

GUIDE TO

# The Best Christmas Ideas and Traditions Ever!

**MOM-E-SCHOOL**

DEANNA RHINEHART



# family

Christmas

## night adventures

GUIDE TO

## The Best Christmas Ideas and Traditions Ever!

Every year the dynamics of our home change along with the seasons of our lives. This year we are in a transitional period with great reflectiveness over the seasons we've lived and the seasons yet to come. We are practicing the art of thankfulness as we build on all God has done in preparation for the next big adventure. In this reflective time, we've enjoyed jotting down some of the things that have made our holidays so special. Not every family is going to operate like ours but in these ideas and traditions we trust you'll find inspiration for traditions of your own. Remember, what you do is not nearly as important as who you do it with. Enjoy every moment. Merry Christmas!



*Brittney and Deanna*

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### CHRISTMAS HUGS IN A CUP



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#### MY FAVORITE CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND TRADITIONS

This darling cocoa or eggnog topper is the perfect way to say, "I love you" without using any words. Somethings just speak volumes all by themselves.

- 3 marshmallows
- Candy corn nose
- Brown piping frosting
- 4 pretzel sticks
- Beverage of choice

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### SNOWMAN FAMILY PORTRAIT



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### MY FAVORITE CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND TRADITIONS

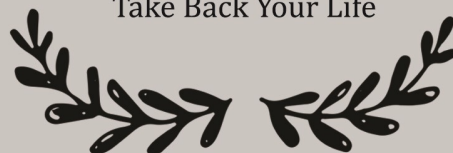
Give your children a snowman challenge this year and watch their creativity soar. Have each family member build a snow person of themselves, then take a family portrait with your new snow twins. Include an annual snow portrait in your Christmas traditions to enjoy for years to come.

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## MY FAVORITE CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND TRADITIONS

Christmas is a great time to teach children how to send personal notes. Let your child's artistry flow and interpret any messages if necessary. Your child feels special when they give something only they can give. Praise your child for a job well done. Help them place their note in an envelope. Address, and decorate with holiday stickers, seal with a kiss and let them place it in the mailbox! (So grown up!) To encourage gratitude, have your children write thank you notes after Christmas as well.

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**CHRISTMAS  
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## MY FAVORITE CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND TRADITIONS

The annual trimming of the tree marks the beginning of holiday festivities for many families. For years we went to a tree farm to choose the perfect one; before that the mountains, in recent years we've gone with artificial, but the iconic experience remains the same. To make it special, start a tree trimming tradition and include a special meal, dessert, or beverage. Add music, post the event date where all can see and make sure the decor is ready to go. Add a Christmas movie or shopping trip to the roster and you'll turn the Christmas Tree Date into one of the most anticipated events of the year.

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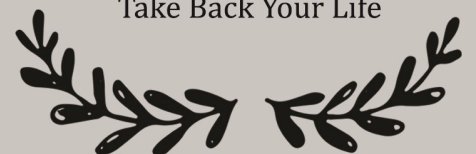
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## THE CHRISTMAS TREE DATE

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**GIVING AND  
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### **MY FAVORITE CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND TRADITIONS**

To teach my children to be gracious givers I had to first teach them to be gracious receivers. It's been amazing to watch how carefully my children shop for each other. It can take them the entire year to find just the right gift to express their love in a way that hits their sibling's highest value. Our children are such awesome givers because they they know their gifts will be received with the utmost appreciation and gratitude. SLOW DOWN CHRISTMAS. Try opening one gift at a time, then express heartfelt gratitude for each one. It can take us hours to open all our gifts... but not because of the volume, it's because our focus is on the reason behind the celebration. We don't ever want gifts to become more important than those who give and receive them.

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## CHRISTMAS EVE COCOA WITH TIPS OF LOVE

### MY FAVORITE CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND TRADITIONS

The way to teach your children to give intentional acts of kindness is to model it for them. On Christmas Eve we celebrate with our extended family but before it gets too late, we head to the local diner and order one cup of hot cocoa each. We aren't hungry, but it's our excuse to fill the table with wads of \$1 tips. Even the littlest members empty their pockets to bless the little waitress working on Christmas Eve.

