

Winter 12-2017

## Birthday Week

Carrigan Price

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Carlyle Price  
Layton, Utah  
December 2017

## **Birthday Week Calendar Custom**

### **Informant**

Carlyle is 16 years old. She is a Junior at Layton High School and is on the drill team there. Her favorite subject is history. She was born and raised in Layton, Utah and currently lives in West Layton. She is the 3<sup>rd</sup> of 4 children in her family. She is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. She is my younger sister.

### **Context**

Carlyle told me about this custom on a Saturday afternoon as she woke up from a nap. She and I were laying in her bed in her room in Layton and we were chatting as she roused herself from a long teenage snooze. We were both wrapped up in blankets against the cold and were very comfortable. We were the only two people in the room and the rest of the family was sleeping, so it was very quiet. The room was dark and she was petting her dog Watson while she spoke. It was a very relaxed and calm atmosphere. Carlyle explained that this custom takes place around her birthday ever year—her birthday is April 28<sup>th</sup>. It is a 7-day-long tradition and her birthday falls on one of those 7 days. As the birthday girl, she gets to choose if Birthday Week ends or begins with her actual birthday. There is no geographic limitation on birthday week; she is the birthday queen wherever she goes during those 7 days, but it is mostly celebrated in her home in Layton and at school. She gets to choose a restaurant to eat dinner at every night of that week, so wherever she chooses to eat is a location of the celebrations as well. The people who help celebrate consist of her immediate and extended family and her friends. There is usually a family party during the week, and the attendees of that are all the members of her dad's side of the family and her immediate family. Most of her friends are familiar with Birthday Week, so they participate as well. She only receives presents on her birthday, and that happens early in the morning on the 28<sup>th</sup> before everybody goes to work and school. This custom is celebrated for all Carlyle's immediate family members, and it varies slightly depending on whose birthday it is. However, the basic rules stay the same—like duration and places.

### **Text**

Birthday Week is the week of your birthday and you can choose 7 days before or 7 days after or split it but everybody that has a brain does the 7 days before and what you do on those seven days is whatever you want [laughter] you get to pick a place to go eat and you usually open presents in the morning and also we have a big family party on the Sunday that is inside your birthday week. When I'm the birthday person, I get to be the queen of everybody. Like when Mom tells me to do the dishes, I just look at her and say "Birthday Week" and somebody else

does them or when I play Christmas music and dad says “It’s literally April” I just say “Birthday Week” and I get to listen to it. If I’m not the birthday person it doesn’t affect you that much unless you’re with the birthday person and then it’s prison. But then it’s okay because when it’s your birthday week you get to be the one that makes other people in prison.

### **Texture**

Carlysle, despite rubbing sleep out of her eyes, was really happy and excited as she talked about this custom. She laughed a lot and recognized that this custom could be considered a little over the top or excessive. She expressed how much she loved it and said she will celebrate a full birthday week until the day she dies. She plans on continuing this tradition with her own family someday as well. She reveled in the absolute power birthday week gives her and even counted down how many days until her birthday as we talked about birthday week. She said that it was so important that she wouldn’t actually turn another year older without birthday week. During birthday week, she admitted that she sometimes creates an atmosphere of fear or dread when she makes people perform tasks for her, but she also said it’s a week of happiness for her because nothing can go wrong. Carlysle, as well as the rest of my family, are firm believers in birthday week and take it very seriously.

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