



# The Front Porch

Where friends meet to share their stories...

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## Defining Tradition.

Christmas traditions: when I first hear this phrase I think stockings, trees, chestnuts roasting on an open fire, and goodwill toward all of us. I envision a warm rosy glow around all those I love, kind of like when you squint at the lights on a Christmas tree and they turn into little starbursts of light. Then my mind begins to think about the process of gift-giving, happiness creating, and party attending and how to accomplish this with success and ease. I also think of my husband's story of his family tradition of reading the birth of Jesus from the Bible and then the adults proceeding to have drunken fights in the next room. I think of my family's tradition of hiding the drunken grandfather in his 'den'...except for the year he broke out and threatened my Gran with death by gunshot. How is it that thinking about this time of year creates such disparity in my (our) hearts and minds?

Mr. Webster defines tradition as 'the way of thinking, behaving, or doing something that has been used by the people in a particular family or society for a long time OR as the stories and beliefs intrinsic to a culture or group of people.' Tradition is our stories. Tradition is our behaviors. Tradition is, in many ways, our history...and our future. Tradition can define where we have been but does not have to define where we are headed.

I love many of my first family's Christmas traditions-an advent wreath on the buffet, stockings from Santa for everyone, baking specific sweets, and as a child, going to my grandparents every year and hearing Santa (aka Grandpa) scramble up the chimney with his bells as we children waited in the kitchen with anticipation and caught breath to see what special gift was under the tree with our name on it. I love the new traditions

my second family (meaning the family created by Paul and me) is making-attending Snyder's Singing Christmas Tree each year and allowing Adeline to decorate the tree with all the non-fragile ornaments. I love that Paul and I are choosing to continue some of our first families' traditions such as stockings from Santa and reading of Jesus' birth from Luke's gospel on Christmas Eve. As Adeline and Abigail grow, we will continue to create and carryout traditions in our family. Thinking of all the years we have to create our traditions fills me with joy and excitement!

Yet I also need to take a moment to pause, reflect, and remember the traditions Paul and I want to forever stop or change in this second family of our own creation – addiction, abuse, depression, loneliness. I pray each and every day that our girls will never personally know these traditions of which Paul and I have firsthand experience. Although there is no guarantee that life will treat Adeline and Abigail gently, I am so very thankful Paul and I are committed to raising our girls with the most important tradition of all – placing our faith in God our Creator and in Jesus Christ our Immanuel (God-with-us). For with faith comes hope and hope brings an ability to sustain oneself through all of the trials which life, eventually, brings.

So this Christmas, remember your first family's traditions. Consider those traditions you are creating in your second family. What do you love and want to keep? What needs to change? Most importantly, is God, our hope-bringing and life-sustaining Creator, in the center of your family? Immanuel is expectantly waiting for you and wants to be part of your family's traditions. Are you ready to invite Him in?

## About the Author:



**Name:** Holyn Bogert

**Hometown:** Home is where my mommy (and daddy) are....and now where my husband and daughters are

**Steering Team Role:** Moppetts Coordinator

**Favorite Book (besides The Bible):** Anne of Green Gables

**Favorite T.V. Show:** Designing Women

**Favorite Quote:** "If you lose hope, somehow you lose the vitality that keeps life moving, you lose the courage to be, that quality that helps you go on in spite of it all"...Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Favorite Food:** anything Italian

**Favorite Hobby:** Reading

## Making Christmas Traditions with your family: a mentor moment with Sebrell Singleton

Traditions help us remember! I have wonderful memories of gathering with my cousins around my Great Aunt who played Christmas Carols on the piano and taught us Bible verses. My Mom was always busy baking, sewing, and making gifts for others. One of our favorite items to make was Christmas ornaments by painting crab shells and oyster shells to look like St. Nick. Our family also gathered with relatives on Christmas Eve for dinner and then went to the candlelight service at our church.

Mixed in with those good memories are also memories of stress, deadlines, packed schedules, etc.

When we had children, we incorporated many of those same wonderful traditions. Our children have had the privilege to participate in the Snyder Singing Christmas Tree. Each year, we are amazed at how God's message of hope through the birth of Jesus impacts so many. We gather goodies for the Samaritans Purse shoe boxes, adopt a needy family, bake Christmas cookies (yes at 16 and 18yrs. old our children still like to bake cookies), and set up our nativity

scenes. When they were younger, we let them play with our wooden nativity scene pieces, so they could learn about Jesus' birth. Through the years, their grandparents and godparents have given them pieces of their own.

