Connecting Through New Traditions in 2020

This year has thrown many new challenges to parents. Maintaining a routine and helping your family stay stable during this time of chaos can be hard. We’ve gone from knowing when school, ballet and soccer are scheduled to needing to find activities for your children to do, making sure they can get online and participate, and trying to maintain some sort of normal. If you are struggling to keep a level of sanity during this time, you are not alone.

According to researchers in Colorado and Arizona, COVID-19 is an outside stressor that has the potential to overwhelm parents. They theorize that because there is little control over the actual events happening, strain is being put on relationships between parents and children. However, there are things you can do to combat these issues. According to the same researchers, parents who have perceived control over their circumstances tend to have less stress and better relationships. One way you can create this perceived control is by incorporating traditions into your routine.

Traditions provide a sense of identity, a source of strength and a sense of connection for families. As we enter the holiday seasons for the year 2020, it may be a good idea to think through traditions you currently have and work on ways to adapt them based on your local COVID guidelines and family traditions. For example, if you are unable to travel to visit family for the holidays, you can utilize technology and have a game night via Zoom or set an extra place at the table and then Facetime during dinner.

You also have the option of adopting completely new traditions. With all the change that has happened this year, it may be a perfect time to start a new tradition like a costume fashion show, a Thanksgiving baking contest, or a Christmas light scavenger hunt. Remember, some of the best traditions are born from spontaneity!
Traditions may seem like they are harder to implement this year, but this year may be one of the most important years to implement them. As parents struggle with the current situation and the lack of control that seems to accompany a world-wide pandemic, being able to implement traditions can provide your family with strength, connection, and a sense of identity. It can also give parents the ability to control something, even if it may seem small, and know they are making a difference. Whether your traditions will need to be created, adapted, or can stay the same this year, remember traditions can be powerful tools to bring your family closer together.

~Tasha Killian & Naomi Brower

References


If you need a sugar free recipe for the coming holidays then you will love this apple pie. It tastes like the real thing!

APPLE PIE
5-6 large Granny Smith apples
1 can (6 oz.) unsweetened frozen apple juice concentrate
½ cup water
¼ cup cornstarch
¼ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon allspice
Dash salt

Combine apples and juice; simmer covered over medium heat 10 minutes. Combine water and cornstarch; blend well. Add slowly to simmering apples, stirring constantly. Add spices and remove from heat. Pour into unbaked crust-lined 10-inch pie pan; add top crust. Bake at 375° for 30-40 minutes until crust is golden brown.

Kids Christmas Projects

CHOCOLATE KISSES FOREST
1 Styrofoam cone (12 x 4-inch)
Aluminum foil
4 bags (13 oz. each) chocolate kisses, wrapped in green, red and silver foil
Low heat glue gun, non-toxic craft glue, or confectioner’s glue*
Toothpicks
Bow

Cover foam cone with foil. Decorate cone with green foil-wrapped kisses by gluing flat side against the foil-covered cone. Insert one end of a toothpick into the side of each remaining red and silver kiss; insert other end into the foam cone, filling in the gaps between the green foil kisses. Place bow on top of tree.

*Confectioners Glue: Whisk together 4 teaspoons powdered egg whites (meringue power) with ¼ cup water until completely dissolved. With mixer, beat in 3 cups sifted powdered sugar until thick and smooth.

PRETZEL REINDEER
Pretzels (2-inch size)
White chocolate, melted
M & M’s
Whole almonds

Lay pretzels on a sheet of wax paper and fill the three pretzel “holes” with white chocolate (a teaspoon works well for this). For eyes, put matching M & M’s in the two smaller holes (place them on the chocolate). For the nose, place a red M & M just below the eyes, in the larger space. For the ears, place the almond above the eyes and a little to the outside. Break pretzels to form “antlers” and set between the ears. The melted chocolate is the “glue”. Let it set up before eating.
Home Buyer Education Classes
USU Extension Office
1181 No. Fairgrounds Dr., Ogden

♦ Saturday, Dec. 5, 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

For your safety, due to COVID 19 this class will be taught virtually. You will receive a link to attend one day before the event. You will also need to fill out paperwork and send it in before and after the class.

These classes will help prepare you for the home buying process. Topics that will be covered are: how much can you afford, mortgage loans, credit, shopping for a home, what to expect at closing and much more. Cost is $25 per household for certificate and free if you only want education. Call 801-399-8207 to register.

Save the Date . . .

