

Kids Korner



The Hoffman family enjoy Christmas traditions such as this one. Dad Steve reads the Christmas story while his wife Beverly and daughters, Angela, Joy, Katrina, and Tessa listen.

Christmas Traditions From The Hoffman Family

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Lancaster Farming Staff
AKRON (Lancaster Co.) — Families everywhere are busy preparing for Christmas. Many have family traditions, which are established customs they enjoy doing each Christmas.

These traditions often become happy memories associated with Christmas. They are things that family members want to do again and again each year.

The Hoffman family in Akron is no exception. Parents Steve and Beverly have four daughters, Angela, 9; Joy, 7; Katrina, 4; and Tessa, 10 months.

When daughter Angela was asked to name her happiest memory about Christmas, she said, "When dad reads the Christmas story in the Bible and we open presents."

Each year, on Christmas morning the family gathers around the tree for the story before opening presents. But before they do that, they have other traditions and one of those is what Joy loves to do.

She said, "When we decorate the tree, we each put up our own ornaments."

Each child receives a new ornament each year to hang on the tree.

For her first Christmas, Joy received a tiny baby in a Johnny Jump-Up swing. This is still her favorite ornament and the one she hangs first each year.

Angela enjoys making presents for other family members. Some of her homemade presents over the years have been a calendar, placemats, a picture frame, and Christmas ornaments.

The girls bake Christmas cookies at their Grandpa and Grandma's home.

Each year the Hoffmans also prepare a package for a missionary family. Many times families living in other countries cannot buy bubble gum and snack foods that children like to eat. So the Hoffmans often include those items with a special toy for each child in the family.

This year, the Hoffmans and some of their friends called the Ephrata Social services to ask for the names of families who don't have much to eat. The Hoffmans and their friends will take food baskets to three different families.

Christmas Eve is the night for more traditions. After the family eats popcorn, they snuggle in sleeping bags under the tree for the night's sleep.

Katrina is only four years old, but she remembers the fun of opening presents.

After the presents are opened, the family has a birthday party for Jesus. The children's mother purchases a decorated cake with the words, "Happy Birthday, Jesus." They put candles on the cake and sing, "Happy Birthday."

"That helps teach the children that Jesus is the unseen guest at the table," she said.

For Christmas dinner, the family takes turns every other year visiting their two sets of grandparents. Because one set of grandparents live two hours away, the family sometimes stays overnight.

The Hoffmans want their children to realize the true meaning of Christmas. They do not emphasize anything with Santa Claus. They believe it is important for children to distinguish between the true meaning of Christmas and the pre-

tense of Christmas.

Joy thought of a pretense about Christmas that many children believe. She said, "Reindeer don't fly." She said this in reference to the poem, "T was the Night Before Christmas."

Christmas traditions are fun and are ways that help families do things together. The Hoffmans continue to find new traditions they enjoy doing together.

Strengthen Your Family With Family Time

HONESDALE (Wayne Co.) — One of the most important traits of a strong family is the ability to provide the affection, love, understanding, and trust each member needs. Parents who have a warm, loving relationship with their children, give them encouragement and support, contribute greatly to the child's emotional, social, and intellectual development.

"Family Time" is a set of four booklets for each age group: (2-3, 4-6, and 7-8). There is a different book for each season. The book-

lets are designed for the family - for parents and children to spend time together doing different activities. "Family Time" will be mutually rewarding for both parents and children if planned for and carried out on a regular basis. The booklets are free.

Christmas At Landis Valley

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — LANCASTER Christmas at Landis Valley Museum will be celebrated Tuesday, December 20, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Enjoy a free program of touring decorated buildings, 7 p.m. carolling around

If you are interested in learning about the various activities that you can do with your child or children to create an atmosphere that will enable parents and children to have a closer relationship, call your county office.

a bonfire accompanied by the Lititz Moravian Trombone Choir, and cookies and hot cider. The museum is located 2.5 miles north-east of Lancaster on Rt. 272/Oregon Pike. For more information, call (717) 569-0401.