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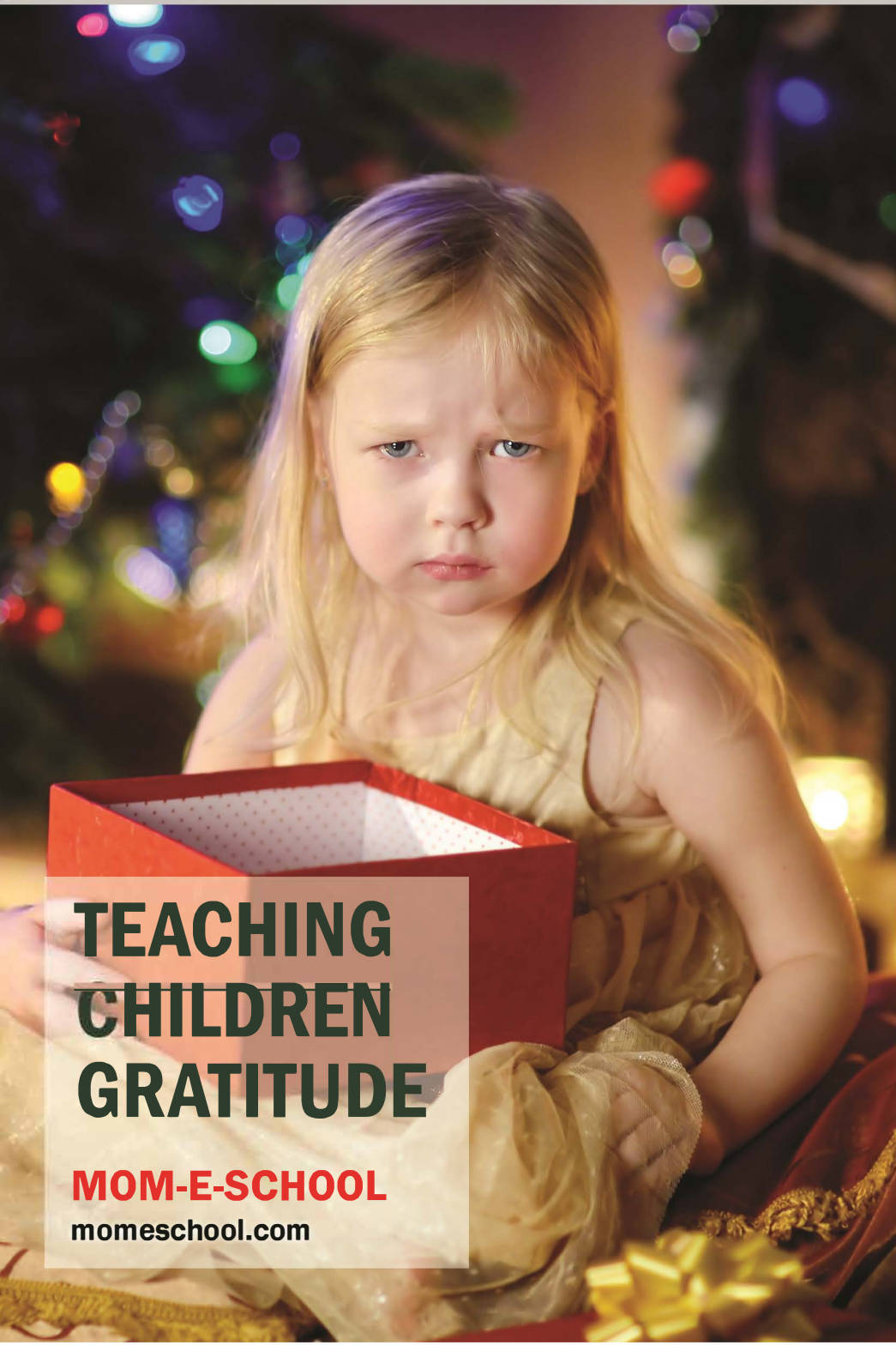
## MY FAVORITE CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND TRADITIONS

What do you do when your child throws a fit over a gift? Your best defense is offense. Keep your focus on family, with gifts being the bonus. Teach your children to be gracious receivers, practicing saying thank you and what to do if they get a dud. They'll think it's funny, and in the event it happens, they'll have tools to manage their disappointment. We use to incorporate the White Elephant game into our extended family celebration. If you are not familiar with it, everyone brings bad gifts for fun. Worst gift of the evening is actually the best. If a melt down does occur, don't be afraid to give a time-out... (yes, even at Christmas.) Most fits, are not over gifts, however, they are the result of tired, sugar-filled children. You might have to leave events early and monitor the dessert table. Finally, remind children of their sharing rules, preempt if possible, redirect focus, and correct when necessary.