Utah Marriage Celebration - Online

Join us for an entertaining statewide virtual educational event at the Utah Marriage Celebration, an online date night for couples or individuals who want to prepare for or strengthen their marriage. Live workshops will be provided by professionals from across the nation on topics such as intimacy, communication and staying connected, as well as an inspiring keynote presentation by Dr. Morgan Cutlip and entertaining capnote by Dr. Dave Schramm. Live workshops will be 6:00-9:30 p.m. (with bonus workshops available starting at 4:00p.m.). For more details see www.relationships.usu.edu.

From all of us at the Extension office we want to wish you a Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year!
Noteworthy Notes for the Holiday Season

PUMPKIN

I am sure many of you are hoping to find ways to use your fall pumpkins, especially if they are the sweet or sugar pumpkin. First note of caution, we do not recommend using a carved pumpkin if it has been sitting out on the front porch, or in the living room window, or standing more than 2 hours.

Second note of caution, it is not recommended that you can mashed or pureed pumpkin…only safe way to preserve pureed pumpkin is to freeze it or dry it…including freeze drying. According to the National Center for Home Food Preservation (www.nchfp.uga.edu): “Home canning is not recommended for pumpkin butter or any mashed or pureed pumpkin or winter squash. In 1989, the USDA’s Extension Service first published the Complete Guide to Home Canning that remains the basis of Extension recommendations today, found in the December 2009 revision. The only directions for canning pumpkin and winter squash are for cubed flesh. In fact, the directions for preparing the product include the statement, "Caution: Do not mash or puree."

Did you take note? No home canned pumpkin butter. Sorry, and yes, I have heard there are many who have ‘been doing this for years’ without any trouble—I see them on uninformed blogs quite often. My question would be, “Is it worth the risk?” You or a loved one just may be the unlucky one…so why chance it? Do it right, eliminate the worry, and freeze it.

HOLIDAY SCAMS

Sadly, the holiday season, the season of ‘good cheer’, is a season of increased attempts at scamming the consumer. Just a noteworthy reminder, stay vigilant and on the lookout for scams. They are so common…from phishing (email fraud), to vishing (live phone calls or robocalls), to smishing (text messaging), to government imposter scams, to lotteries and sudden riches scams, as well as grandparent scams, work from home scams, and certainly this time of year, charitable giving scams.

The FDIC says: “Be suspicious if someone contacts you unexpectedly online and asks for your personal information. It doesn’t matter how legitimate the email or website may look. Only open emails, respond to text messages, voice mails, or callers that are from people or organizations you know, and even then, be cautious if they look questionable.

If you think an email, text message, or pop-up box might be legitimate, you should still verify it before providing personal information. If you want to check something out, independently contact the supposed source (perhaps a bank or organization) by using an email address or telephone number that you know is valid, such as from their website or a bank statement.”

Speaking of scams, you will be happy to note that at the end of September, the FTC, in partnership with 50 state and federal law enforcement agencies, launched a new nationwide initiative designed to protect consumers from fraudulent collection attempts. “Operation Corrupt Collector” aims to crack down on “phantom collection” practices, that is, attempts to collect debts which the consumer does not owe, or the collector has no authority to collect. These fraudulent collection attempts, which represent nearly 45% of FTC complaints this year, often go hand in hand with abusive tactics making them a high priority for the FTC at a time when so many consumers are under financial stress.

~Teresa Hunsaker

What does Santa call his little helpers? Subordinate clauses!

What do you call a kid who won’t sit on Santa’s lap? Claustrophobic!
Gift Cards

With many of us trying to avoid crowds and large gatherings of people this holiday season we may be choosing to stay out of stores and malls as much as possible. In fact, we may be tempted to give even more gift cards than we ever have.

While gift cards provide a level of convenience to our shopping (and crowds dilemma) it is important that both the giver and the receiver understand the details of each card, and be well aware of any policies and stipulations by either a merchant or a bank issued card.

Here is some information provided by FDIC that will be helpful to know:

Federal Law Offers Protections

The Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure (Credit CARD) Act provides several protections for consumers who purchase certain types of gift cards, including store and restaurant (also known as merchant) gift cards. These cards can only be redeemed at the stores and restaurants that sell them. Bank gift cards, which carry the logo of a payment card network (e.g., Visa, MasterCard), are also subject to Credit CARD Act protections and can be used wherever the brand is accepted.

Under the law, a gift card cannot expire until at least five years from the date it was activated. The law also places general limitations on fees. For instance, the card issuer cannot charge a dormancy or inactivity fee on a gift card unless there has been no activity for one year and the card clearly states its policy toward that fee. In addition, some states have separate laws that provide added protection in certain circumstances.

