

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- Make a step towards recording your family heritage.
- Pictures make great memories!
- Great finds!
- Remember our armed forces this season.
- Personalize something meaningful.

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The Gift of Giving

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Giving Your Time This Season

How valuable is your time? How much do you gain when you give to others? As we approach the holiday season faced with economic concerns, these are empowering questions to ask ourselves.

I have many memories of my parents but the ones that stand out do not involve money ~ only their time. Lying down and looking up at the stars requires nice weather, a warm blanket and minutes to spare. Roasting marshmallows requires a small wood fire, marshmallows and sticks. Reading a book or playing a game requires going to the library and dusting off a game you may have not played in a while. There's no tickets to

be purchased, trips in the car to make, or a costly restaurant bill. We often correlate "fun" with concerts, theme



Others probably value their time with you more than anything else.

parks and other activities that require the purchase of tickets. While these things are exciting and most certainly

entertaining, there are far less costly activities that are just as memorable, if not more so.

We value the people we love, whether it's family or friends. This holiday season, find ways to enjoy one another by spending quality time together. Watch a favorite movie, take a walk, bake cookies, sit around a bonfire, or play a game together.

Does your family have an annual holiday tradition? This season, give your family one new board game. Continue this tradition each year. Choose a night each week, or monthly, that is a designated "family game night."

Guess Who?

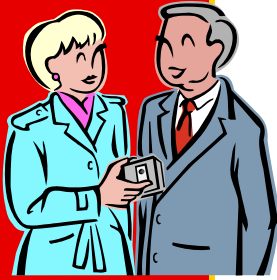
As children grow older, they become more curious about their family tree. This holiday season, introduce your children to their ancestors by playing a game. Make black-and-white copies of vintage photos. Include photos of various ages, including baby

pictures. Ask your children to guess who is in each photo. The winner may choose a game the entire family can enjoy.

If your family is exchanging gifts, skip the typical gift tags. Attach a black-and-white

photo of the individual as a baby, teenager, or young adult. Guessing who a gift belongs to creates an additional, enjoyable challenge.

Focus on memories this holiday season.



**“I learned things about my parents that I never knew before.”
(StoryCorps, 2009)**

“This year, ask your family to donate their time to a cause by participating in a charitable walk or run.”

It can be fun recording favorite memories.



National Day of Listening

In 2008, the first annual National Day of Listening was launched by the StoryCorps. StoryCorps is a non-profit organization whose mission is to honor as well as celebrate one another's lives by listening (StoryCorps, 2009). The goal of this day is to record and share conversations with family, friends, and even neighbors.

StoryCorps challenges each person the day after Thanksgiving to “set aside one hour to record a conversation with

someone important to you” (StoryCorps, 2009). You can interview a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin, a friend, teacher or someone who lives in the neighborhood.

To preserve the interview, StoryCorps encourages using equipment that can be found in most homes: cell phones, tape recorders, computers or the old fashioned way, pen and paper (StoryCorps, 2009).

If you would like to learn

more, visit www.nationaldayoflistening.org and download a free Do-It-Yourself Instruction Guide. If you've missed the “designated” day, you can still honor the tradition during the month of December.

As your children grow older, and eventually have families of their own, they will have a collection of treasured stories and a true sense of their heritage in detail.

Walk a Little ~ Donate Your Time

This year, ask your family to donate their time to a cause by participating in a charitable walk or run.

Charitable walks and runs create an opportunity for you to contribute your support by helping to raise funds for many worthy causes.

Choose a foundation that means something to you as a family and commit to walking for their benefit. In your local area, contact the Chamber of Commerce for more information.

If this type of event doesn't appeal to you, frequently local food pantries or meal kitchens for the less fortunate welcome volunteers

to separate or stack donations or prepare meals for those in need.

The opportunity to help others is personally enriching and the camaraderie found with your fellow volunteers is an equally fulfilling experience.

Scrapbook It!

Families usually set aside a special time when they gather to celebrate each other's company. It may be a particular holiday, a birthday or a designated time of year.

Whether it's the holiday season or

next summer, begin a scrapbook tradition. Each year, ask members of your family to choose their favorite photo of the year. Attach the photo to a scrapbook page and write down important details such as the date, place, who is pictured and why the photo is a memorable one. As the years go by, the

scrapbook will become a treasured storehouse of family memories.

Another option is to create a calendar featuring pictures from the previous year. Adding captions, comments and remembrances can help everyone recall the significance of each photograph.

Stock Up on Books



It's no surprise that many of us will watch our spending this holiday season, cutting down on expensive gifts. Local organizations often hold fund raisers this time of year where you can find various book assort-

Where can I find book titles that are appealing to my child?

ments ~ chapter as well as picture books. Pay attention to the classifieds in your local newspaper and make note of garage or yard sales that are selling children's "toys." Parents often include books with toy items and you can find great books for pennies on the dollar. *Half-Price Books* has a children's section that includes not only new, discounted books but also "gently used" book

titles as well.

Frequently, your child will bring home from school book orders from quality companies such as Scholastic. Watch for bundle packages that include more than one book title; popular educational videos are offered as well. If you have family or friends with children similar in age, trade book titles and videos to expand your child's selection.

It pays to shop on-line as well. Look for companies that offer free shipping or discounted offers.

A Personal Sentiment

Children often enjoy poetry. They may have a favorite poem or found significance in a single verse.

Ask your child to write their favorite poem on a selected sheet of colored paper. If there's room, attach a photo next to the poem as well.

Frame the poetry sentiment and give it to someone special this holiday season.

If your child does not have a poem in mind, ask him to write a special message to a grandparent or friend. A picture may be attached or one may be drawn.

When finished, frame this special sentiment. Frames can be found at most department stores, as well as grocery stores. You can also find frames at "gently-used" shops for a deeply discounted price. For added fun, decorate or paint the frame to match your child's personality.

"Frame the poetry sentiment and give it to someone special this holiday season."

Remember Our Military

Most of us are fortunate enough to have our family with us this holiday season. Those who serve in our military are frequently separated from their families during the holidays while serving our country.

If you would like to show your gratitude and appreciation, you can purchase a care package for an American overseas by con-

tacting the United Service Organization (USO). Packages contain anything from toiletries, to snacks to scarves or hand warmers. Each package is \$25 and will be delivered with a letter from you.

Our troops also like to hear from us, to know that what they are doing is appreciated and supported. A simple holiday

card with a sincere message means more to some than a care package.

If you have a military family living near you, remember to say "Thank You" this season. The families of those who serve make sacrifices as well.



Reach out to our armed forces, and their families, this holiday season.

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**Promoting social & emotional fitness
for kids.**

Daphne Morris, M.Ed., met Trevor Romain in 1992 when he visited a school as a guest speaker. Impressed by Trevor's profound and meaningful impact on students and educators, Daphne joined The Trevor Romain Company in 2006. A former elementary school principal, Daphne holds two Master's degrees in education.



Resources:

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Reimer, Sara. "Simply Thankful." Midwest Living, December, 2009.

StoryCorps. "National Day of Listening." <http://www.nationaldayoflistening.org> (accessed November, 2009).

*Happy Holidays from
The Trevor Romain Company*

