

## **The Holidays Are Coming...**

**By**

**Sally Goldberg, Ph.D.**

**Q.** Even though I try to teach the meaning of each special occasion as it comes, each year the commercialism of each holiday seems to win over. Do you have any suggestions for making this holiday season more meaningful for children?

**A.** Yes, there is a way to keep holiday sensitivity at the forefront of your child's thinking.

October, November, and December are the holiday months. Each week during the holiday season life gets busier and busier as family dinners, gift-giving, and parties multiply in number. Excitement mounts day by day as one holiday leads into the next. As you enjoy each holiday event this season, here is a way to help make the time you spend together with your child into a rich and meaningful character building experience.

### **Halloween**

Starting with H for Halloween, HONESTY comes to mind. Dress-up is the theme. It is the official opportunity to pretend to be someone else. What better time than that to talk about *honesty*, the quality of being yourself and telling the truth. Because it is natural to act the part of a costume, explore with your child traits that go along with the choice of character. There may be admirable characteristics to emulate, but there also may be some that are

not admirable and maybe even too distasteful to warrant keeping the costume choice. Remind your child how important it is to be *honest* and *truthful*.

### **Thanksgiving**

November brings us Thanksgiving and a T for TRUSTWORTHINESS. As you celebrate Thanksgiving and a month of giving thanks, you can talk to your child often about their tasks and responsibilities. Remind your children of how thankful you are for their daily contributions to family life. Take the opportunity to explain what it means to be *counted on* and to inspire *trust*.

### **December**

December brings 2 C's for Christmas and Chanukah. They can be for CARE and CONCERN. Because there is a natural focus for these holidays on gift giving, it provides an excellent time to enrich your child's thinking with thoughts of presents that are helpful and supportive to others. Both commercial items and non-material gestures can be based on the deeper attributes of *caring* and *concern*.

December has a K for us in the holiday of Kwanza, the African-American cultural festival for giving thanks for the first fruits of the harvest. That makes it just the right time to teach about KINDNESS. It provides the perfect reminder about not taking anything or anyone for granted. Just as much *kind* attention goes into producing a harvest, so many *kind* words and actions go into the making of great friendships.

With the advent of this holiday season, I hope you will now have an easy way to make each holiday more meaningful to your children. With the pushes and pulls of commercialism all around, I hope that these letters of character will guide you and your children through festivities of holiday richness.

- H for HONESTY
- T for TRUSTWORTHINESS
- C and C for CARE and CONCERN
- K for KINDNESS

My very best wishes for safe, happy, and healthy holiday times together.

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