

Family Shares Ideas To Make The Season Bright

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MOUNT JOY (Lancaster Co.)

— The Creveling's two-story German home in Mount Joy glows with coziness during the holiday season.

It's the little touches that make Christmas truly memorable, believe Sue and Rick, parents of Kristen, 8, and Katie, 5.

Family traditions of turkey dinners, cookie baking, and sing-alongs have been passed through the generations. Now the Crevelings are adding some of their own to enrich their children's lives.

The Christmas season begins officially after Thanksgiving when Rick takes his annual trek to a local bookstore to find tapes to add to his stock of Christmas music.

"I think music sets the atmosphere," he said. "It's amazing what the kids pick up by listening to music."

Then the family cuts down its own tree. While Sue and the girls decorate it, Rich picks out music for the season that spreads an air of anticipation.

Sue said, "I like the tree decorated with things the children make. Our tree is more of a homey, subdued tree rather than a glitzy one."

Each ornament the child places is left where attached and not moved to a more eye-balanced spot because Sue believes it is important that children have confidence that they do a good job.

"We put on the lights and take an evening to decorate the tree," Sue said. "The holiday music and the real tree smell put us in a Christmasy mood."

A crackling fire in one of the four fireplaces in the Crevelings' home encourages drop-in guests to linger. Sue has a bowl of popcorn and other holiday goodies ready to serve guests.

With Sue's sister, Donna Courtney, traditional candies and cookies, and breads are prepared that spread a delicious aroma throughout the house.

The open staircase is decorated with swags of holiday greens. A lace tablecloth angled on top of a solid red one, is ready for guests.

Sue found that a tray or dish draped with red or green tissue



Holidays are shared with extended family memories. From left: Kristen, 8; Grandma and Grandpa DeSiegheardt;

Katie, 5; Sue and Rick Creveling.

paper and filled with snacks adds a festive touch.

For creative recycling, Sue cut in half a lace tablecloth that got a hole in the middle but was still good around the edges and draped it along two of the fireplace mantels. She tied ribbons at intervals to scallop the cloth's edges. Greens, pinecones, Christmas balls and poinsettias are intertwined among the family photos on the mantels.

Each year, the Crevelings give three gifts that are symbolic of the three gifts the Christ child received. The three gifts include something the child needs, some-



Drop-in guests are welcomed by this festive table setting. Kristen enjoys serving guests cranberry bread that is easily sliced when using the wooden slotted bread-holder.



The Crevelings take a whole night to decorate their tree while holiday music fills the house. They use mostly handmade ornaments or those given by friends.

thing the child requested, and a surprise.

"We don't use credit cards; we pay cash," the Crevelings said. "Our focus is not materialistic, but symbolic of the real reason to celebrate Christmas — the birth of Jesus," Sue said.

One year, a family member wrote scripture verses in calligraphy and rolled the messages like a scroll and placed them by each plate. Each guest read aloud the verse by his or her plate.

On Christmas Day, the Crevelings read the Christmas story to their children.

Sue recalls that her dad always took pictures of his children, still dressed in the nightgowns, coming down the stairs on Christmas morning. Somewhat embarrassed by that during her teen years, Sue now finds it entertaining to review each year's celebration.

Rick and his two older brothers recall taking their stockings to their parents' bedroom on Christmas morning. His father would light the tree, and the children would open the presents. Invariably, their mother would ask, "Did you get what you wanted?"

Then his father would hurry to the garage to bring in one last gift for the boys to enjoy.

Like most families, the Crevelings find that holidays are even more special when extended family members share in the occasion. Each year, they alternate visiting between the two sets of grandparents.

The Crevelings and Sue's parents, Arthur and Alice

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