

# *No Place Like Homeschool for the Holidays*

By Nikki Brown

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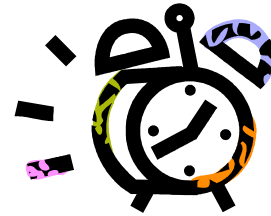
# *No Place Like Homeschool for the Holidays*

*Quick Tips for Meaningful and Relaxing Family Celebrations*



No matter how much you love the holiday season, there's no denying it can be a time full of scattered schedules and frazzled nerves for homeschooling families. Just about the time you have your school schedule ticking along like a well-oiled clock, here comes a multitude of extra (and often last-minute) activities to squeeze into your already bulging day-planner. It is no wonder this is a time of year which can evoke both excitement and concern in the heart of home schooling mamas everywhere.

On top of the busy schedule, holidays often bring us into contact with extended family members, co-workers, or other acquaintances that may be less than supportive of our homeschooling efforts, thus, adding confusion, hurt feelings, and defensiveness to a time which should be happy and full of joy. So what's a mom to do? Here in this quick list of tips and ideas, I pray you will find something which can help you have a more relaxing and enjoyable time with your family this holiday season.



## *Design Your Master Plan*

Now's the time! If you haven't already done so, plan a night this week to have a family meeting to clarify how you really want to spend your time and energy during the holidays this year. You may think that your children are too young to contribute to the planning process or that your husband or teens don't care, but Most of the time, people support what they help to

create. So it is important to get some kind of “buy-in” from each member of your family. Here are some questions you might like to consider together.

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- What outside activities or events will you participate in?
- What holiday traditions are really important to each of you?
- What would make the holiday season most memorable and meaningful for your family?
- Out of everything your family wants to do, what are the top three or four “must do” items for each of you? What can you live without?
- What do you really **NOT** want to do this year?

Try to be flexible. Don't be afraid to try something new or to let go of an older tradition if it no longer suits your family. This is a time to practice cooperation and teamwork together. 😊

You also need to realize that there will probably be more activities, events, and fun things to do than you can realistically fit into your schedule. Please give yourself permission to say, “No” to some things. You do **NOT** have to do it all! Your value as a mom is in no way related to how many cookies you bake or how many times you go caroling at the local nursing home. Please don't buy into the lie that more activities, more events, more gifts, etc. will mean a more meaningful holiday season for you and your family.

### *Keep your Plan in Sight*



Once you have your list of activities and events, put them on a large calendar, whiteboard, or poster board and put it right out in plain sight. Maybe somewhere near the breakfast table or in the living room is a good place. It needs to be able to be seen on a daily basis so everyone will know what is coming up and when. Make sure you mark down **EVERYTHING** so there are no surprises at the last minute for anyone.

To make sure you all stay on the same page, you might want to hold a mini meeting with your family each week or every other week to prepare for upcoming activities and to make sure the plan is still working for all of you.

## *Keep School Cool*



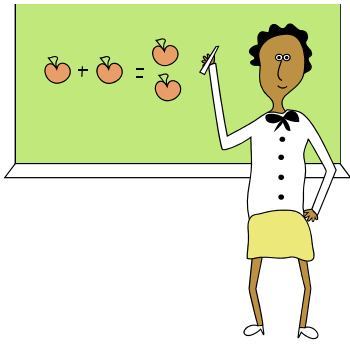
Ah, yes, the question of how to keep up with schoolwork during the holiday season is one that can send even the most organized homeschool moms into a tizzy. May Heaven help those of us whose organizational skills are less than perfect. 😊

Try to keep your school schedule realistic. Even if you are in a state which requires you to follow certain guidelines, there will be some flexibility built in to how you can handle your teaching schedule. For instance, if you know that you will not have the time to help with science experiments during the holiday baking time, simply don't schedule them! If your perfectionist side won't allow that, just schedule the experiments that your kids can do on their own and make sure you have the items they need in advance. Then, call me at your earliest convenience to schedule some coaching sessions to deal with the perfectionism. 😊 Seriously, my point is to take charge of your schedule and realize it is OK to re-arrange things a bit during this hectic time of year.

Another idea to try is to completely put away the books for a couple of the busiest days or weeks during the holiday season. There are still plenty of learning opportunities to take advantage of without relying on the everyday curriculum. Here are some ideas and online resource suggestions which may help you to work some of your school subjects into your everyday holiday prep activities.



## Math

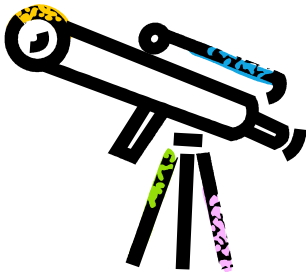


Math skills can be worked in almost everywhere in your holiday preparations. Basic math facts through fractions can be tackled in the kitchen with every recipe. Geometric shapes and patterns are involved with making decorations and wrapping gifts. Figuring out what the best buy is at the grocery store, how long a turkey needs to bake, and how many extra brownies you will need to make if the preschooler raids the dessert stash are all wonderful and practical applications of math.

