

Raising Likeable, Responsible, Respectful Children in an Age of Overindulgence

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Start Connecting and Stop Overindulging Your Children This Holiday Season - Ideas 1-10 by David Bredehoff

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The majority of parents think that we buy way too many gifts for our children each Christmas. This is true for Hanukkah and Kwanzaa too! If you are one of the concerned parents or grandparents I am going to share 10 ideas a week for the next five weeks to help you. Many of these ideas have been submitted by our readers. Use the ones that work for you and your family; save the rest for some later date. **Please open your FaceBook Page and then click our share button in the upper right hand column of this page to share this with your friends.** Here are my first ten ideas.

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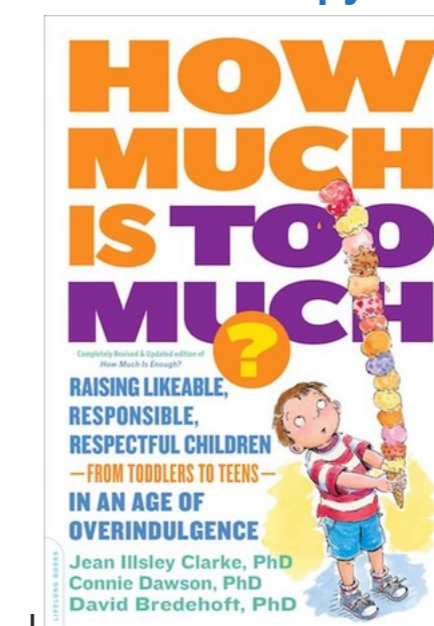
1. CHOOSE A FAMILY GIFT

Each year on the 25 days leading to Christmas we open a gift as a family. That gift is one of the kids' books. I wrap 25 of their favorite books (that we already own) and we open one each day as a family. The kids rotate on who gets to open the gift each day. It's a great way to make sure we are spending time together as a family during the

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craziness of the holidays and the kids also see that a gift does not have to be something just purchased but also can be the treasures we have within the house. **Submitted by Natalie Laski**

2. MAKE GIFTS FOR EACH OTHER

Have your children make gifts for each other. My children did this last year getting ideas from books in the library and using materials found at home. They still talk about the gifts they made and received from each other with a sense of pride. **Submitted by Debra K. O'Fallon**

3. SHARE THREE THINGS YOU LIKE ABOUT EACH OTHER

When it is time to decorate the tree, have each family member choose three ornaments. As each family member tells three blessings they have received during the year as they hang the ornaments on the tree - continue until the tree is decorated by telling three favorite memories from the year, three biggest accomplishments, and three things you like about each family member. **Submitted by Leanne Weyrauch**

4. MAKE A LIST OF THINGS YOU WANT TO DO TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

Instead of making lists of things we each want to get, we all sit down at Thanksgiving and make lists of things we each want to do together as a family during the holiday season. Each person "gets" at least three or four things on his/her list; e.g., old movie night, or Monopoly marathon, or cross-country skiing at night. This also helps instill those family traditions (my daughter's list always includes watching [It's a Wonderful Life](#) and having fondue) and helps to emphasize that what we value most is our time together.

5. MAKE A TIME TO TALK ABOUT THE CONCEPT OF "ENOUGH"

I talk about "enough" and take opportunities to point out to my children when I've had "enough". Like, "This food is so delicious and I've had enough. I'm glad there'll be leftovers for later." or "I might want everything in my collection, but right now, it's enough to enjoy this one new addition." I let "Is that enough?" be a common question in my household. **Submitted by Leanne Sponsel**



6. EACH NIGHT OF HANUKAH WE GIVE TO A DIFFERENT CHARITY

I noticed how my kids got so focused on themselves - on GETTING - over the holidays, so we started using half of the days of Hanukah to focus on giving. Every other night we do a "mitzvah" - bringing food to the local Ronald McDonald house, jump ropes to the neighborhood public school after school program, homemade book marks to the elderly, etc. **Submitted by Jenni Watts Evans**

7. LIGHT MENORAH CANDLES AND USE IT AS FAMILY TIME

Although my family and I are not Jewish, I like the tradition of making the time that candles burn be family time. We have a menorah and light the candles, and play a game, talk, or cook together while the candles burn down (takes about an hour). **Submitted by Carol Lothrop.**

8. MODEL ACTS OF KINDNESS

We make a special effort to model doing acts of kindness - shoveling a neighbor's walk, inviting a single person to a holiday dinner, offering the mail carrier a cup of hot chocolate, tipping people who don't normally receive tips - like the cashier at the parking lot.

9. HAVE A TOO MUCH STUFF DAY

We have a 'too much stuff' day prior to the holidays. This is the day they look through their toys and 'stuff' and figure out what they can give away.

10. CELEBRATE A FAMILY TRADITION DAY

We make sure that we have some traditions that the children will remember and look forward to. Since we are Swedish, we celebrate [St. Lucy's Day](#), and it is very low-key but fun. **Submitted by Cindy Gardner**



Celebration of Saint Lucy's Day in a [Lutheran](#) church (2006). By Claudia Gründer (Claudia Gründer) [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons

Look for 10 more great ideas to come next week.

There is more help about avoiding overindulgence in [How Much is Too Much? Raising Likeable, Responsible, Respectful Children – From Toddlers To Teens – In An Age of Overindulgence](#) (2014, DaCapo Press Lifelong Books).

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