



# Wee Learn

Wee Learners

(4 - 5 years):

The Importance of Holiday Traditions



Reading “**The Night Before Christmas**” around the fire on **Christmas Eve**. Lighting the **Chanukah menorah**. Going to visit **Santa**. Serving a meal at the local soup kitchen. Whether formal or informal, recognized or not, each family has its own set of **holiday traditions**.

In addition to making the holiday memorable, these traditions serve a higher purpose.

First, **traditions build a sense of stability**. Regardless of whatever else is happening during the holiday season, family members look forward to and count on participating in family traditions. When families take part in rituals, trust builds. Family members learn that regardless of the changes life brings, traditions will be a consistent constant.

Secondly, **traditions build unity**. Traditions bring family members together. When individuals within a family join to take part in a ritual, they experience a sense of belonging to something bigger than themselves. For children, traditions are exceptionally important. When children are welcomed to take part in family traditions, it helps them to feel accepted within their family unit.

Thirdly, **traditions build identity**. While many families may share similar traditions, the way they are carried out is unique from family to family. When families do something together year after year, it becomes a part of who they are and how they celebrate.

Lastly, **traditions build connections to the past**. Traditions can serve as a bridge from the past to the present and from the older generation to the younger. Whether it's making a special family recipe that's been passed down from generation to generation, hiking into the woods to cut down your own Christmas tree or using the menorah that your great, great grandparents used, traditions provide something everyone within a family can relate to.

Traditions can be as simple as making an ornament for the family tree each year or as complex as hosting a family reunion. What's important is that holiday traditions work for your family and are easy to replicate year after year.

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