

Wishing You a Season of Joy!

By Paul Peavy, MS, LMHC

Taylor County School District Mental Health Coordinator

Wow! It is so hard to believe it is the Christmas season already! If Thanksgiving sure reminded us of one thing it is that we really do need to be thankful for the simplest of things. What I hope it has reminded us all of is that it is our friends and families that make our lives complete! How can we enter into the Christmas holidays remembering those priorities and teaching them to our children? How do I get my children away from such blatant materialism that is promoted at this time of the year?

Start with remembering the reason for the season. It is a time represented by the ultimate sign of love and simplicity. Sharing that same feeling of love and simplicity by role modeling that for our children is huge. As the month of December flows remember that you can put your children in a direction of gratefulness instead of constant desire. What specifically can you do?

- Be sure they know the reason you believe for the season. Talk to them about what makes these holidays so special for you and others.
- Give as a family. Donate your time and energy. Clean an elderly person's yard. Shop and donate gifts to other family in needs. Take baked goods to a neighbor.
- Create a special time each day to talk about the Christmas season. Using an Advent Calendar or something like that is a great way to launch discussions.
- Carry on and create traditions. Making cookies, decorating a tree, wrapping presents and even watching holiday movies are all ways of spending quality time together and can generate discussions for the future.
- Create and draw Christmas cards and send or drop them off to hospital staff, law enforcement officers, or nursing homes.
- Have kids write letters of gratitude to Santa. Yes, one night have them tell Santa what they are thankful for instead of asking him for more stuff. You might be surprised by what they say.
- Make ornaments that represent the year or each child's personality.
- Sing! Sing loudly. Sing badly. Make up dances that go with your Christmas songs. Laugh together about your loud, bad singing and dancing!
- Be creative and follow your own whimsical ideas, you never know when you will create a tradition that your family will end up loving forever!

The theme here is that you need to take charge of your family's time, communication, and focus. Don't let commercialism overwhelm your family this holiday season! Be intentional in your desire and your plans to build the best gifts this Christmas, creating wonderful memories and great relationships!