<http://www.biglearning.com/treasure-cooking-with-kids.htm>

[http://eclectichomeschool.org/articles/pages/kitchen\\_math.asp](http://eclectichomeschool.org/articles/pages/kitchen_math.asp)

## Science



Be creative! Work science experiments into your cooking, baking, and other kitchen activities. Also, how about a study of astronomy? After all, the wise men mentioned in the New Testament story of the birth of Jesus studied the stars. Clear winter nights can offer up some beautiful views of the night sky, and this is a great time to relax and consider God's amazing creation all around us.

<http://www.leapingfromthebox.com/art/rlg/kitchenscience.html>

<http://www.homeschoolcentral.com/study/astronomy.htm>



## Social Studies



Work in history, geography, and cultural lessons by having your children research how a particular holiday was celebrated in the past or how it is currently celebrated in other parts of the world.

You could also research other holidays that you do not celebrate as a family and learn about their meanings and cultural significance.

<http://www.history.org/almanack/life/xmas/customs.cfm>

<http://homeschoolinghelp.com/celebrating-thanksgiving-a-homeschool-study/>

## Language Arts



Practice language arts by reading aloud some holiday classics together as a family. You can even get many of these in dramatized audio versions from your library or other resources and listen while you wrap presents, cook, or drive to grandma's house. )

Practice handwriting and spelling by having your children fill out or sign holiday greeting cards for family members, our soldiers, or your favorite charity.

<http://soldiersangels.org/cards-plus-team.html>



## Fine Arts

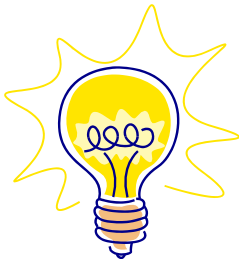


Why not take some time out to attend a play such as *The Nutcracker* or other holiday classic.

Practice music appreciation or learn about music history by listening to classical holiday music, studying famous composers, or learning to sing some new songs together as you cook or clean the house.

<http://www.christmasgifts.com/music.html>

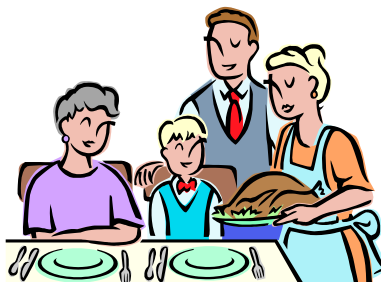
## Other subjects



Practice good citizenship by participating in a coat drive, toys for tots, working at a soup kitchen or some other charitable volunteerism.

Practice computer science skills by having your kids put together a digital slideshow of holiday pictures to send to family members.

With a little brainstorming together, I'm sure you and your family can come up with even more creative ways to do school lessons during the holidays without making it seem like work at all. 😊



## *Ready for the Relatives?*

During the holidays, we often spend longer periods of time with extended family, acquaintances from church or work, and other folks we don't know very well or whom we are not accustomed to being around. It may help to decide beforehand on some strategies to handle relatives and friends who may not be very supportive of your homeschooling efforts.

Depending on the ages of your children, see if you can come up with ways to help them handle uncomfortable situations such as times when well-meaning adults may try to quiz them on their skills. Some children may relish the opportunity to show off their knowledge while the thought of having to perform like this may petrify others. There are other good times for your child to have a pre-planned answer to give such as when he or she is asked why they are not in school or when asked about Santa Claus (for those who don't participate in that tradition).

## *Take a Moment for Mom*

You have decorated, cooked the holiday meals, attended parties, done community service, hosted extended family members in your home, baked cookies, gone caroling, attended church plays, and somehow managed to squeeze in some school lessons to boot. Now, mom, go do something for yourself! Take a long relaxing bubble bath, get a facial, have your nails done, get a pedicure, go to the coffee shop – something. You deserve to reward yourself a bit for all that you do.

This suggestion is one you will most likely overlook even though you might think it would be nice. Go do it! In fact, I invite you to e-mail me at [coachnikkib@gmail.com](mailto:coachnikkib@gmail.com), and tell me what you did to reward yourself this holiday season. Don't let money be an excuse. Coordinate with another mom and watch each other's children so you can



take some time for yourself to go walk in the park and sip hot chocolate. Do whatever it is that gives you some peace and joy. It doesn't have to break the bank to have a lot of value.



Thanks for reading! I would love to hear from you and would value your feedback about this list of holiday ideas for homeschoolers. If there is ever any way I can be of service to you, please let me know. I wish you true joy, peace, and beautiful memories with your family during this holiday season!

Sincerely,

Nikki B.

<http://www.coachnikkib.com>



Nikki has been a homeschooling mom since 1999 and currently has two teenage students. Along with helping her husband with his computer consulting business, she has volunteered with organizations such as Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and 4-H. She has also served as a founding member of the Board of Directors for her local homeschool support group. She loves helping both kids and adult volunteers increase their confidence and develop their own unique leadership abilities.

Nikki understands very well how challenging homeschooling can be. A homeschool mom often faces pressure from outside influences, within her family, and even in the context of her own thoughts, feelings, and beliefs.

As a coach, Nikki's mission is to strengthen families by encouraging, empowering, and inspiring family-focused moms such as homeschooling moms and stay-at-home moms. She loves to help mothers discover their own unique potential, power, and purpose in life.

You can request a copy of Nikki's FREE report, "***The ABC's of Staying Sane as a Homeschool Mom***" by visiting <http://www.coachnikkib.com/free>.