

When I think of family traditions, I always think of the night before Thanksgiving with me and my sister in the kitchen with Mom and Grandma, preparing food. My sister and I tear loaves of bread for the stuffing, Grandma peels apples for the Waldorf salad, while Mom forms pie crusts to hold Great-Grandma's famous pumpkin pie. The following afternoon, we set tables with the good China, silver flatware, and elegant crystal upon crisp linen tablecloths. Family and friends seated at tables laden with more food than we can possibly consume wait for the traditional blessing of the food. A solemn *Amen* at invocation's end signals food to be passed, conversation to begin, and another family tradition has been cemented into the minds of at least two generations in the room.

I sometimes wonder if Mom and Dad created new family traditions with us, or if they continued familiar traditions, or combined the old with new. Creating your own family traditions doesn't mean that you have to ignore old family traditions. Here are a few tips for creating your own family traditions:

- Hold a Family Night to discuss a tradition you'd like to start. Traditions don't only have to happen at holiday time. Perhaps you want to go camping each Memorial Day, and you want to choose the same spot each time. That could be a tradition to start.
- After you've agreed on a tradition, discuss how to plan for it to happen by discussing finances, gear and equipment you may need, scheduling conflicts, and possible venues, if need be.
- Buy a large calendar and put it on the side of your refrigerator. Circle the date on the calendar with a red marker and write the event on the day.
- If the event will happen on the 25th of a month, write the name of the event on the 25th day of each month leading up to the event as a mental preparation. For example, if you plan on a family camping trip on May 25th, then starting in January, write *Family Camping Trip in May* in red marker on each month prior to the event. That way, all family members will see that it will happen and can mentally prepare for it.
- Prepare for the event, leaving ample time to enjoy the event. If you are going camping, don't leave everything until the last minute. If you're doing something as simple as having a family portrait taken, make sure you prepare the night before to coordinate clothes.

Make sure the day of the event that you somehow announce that you are happy to celebrate this tradition with your family, and that you look forward to doing it again every year. Mark the event on your calendar for the next year and make sure that it happens. Soon, your family will look forward to the tradition and might even carry on the tradition when they are grown with families of their own.

Source: http://family.tips.net/Pages/T003581_Creating_Family_Traditions.html