Beware of Scams

Scammers often use gift cards as a way to defraud people of their money because they’re just like cash – any misuse is hard to trace. Unlike credit cards, there typically isn’t any recourse for consumers when a gift card is stolen or used without authorization, so it is very hard to reverse the purchases or get a refund in these situations.

Another common scam is someone who poses as an attorney for a family member and claims that the family member is in trouble with the law and needs assistance. They contact you by phone or email, and ask you to purchase gift cards in specific amounts to pay them. These are all red flags to a scam, and once you purchase the gift cards, the scammers will tell you to provide them with the code numbers and PINs that are usually located on the back of cards so that the scammer can redeem them.

Remember, no business or government agency will ask you to make payments with gift cards, so if you are contacted in this manner, it is most likely a scam. It’s also a good rule of thumb to never make a payment over the phone or by wiring money unless you can confirm that the request for payment is legitimate.

Also, be on the lookout for gift card scams if you are selling items. Someone may contact you to purchase the item you are selling and tell you they will send a check for more than the purchase price and ask you to give them the difference in the form of a gift card, but once you try to deposit/cash the check, you’ll find out it is fake.

If you believe you’ve been the victim of a gift card scam, report the situation to your local police department. You may also want to notify the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which tracks scams and frauds. You can submit complaints about scams to the FTC by visiting The FTC Complaint Assistant.

In addition, you should immediately report the scam to the merchant or company that issued the card and ask if they can refund your money. Most issuers have toll-free telephone numbers available online, so you can call to report a lost or stolen card. You might get back the money left on the card or a portion of it, and sometimes there is a fee when they provide a refund, but still worth reporting. You may need to provide the receipt and the card number, so be sure to keep record of that information.

Gift cards continued on page 8
### Helpful Holiday Baking Substitutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INGREDIENT</th>
<th>USE INSTEAD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allspice</td>
<td>For 1 teaspoon, combine ½ teaspoon of cinnamon, ¼ teaspoon of ground cloves and ¼ teaspoon of ground nutmeg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple pie spice</td>
<td>Combine: 4 tablespoons ground cinnamon 1 ½ teaspoons ground nutmeg ½ teaspoon ground allspice 1 teaspoon ground ginger 1 ½ teaspoons ground cardamom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buttermilk</td>
<td>For 1 cup use: 1 cup plain yogurt; or, 1 tablespoon vinegar or lemon juice and milk to fill 1 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown sugar</td>
<td>For 1 cup use: 1 cup white sugar + 2-3 tablespoons molasses-depending on light or dark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baking powder</td>
<td>For 1 teaspoon use: ¼ teaspoon baking soda + ½ teaspoon cream of tartar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baking soda</td>
<td>For 1 teaspoon use: 4 teaspoons baking powder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocoa</td>
<td>For ¼ cup cocoa powder use: 1 square (1 ounce) unsweetened baking chocolate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn syrup</td>
<td>For 1 cup use: 1 cup liquid glucose, or, 1 cup light flavored honey, or, 1 cup treacle, or, 1 cup maple syrup, or, 1 cup agave syrup.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crème Fraiche</td>
<td>For 1 cup use: 1 cup sour cream, or, 1 cup whipping cream plus 1 tablespoon buttermilk or yogurt, or, ½ cup whipping cream plus ½ cup sour cream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>For each egg, combine 2 tablespoons of water with 1 tablespoon vegetable oil and 2 teaspoons baking powder, or, ¼ cup mashed banana, or, ¼ cup mashed avocado, or, ¼ cup applesauce, or, 1 tablespoon ground flax or chia seed with 3 tablespoons water (let sit combined for 5 minutes before using), or, ¼ cup aquafaba (the leftover liquid from a can of beans—most popularly garbanzo beans).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mascarpone cheese</td>
<td>For 1 cup use: 1 cup (240 ml) creme fraiche, or, ¼ cup cream cheese beaten with ¼ cup heavy whipping cream (at least 35% fat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumpkin pie spice</td>
<td>Combine: 3 tablespoons ground cinnamon 2 teaspoons ground ginger 2 teaspoons nutmeg 1 ½ teaspoons ground allspice 1 ½ teaspoons ground cloves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ricotta cheese</td>
<td>For 1 cup use: 1 cup dry/drained cottage cheese blended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-rising flour</td>
<td>1 cup all purpose flour plus 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder plus ¼ teaspoon salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweetened Condensed Milk</td>
<td>For 1 can (14 ounces) boil together 10 minutes: ¼ cup sugar, ½ cup water, and 1 ¼ cup powdered milk. Cool before using.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No doubt about it, 2020 and the pandemic has been a challenging year for all of us. With the holidays here, and family and friends being needed now more than ever, how do we stay connected while apart?