I still struggle with not overloading myself and family with so much busyness, that we are too tired to truly enjoy the reason for Christmas. Looking back, the best memories are centered around the hope and joy we have in knowing God would send his son to us as a baby, so that by his sacrifice we could have eternal life and forgiveness of sins. Traditions help us remember! We remember the gift of Jesus, the gift of time with loved ones, and the gift of giving to others.

**“Stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.”**

**2 Thessalonians 2:15**



### 5 Fun Christmas Eve Traditions with Kids!

- 1. Have a Pajama Party!** Kids can never have enough pajamas and Christmas Eve is the perfect excuse to get them a fresh pair. Whether you decide on matchy-matchy ones or your kids' favorite character ones, let them hang out in their new PJs all night long. Mom and Dad — don't forget to get new pajamas for each other too!
- 2. Take in a flick!** One of the toughest parts about Christmas Eve is keeping the kids distracted while they wait for family to arrive and presents to be put under the tree. So get them out of the house for a fun movie day.
- 3. Open one present from under the tree—just one!** Go ahead and give in — let them open one present on Christmas Eve to hold them over. Just one!
- 4. Spend the day thinking of others.** Create the Christmas Eve tradition of giving back by volunteering as a family. There are so many local charities that need help during the holidays, try [volunteermatch.org](http://volunteermatch.org)!
- 5. Create a special Christmas eve menu.** For most families, Christmas Eve is focused on getting together with family and spending some quality time together, which means that there is sure to be food involved. This year, incorporate your kids' input into your family's Christmas Eve menu. Start a tradition to bake cookies together or make homemade pizzas as a family.

Have your own tradition? Tell us about it on Facebook!



## The Birth of Jesus from Luke 2:1-20



<sup>2</sup> In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. <sup>2</sup> (This was the first census that took place while<sup>[a]</sup> Quirinius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup> And everyone went to their own town to register.

<sup>4</sup> So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. <sup>5</sup> He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup> and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

<sup>8</sup> And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup> An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. <sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared<sup>[a]</sup> with the angel, praising God and saying,

**"Glory to God in highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."**

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

<sup>16</sup> So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

*Our Compliments*

*to the Chef!*

**Thank you Mentors  
and Table Leaders for  
breakfast!**

**January-**

Yellow Table

**February-**

Green Table

**March-**

Blue Table



**LITTLE GYM PLAY DATE**

**What:** MOPS January Play date at THE LITTLE GYM OF FAYETTEVILLE

**Where:** 4011 Sycamore Dairy Road  
Fayetteville, NC 28303

**When:** Wednesday, January 15 at 1:00pm

**The Cost is \$5 per child and is nonrefundable.**

**Please see Kimberly Mahne for more details!**

# TIME OUT!

with the Moppetts

This month our children are learning about Jesus – about his birth – and the celebration surrounding his arrival. I vividly remember each of my girls' births: the hopeful expectation, the work, the pain, and the overwhelming feeling of joy as their precious bodies and spirits entered this world. I find my heart growing a little larger each day – making room for more love – as I watch Adeline and Abigail develop into their own little persons. Each day I find my faith growing – making room for more God – as I walk the path toward becoming the mother my girls need and leaning on God during the (many!!) times I cannot lead them on my own. And in the chaos of this life, I find myself yearning for calm and a place to breathe – making room for more peace. Hope, joy, love, faith, and peace: fruit of the Spirit for which all of us yearn and truly none of us can live without. My prayer for you and your families during this Christmas season is that your home is filled with hopeful expectation and overwhelming joy as Jesus Immanuel, once again, comes to live among us bringing all we need and more than we can ever wish.



**"The Word became flesh and blood, and moved in-  
to the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own  
eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son,  
Generous inside and out, true from start to finish."  
John 1:14 (The Message)**

For questions or more information on the Moppetts program contact Holyn Bogert at 254-220-8424  
or [holyn.bogert@gmail.com](mailto:holyn.bogert@gmail.com)

## Check your Schedule!



Snyder Christmas Eve Service-3:30p and 6pm

January 15-Little Gym Playdate

January 17-Regular MOPS Meeting

January 25-MOPS Night Out

February 7– Moms Morning In

February 21-Regular MOPS Meeting



## 2013-2014 Steering Team

**Karen McAmis**-Co Coordinator ([jkmcamis@msn.com](mailto:jkmcamis@msn.com))

**Carolyn Owens**-Mentor Leader ([carolynowens@nc.rr.com](mailto:carolynowens@nc.rr.com))

**Kellie Ross**-Communications Leader ([kellie.ross0421@gmail.com](mailto:kellie.ross0421@gmail.com))

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