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## THE 12 DATES OF CHRISTMAS

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### MY FAVORITE CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND TRADITIONS

This is one of our family's all-time favorites! Every few years we give 12 different family dates or events to be enjoyed throughout the year. Your dates can be anything from a family trip to McDonalds to a play date in the park to an elaborate vacation. It's not what you do that matters as much as the fun way you do it and how you present it. You can give your gifts in 12 separate boxes filled with themed accessories for each event. You can use treasure maps or clues to discover what excitement lies in store. You can even save the boxes and not open them until the 25th of each month! (Of course you'll want other gifts under the tree, because this version is sheer torture... but the kids love it, and it's a special way to extend the spirit of Christmas throughout the year.

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### THE GOLDEN CHRISTMAS BOX

#### MY FAVORITE CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND TRADITIONS

I grew up in a home of modest means where we only received a handful of gifts for Christmas and that included underwear. The gifts we did receive were beyond cherished. I can even tell you what most of them were. To help my children understand the purpose of giving gifts, I use a golden box. In it I place a gift certificate or letter announcing either one special family gift or one special gift for each of them. It could be as simple as a date with mom, or as elaborate as a trip, or a special activity. All the other gifts are fun and given in love, but The Golden Box holds the gifts I hope they'll remember for the rest of their lives.

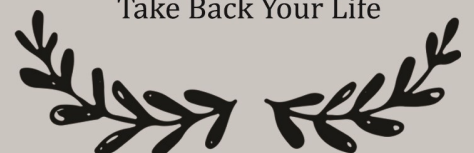
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### CHRISTMAS AROUND THE CLOCK



#### MY FAVORITE CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND TRADITIONS

I take advantage of opportunities to teach my children to savor special moments. In an instant world, it's okay to slow down Christmas. To do this we play a game called the Christmas Clock. It varies from year to year, but the idea stays the same. Instead of opening all the gifts in one mad rush, we set the timer and open them throughout the morning. This sounds like Christmas torture but we accidentally fell on this when our toddlers did not want to open more gifts until they had a chance to play with the one they had. We just adapted to them and realized how much we loved slowing down Christmas to include reading the Christmas story, breakfast, prayer, and playing with each new gift before moving on to the next. This tradition grew with us but if you have small children, you might find this works well for your family.

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## MY FAVORITE CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND TRADITIONS

What should you tell your children about Santa? Everyone has their own take on this, so I'll give you mine. In our family truth and honesty are some of our highest values. If our children told us the truth when they were in trouble, their punishment was modified. We did this to teach them we are their safe zone and there is nothing we can't handle together as long as we're truthful. This is critical to establish and reinforce throughout their lives. All kids lie, but we worked hard to discourage it. Since we didn't want any form of dishonesty we shared the historical story of St Nicolas and his demonstration of faith, as well as the legend of Santa Clause that he inspired. It's an awesome story of his legacy of love and by telling all of it, we actually reinforce our family values while still celebrating all the festive fun Santa brings.

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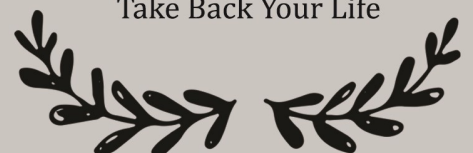
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## THE STORY OF SANTA

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# Merry Christmas!

## and have the happiest New Year

## Ever!

You may not realize this but my background in child psychology, education, leadership training, music, ministry, and business make this more than just a collection of fun Christmas ideas. I'm a forerunner in Emotional Safety and IQ-EQ Education, which means I'm not just a mom, I'm an expert in teaching mom's how to create healthy, happy homes. The concepts behind these activities strengthen family bonds and address root issues that lead to family conflicts.

I'd like to invite you to join Brittney and I on a special project we're working on this year called, *Take Back Your Life!* No stone will be left unturned as we tackle each room of our homes, each aspect of our lives, and each chamber of our hearts. I'll show you how to make a life success plan, how to transform your home from chaos to tip-top efficiency, how to master your finances, and how to develop family relationships that last.

This year only, I'll post the materials I create for the challenge on our mom-e-school Facebook page, **FREE**, for those taking the challenge with us. It's time to Take Back Your Life and start living your *Happy Ever After*. Together, we can do this!



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**Click Here to Get Started Now!**