) • May 18, 2009



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The following is by Sherri of [Serene Journey](#).

Traditions. Those little rituals passed down from generation to generation that help shape your family by creating a sense of unity, warmth and closeness. They create memories that fill your mind with peace, love, happiness, and security.

But what do you do if your family doesn't have many traditions? Well, you create them of course! **Somebody has to create all these little rituals, so why not let it be you?**

There are so many traditions that you can incorporate into your family. I grew up spending every birthday with my family, decorating eggs at Easter, carving the pumpkin at Halloween and opening stockings on Christmas morning.

Traditions don't have to be extravagant, intense or require a lot of planning.

They can be as simple as reading to your child every night in the same comfy chair, having a movie and pizza night every Friday or discussing things you are grateful for around the dinner table each evening. **Traditions are the glue that keeps a family together.** We all have very busy lifestyles, and adding a small tradition here or there can make all the difference to your family.

### **Family tradition ideas to get you started:**

**1. The birthday hat.** Get a hat that is well suited to your family and make this the "official birthday hat." The idea is that each person wears it at their birthday dinner, whether that be at home or out in a restaurant. We have a rather large birthday hat in our family – it looks like a cake complete with big felt candles out of the top. It's ridiculously awesome.

**2. Birthday cakes.** Create the birthday boy or girl's favorite type of cake. Is it cheesecake, devil's food cake, or black forest cake? Or is it not even cake at all? Do they prefer pies, cookies, or cupcakes? Whatever it is, make their favorite treat an annual tradition for their birthday.

**3. New job.** When someone in your family gets a new job, a promotion, or a raise, create a tradition that they take *you* out for dinner. It doesn't have to be a fancy or expensive dinner – you can go for pizza or wraps.

**4. Christmas dainty exchange.** This is my favorite new tradition in our family. Christmas can be a very stressful time, but baking all those Christmas goodies doesn't have to add to it. Include as many or as few people as you want, and choose two to three items each to bake. Bake enough to share with everyone in your group and agree to a date when you'll meet up and exchange the goodies you've all made. I love this one for a couple of reasons. You get a huge variety of baked goods, and you don't have to spend weeks preparing. Who doesn't want that?

**5. New Year's fondue.** This has been a tradition in my family for as long as I can remember. Every New Year's Eve we have a fondue at Mom and Dad's. It's a very fond memory for me, and now my husband and kids are included in it as well. It's a very slow way to eat a meal, and a great way to spend the evening with family as we ring in the new year.



*Photo by [Sara Atkins](#)*

**6. Saturday mornings in bed.** Choose a morning on the weekend to spend in bed with your family. You don't need to spend hours laying around, but 15 to 30 minutes is a nice length of time. Try having coffee, tea, or milk with a couple of cookies. Relaxing and taking a few minutes to connect with your family can be a great way to kick off a weekend.

**7. Easter egg hunt.** A classic in many households around the world. I always looked forward to finding hidden goodies from around the house each year. It was always a lot of fun and the morning would be full of laughter. Even now, my mom and dad still hide Easter treats for us, and it will certainly be something we continue and share with our kids.

**8. Potluck.** This is a great way for extended family members to showcase their culinary talents. If you decide to do this monthly or bi-monthly, consider themes – make one night Mexican, and the next time Thai, followed by Italian. Theme nights can introduce you to a whole new world of cooking.

Bring print-outs of the recipe so people can take it home with them.

**9. Family Olympics.** When the weather is nice, spend the day at the park, at the lake, or at the beach. Decide on sporting events for whole family – think bean bag toss, horseshoes, badminton, volleyball, and synchronized swimming. Create teams, or compete individually and have prizes for all participants.

**10. Kick off summer with a BBQ.** This is a great way to welcome the beautiful summer weather and BBQ season. Set up outside on the grass or on the deck, and have everything from fresh fruit and vegetables, water, hamburgers, hot dogs, potato salad, and ice cream. Have some games ready for kids like water balloon tosses, shoe scramble, and potato sack races.

Creating a feeling of unity, warmth and closeness with your family is priceless. **There are no rules and there is no "right" way to do this.** So take initiative, get creative, make it happen and most importantly have fun!

*What is your favorite family tradition? How will you create a new family tradition?* Please share your ideas in the comments.

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**Sherri** writes at [Serene Journey](#), a personal development blog where she shares tips, tricks and philosophies that can help us all enjoy life. [Serene Journey](#) is about living your life deliberately, purposefully and fully by choosing happiness, and remembering it's often the little things that mean the most.