

## New traditions, old traditions

Get your family together and make a list of all the family traditions that you have. You may find there are more than you realised because you may not think of them as traditions – things like eating Sunday dinner together or having family games evenings.

Ask each other honestly how much you enjoy each tradition. Be willing to tweak or abandon any that no longer work for you. Traditions aren't always carried on for ever. Some, like the Easter egg hunt you always did for the children, will die out naturally. As things change over the years, new traditions may come about spontaneously, but you can also plan them deliberately – for example, always having pancakes for breakfast on birthdays.

## Create lasting memories

If you ask adults what positive memories they have of their childhood, they usually begin with a smile and then say something like: 'We used to ...' or 'We always ...' Often these memories are not of expensive holidays or presents, but activities like strawberry picking expeditions, board game marathons, or going to the beach in the holidays. Giving our children happy memories like these is a wonderful gift that will last throughout their lives.

Remember that every family is unique, and when it comes to family traditions, anything goes, so do what works for you. And above all ... have fun!



Whether they are simple or profound, traditions say to us, "You belong here – these are your roots"

**Rob and Dianne Parsons**



Care for the Family creates resources that help to build firm foundations for family life and support those who face family difficulties.

### Resources

**Read** our book on family traditions, *We Always ... Making Memories That Last a Lifetime*. Available at [cff.org.uk/shop](http://cff.org.uk/shop)

**Attend** a local parenting course  
[cff.org.uk/courses](http://cff.org.uk/courses)

**Visit** the Single Parenting section of our website [cff.org.uk/parenting](http://cff.org.uk/parenting)

 [cff.org.uk](http://cff.org.uk)

 029 2081 0800

 [mail@cff.org.uk](mailto:mail@cff.org.uk)

    

TLFT04

A Christian initiative to strengthen family life, offering support to everyone.  
Care for the Family is a registered charity (England and Wales: 1066905; Scotland: SC038497).  
A company limited by guarantee no. 3482910. Registered in England and Wales.  
Registered office: Tovey House, Cleppa Park, Newport, NP10 8BA.

# Top Tips For Parents

## Family Traditions



**The family acts as a defence against the storms of life. It should be a place of training, security and safety, but it also has another vital function. It gives us a sense of identity; it helps us know our place in the world – perhaps even the universe. One of the ways in which families can build a sense of togetherness over the years is by having traditions.**

## A sense of belonging

Traditions can be something we do on special occasions, such as singing Auld Lang Syne with neighbours on New Year's Eve or collecting holly for Christmas decorations, or they can be something that you do often together, like having a weekly takeaway night or taking hot chocolate on a family walk. Whatever the tradition, it can help families bond together by sharing something special. Traditions help create a sense of connectedness. They say 'This is the way we do things around here. This is where I belong.'



## Values

Traditions are a great way of passing on our values. Nightly bedtime stories can give children a love of reading and show the value of education, family meals and activities together encourage unity.

## Comfort and security

During times of change and grief, family traditions can be an important source of comfort and security. Maybe you've moved house and everything is new and strange for your children, but at least they know that every Tuesday is still pizza night and every Saturday morning they can still count on going for a swim with dad or mum.

## Cultural and religious heritage

Many family traditions can be to do with our culture or religious heritage and are often handed down from generation to generation. Continuing them in your own family is one way of passing on your family history to your children, teaching them about events that have shaped your family, and nurturing the connection between the generations.

## A way to remember

Traditions can help us remember those loved ones who are no longer with us by including them in our traditions as the years pass. This might involve looking at treasured photo albums, visiting their favourite places or perhaps, like one family, having a special bauble to represent them on the Christmas tree.

## How traditions come about

Some family traditions come about by chance. Perhaps one day you go for a walk and end up racing sticks in a stream, and after that, every time you pass the stream you do the same thing. It has become a tradition. Other family traditions are inherited, with new parents continuing the same traditions with their children that they were brought up with.

You can also deliberately begin new traditions. For blended families in particular, who don't have a shared history, it can be good to work on building new memories and experiences together. This doesn't mean you have to abandon all the old family traditions; it is simply that you add to them with traditions that reflect your new family – for example, when and where you open your presents on Christmas Day.

