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What Do You Suggest For Family Holiday Activities That Don't Cost A Fortune?

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A weekly question/answer column

What Do You Suggest For Family Holiday Activities That Don't Cost A Fortune?

Glen O. Jenson answers:*

Here are some suggestions you might consider for inexpensive activities to make the coming holidays special.

- Write a letter of appreciation to your spouse and children. Letters are often read over and over again, each time conveying warmth and acceptance. A letter from a significant person in your life is always welcome. We all like mail that makes us feel good. A 33-cent letter is a nice way to tell a person of your love and appreciation for them, and the price is right.
- Make personal contact with as many of your immediate family members as you can, especially the young and the old. A face-to-face visit is preferred by most, but letters, email messages or phone calls are also great to receive. An unexpected contact of some kind is often a very welcome gift.
- Instead of giving expensive gifts to parents and older brothers and sisters, agree beforehand as a family to pool money that would have been spent and give it to a charitable organization or a family in need.
- Join other families in your neighborhood for a “sing in” of favorite Christmas songs. Singing is something in which everyone can participate regardless of age. Invite each family to bring a food treat to share with others.
- Take a walk around areas in your community that have festive Christmas decorations. Christmas decorations are better enjoyed standing next to them. Enjoy the beauty others have provided.
- Select an ancestor who somehow has made a meaningful contribution to your life. Compile some information about that individual to share with other family members.
- When loved ones are together, hold an “I Remember When” session encouraging each person to recall and share significant events and memories that have been meaningful to you and other family members. A video or audio recording of such a session can become priceless.
- Invite someone who may not have family members close by to join you and others for a meal or two and some conversation during the holiday season.
- Spend time with children. Holidays are better in the presence of children. Children enjoy having adults show them attention and give them praise — inexpensive to give and very much appreciated.
- Greet everyone you see with a smile and a wish for a wonderful holiday season.

- Find new and different ways to express love and appreciation to family members and others during the holiday season. Use your creativity to brighten the lives of others.

* Glen O. Jenson is Utah State University Extension Family and Human Development Specialist