

# Holiday Guide

*for your practically grown-up big kids*



## Do something they are familiar with

Surprisingly, your big kids will love some of the age-old traditions you've done in the past and will expect you to keep them. Yes, even if they occasionally tease you about how lame it is. So, don't skip the holiday lights, dyeing the eggs, or sparkler buying. Keep some of the old stuff the same.

## Do something new

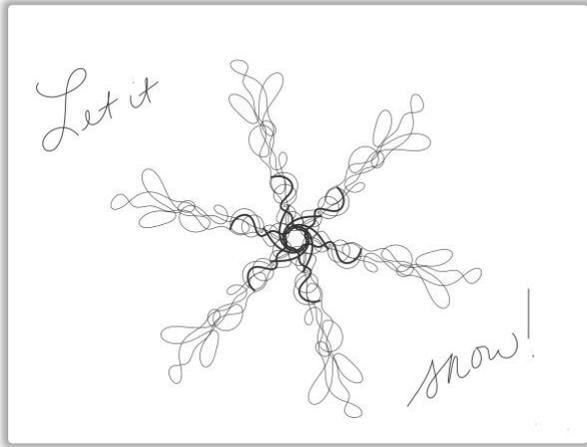
Keep it fresh and fun. They may seem disinterested, but it could be because they are a little bored. Do something they haven't experienced yet. You might just add a new favorite tradition to the mix.



## Do something for someone

Whether this was part of your old tradition or not, make it a point to do something for someone over any holiday season. Chances are your kids have seen someone in need that they would love to help, but don't know how. Talk about it and come up with a plan. Their sense of purpose and meaning deepens so much during these years and doing something for someone in need may be the very activity that draws you closest together.



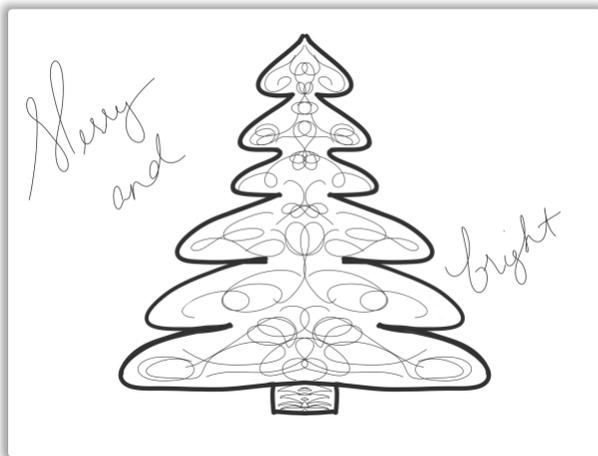


## Ask them what they want

Maybe you don't know which traditions are most important to them. Ask what they love! Make them each a favorite food during the holiday. Watch the movie they want. Don't put pressure on yourself about doing all the things you've ever done, ask what's important to the people you love, and enjoy the moments.

## Rotate according to schedules

They won't all be able to make it to everything. Say no to a couple of things that you're invited to and rotate your activities according to their schedules. Have three movie nights if you have to. Decorate with three out of your four kids and call it success. Things won't always go as planned. Remember your goal to enjoy the moments.



## Make your gifts handmade

If gifts are being exchanged, make it a "handmade year". Have your immediate family take the pressure off by not expecting siblings to spend their short supply of money on gifts for each other or mom and dad. They have enough expectation outside your home. Invite them in without any stress.

## 15 mostly inexpensive Big Kid Activities:

1. Family and friends game night (don't exclude their friends at this age, it's okay, you'll see more of them, trust me).
2. Movie night (Let each kid choose, or come to a consensus, and do it often).
3. Make holiday foods together (if you feed them, they will come).
4. Discover a new place to view Christmas lights.
5. Do a glow in the dark activity (can be tweaked for any holiday season).

6. Scavenger hunt (this one can be super fun-and time consuming, so beware-if you do a lot of prep and actually talk to store employees to do Amazing Race style envelopes for their hunt).
7. Host a party or sleepover *they* plan.
8. Dress up and take them to a nice dinner (okay, I said *mostly inexpensive for a reason*)
9. Give them a “wish list” but ask them to list wishes for their future, naming what they desire to contribute to the world. Then listen to their dreams, asking how you as a parent can help them reach their goals.
10. Read the same book and discuss it when you have your next family get-together or dinner.
11. Give them \$10 to pick out a gift card for someone else.
12. Play a favorite family sport.
13. Bake, bake, and bake, then give every bit of it away (maybe even to their friends, theatre or sports groups, neighbor, boss, teacher, etc).
14. Take them shopping letting them pick out *little kid* gifts to fill a box for a child in need (they will have more fun with this than you can imagine).
15. Make music together (we’re a musical family, so if this isn’t how you roll, choose that thing you all are into, and sit down for your *own style* jam session).

Choose one or two things to do, not all of them, goodness! Give your kids from high schooler to on-her-own adult an opportunity to join your events or parties *if they can*. And, dear parent, hold all of the plans you make in the palm of your open hands instead of clenching tightly to any of it. Spouses and families will someday enter the mix, and you will be only *part* of their plans. And if you are blessed to parent along with a partner, schedule some time together...something that might just become a tradition for the two of you when none of your kids can make it to *your* thing because they are planning their own. Find something new that you enjoy and prepare to fill your time with a little bit less of them, and a little bit more of what interests you. Some of our recently-empty-nester friends just started taking ballroom dancing lessons together. Just sayin’.