

CREATING A FAMILY LEGACY

When we hear the word tradition it brings to mind many things. The fire service is steeped in traditions, the ringing of the bell, the Maltese cross, Dalmatians, bagpipes...the list goes on. Traditions help unite individuals to a common purpose and create fond memories.

As parents and grandparents we often want to leave a legacy for our children and or our grandchildren. A few of us crave novelty but, at the holidays, we tend to be traditionalist so this is the perfect opportunity to build relationships and create family traditions.

There's something reassuring about pulling the top off the old ornament box or polishing the menorah your grandmother polished before you. In a world where nearly everything's disposable, traditions remind us that some things were meant to last. So, this year, if you're shopping for the perfect gift, why not try a new tradition? Unlike most presents, they're inexpensive, need no wrapping and will last nearly forever. Here are a few ideas that may help you get started.

1. During Thanksgiving meals have family/guests bring to the table three things that represented what they were thankful for (beware teenagers usually bring their cell phones). No matter what the item, it will inevitably prompt discussion in which you can learn about your family and friends.
2. Write or record the story of your life and give it as a gift.
3. Capture memories by adding handprints or notes each year to a keepsake tablecloth.
4. Engage the children in games. Play hide and seek with stockings or trinkets.
5. Give each child a special recognition award. Watch the children throughout the year and the child who has overcome adversity or had an especially good year could receive a creative gift that is representative of the event. (Kids look forward to receiving a special honor and the "sillier" the gift the better.)