

Christmas Traditions

- A tradition only has the meaning given to it by those who practice it.
- If someone claims that a Christmas tradition has pagan origins, feel sorry for them.
- Like Halloween, the pagan part has been (thankfully) lost.
- Traditions make us feel comfortable.
- Assign your own meanings and teach them so your future family has a positive history.

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Gifts

- In imitation of God's gift to those whom He loves. (Or, the gifts of the Wise Men.)
- Our gifts should satisfy true needs, not wants. Give gifts like God, so the recipients can be more than they are
- God chose to live here from infancy. Would you?
- The date is not in the Bible. This one works.

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Family

- Wouldn't it be nice if we got that excited about gathering extended church family?

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Santa

- Surgeons have the Ether Bunny.
- Congressmen seek the leprechaun's pot of gold.
- Vampires and werewolves have been sanitized and are the heroes of a modern romance series.
- We all need a little magic now and then.

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The Tree

- A reminder of the beauty that surrounds us, although winter has begun.
- Made popular by Martin Luther.

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- Christmas Stockings (Turkey, 4th century)
- Mistletoe (Rome and Scandinavia)
- Holly and other greenery (Northern Europe)
- Poinsettias (Mexico, 1828)
- Candy Canes (1950's)
- Christmas cards (1843)
- Rudolf (Macy's 1939)

Hanukkah

- From 168 – 165 BC, a revolt led by the Maccabee family successfully drove the Syrian occupation forces from Israel.
- Read 1 Maccabees.
- Upon re-capturing Jerusalem, they cleaned out the Temple, which had been made a pagan shrine, and re-started Mosaic rituals.
- Due to the war, they had only one day's oil.
- The oil lasted eight days, until they were re-supplied.

Kwanza

- Invented in 1966 in Long Beach, CA
- Celebrates African heritage from December 26 – January 1.
- Has seven candles to represent Unity, Self-determination, Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, Purpose, Creativity, and Faith.
- Kwanza is Swahili for “fruit of the harvest”