

Christmas with Twins

Christmas is a wonderful time for families with twins full of excitement and memory-making traditions. The parties, celebrations and family time provide many opportunities for parents of multiples to develop traditions that enhance their children's unique identities. No matter what holiday or religious observation you celebrate, keep these things in mind:

Twin individuality

Recognise each child individually in your family traditions. Never lump multiples together as "the twins". That seems like an obvious statement but there are numerous small ways that it occurs sometimes subconsciously or by well-meaning friends or family members. Parents can counteract that tendency by intentionally distinguishing each child individually during the holidays and by encouraging others to do the same. Here are a few basic tips to help encourage individuality:

- 🎄 If you hang stockings each child should have their own.
- 🎄 If you write a family letter to include with Christmas cards mention each child by name. Instead of saying "The twins are taking dance classes." mention them individually and recognise something unique about each one.
- 🎄 If you decorate a Christmas tree don't hesitate to let it reflect your family's multiplicity with possible doubles of certain ornaments. Or consider having a family tree then letting each multiple decorate their own smaller version.
- 🎄 Visiting Santa at your local shopping centre? It might take twice as much time and cost twice as much money, but every child deserves their own moment in the spotlight. Unless your multiples prefer to sit on Santa's lap together give them the opportunity for a private one-on-one.
- 🎄 As the years go by talk to your multiples about their favourite aspects of Christmas. Is it Baking? Shopping? Carols? Decorating the tree? Try to identify something special for each child then make it a point to incorporate their preferences into your plans.

Taking it in Turns (Again!)

The Christmas holidays are full of special moments. When you have multiple siblings vying for attention some of those moments can quickly disintegrate into episodes of competitiveness and hurt feelings. Whether it is laying out the mince pies and carrots for Santa and Rudolph on Christmas Eve or being the one to hang a cherished ornament on the tree these special moments take some creative parenting. Sometimes it helps to take turns. And sometimes it's better to recreate those special moments so that everyone gets a chance. Develop a system that works for your family. You may want to take turns from year to year. Or it may be easier to keep track if you take turns as each situation occurs.

Having multiples presents an interesting predicament when it comes to opening gifts. Since they often receive the same items, they can spoil the surprise for each other. You may wish to create your own system for present opening, such as having them open duplicate presents simultaneously, preferably back to back!

Create Unique Christmas Traditions

Some of the most fun Christmas memories are created when families develop their own unique traditions. You may decide each child can pick something they would like to eat for Christmas dinner/dessert or that they each choose a new tree ornament or maybe each year they make a special handmade gift for someone. Whatever you decide they will have fun and enjoy the tradition for years to come.

All Together Now

Use the Christmas holidays to enjoy family together time. The chaos of everyday life, especially when there are multiples in the family mean that parents are often busy accomplishing tasks and completing chores. Make memories simply by spending time together. Read a favourite book or haul out the old movies. Don't just play the movie for the kids while you're busy baking or wrapping gifts in another room. Snuggle up on the couch and watch it together.

The Spirit of the Season

Finally another way to make Christmas truly meaningful is to celebrate the spirit of the season by putting others first. You can implement that attitude within your own family by having your multiples shop for gifts for each other. Or look outward into your community. Volunteer as a family giving your time or money to those that need it more than you do during the festive season. You could give away toys that your multiples have grown out of or no longer play with. Involve them in sorting them to take to your local charity shop or make up a Christmas Shoebox to send abroad and explain what the gifts will mean to other children.

We wish you all a Magical and Merry Christmas!

