

Christmas Eve Traditions

(NC)-Excitement is a big part of the holiday season, especially on Christmas Eve when children eagerly await Santa's arrival.

"Every family has their own traditions that make this night a special time," says Denise Darragh of a major Canadian retail chain. "These special activities that are looked forward to all year are often created when children are young and parents mix favorite traditions from their childhood with new ones that reflect their growing family."

If you've got a young family and are looking for some inspiration on how to make Christmas Eve memorable for years to come, consider these ideas from holiday experts.

- Leave cookies and milk out for Santa with a cookie plate and mug. Plus, remember to include a few carrots for Rudolf and the rest of the reindeer crew.

- Find an outdoor ice rink in your area and set up a skating party for family members young and old. The exercise and fresh air will help young ones sleep later on Christmas morning as an added bonus.

- If you don't have a fireplace or your roof is slippery, leave a special Santa Key on your front door to provide a new route of entry for the jolly old elf.

- Sprinkle icing sugar on your dining room table once the kids are in bed. Tell them it's magic reindeer dust when they spot it in the morning (proof positive Santa stopped by).

- Settle excited kids with a bed-time story like the 'Night Before Christmas' and snuggle on the sofa together with hot cups of cocoa.

- While most families have decorated their tree long before Christmas Eve, consider saving a few special ornaments to hang on Christmas Eve.

- Get your youngsters involved in Christmas Day preparations by assigning a few special tasks to them the night before like decorating sugar cookies or helping to hang mistletoe.

- Teach your kids popular Christmas carols or other seasonal songs and sing them together before bed time on Christmas Eve.

The traditions you start at Christmas Eve are only limited by your imagination. No matter what activities you choose, they'll provide happy memories for the whole family and enrich the holiday season with sharing and love.

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