One of the first things that is important to remember is that being physically distant does not mean being emotionally distant. It also means that when (and if) we are together, out of courtesy to all, we all wear masks, and keep our especially vulnerable family members and friends specifically in mind.

❖ Meet up on video conferencing on computers or smartphones.
❖ Make more phone calls to loved ones when you think of them.
❖ Write letters or send cards via email or through the mail. For those interested in using technology, there are some fun and easy to use apps for this purpose...Smilebox, Just Wink, eCards, Ink Cards, are just a few to choose from.
❖ Keep traditions alive…recipes, activities, and decorations can all still be a part of the holiday…just find creative ways to continue the traditions.
❖ Send text messages with funny memes or videos you see with a note that you are thinking of them.
❖ Put together a small COVID care package and send to your best friend.
❖ Make front-porch visits, decorate front doors or sidewalk chalk a message to a loved one/friend.
❖ Open gifts together remotely.
❖ Have scheduled times to do things ‘together’ remotely…watch a favorite holiday movie, cook a favorite dish/treat, decorate the tree, or read a book.
❖ Send photos through any one of the many private photo sharing apps.
❖ Consider ways to give back…or serve…or sponsor a charity together, and share what each person has done and how they have grown or benefitted from the experience.
❖ Take a class together…remotely. How fun is that? You all join in as students in the class…then meet up and discuss afterwards.
❖ Form a holiday book club.
❖ Order a special t-shirt or pair of pajamas and all wear them at a designated day/time…take pics and send them to each other.

❖ As you know we are in a board game and puzzle frenzy…so join in…play a board game (remotely of course) together…or put a puzzle together (order and send everyone the same puzzle). There are even sites like Words with Friends (it’s like Scrabble), or Chess.com that allow you to play certain games together.
❖ Pick your quaran“team” -- people who are limiting social interaction that you can spend time with. You could even set up your own FaceBook Live event…privately of course.

Thank goodness for technology, but for folks who are not familiar with how to use zoom (or other platforms), or who do not have access to a cell phone or computer with some of these options, there are things that can be coordinated over the phone, sent out in the mail, and/or dropped off at people’s homes…if proximity allows.

The idea is to be creative, think ‘outside the box’, and be willing (and positive) about the new approach to the holidays that will assist in keeping your loved ones more safe and still stay connected.

We’d love to hear from you your ideas and successes for things you did to stay connected. We will post them in our next Sampler, which can help others in the New Year, and into Valentine’s Day.

~Teresa Hunsaker & Melanie Jewkes

5 Simple Stress Busters

1. Say no to unwanted invitations and requests you’ll be unable to fulfill, either in your personal or professional life. Saying yes only increases stress.
2. If the evening news makes you anxious, turn off the TV.
3. If you get irritable in traffic jams, use a less traveled route.
4. If you repeatedly argue about the same topics with certain people cross those topics off your conversation list,
5. When you find yourself in a stressful situation, ask yourself how important it will be in the long run. Will it matter in a month? A year? If the answer is now, let it go.

Source: American Psychological Association
Create a Healthy Winter in 2020

Hello and happy holidays from Create Better Health! We hope this newsletter finds you well. It has been an interesting year to say the least and we have been looking forward to the relief and comfort the holiday season can bring. Family, friends, comfort food, cozy blankets and fires, etc. how can we best enjoy these things in the current pandemic circumstances?

The Mayo Clinic published an article on their website which offered several tips to preparing for a healthy COVID-19 winter including receiving a flu shot, keeping up with preventative screenings, performing an office space checkup, and to our great delight, exercising and meal planning!

Did you know that you can reduce your risk of getting sick by 50% when you exercise regularly and eat a balanced diet? 50%!

Eating a balanced diet often begins with a solid meal plan.

We recommend using a two to four-week meal plan calendar to plan and create meals for you and your family that reflect recommendations found in the MyPlate diagram. By following these recommendations your body will be getting the proper vitamins and nutrients it needs to remain healthy and strong in northern Utah’s physically taxing winter conditions.

It is simply not enough to eat your way into good health, once your body has been fueled it is important to get up, be active and use that fuel in a way that best serves your health. You can plan to exercise indoors by using or building your own at home work out program or you can bundle up and take you activities out doors for some classic or new winter fun such as sledding, building a snowman, taking a winter hike, or painting the snow.

Follow create better health on Facebook and Instagram for more food and exercise tips on creating a healthy pandemic year winter.

@createbetterhealthwebercounty

~Kayla Lane, Weber County Ambassador

Gift cards continued from page 5

Tips When Buying Gift Cards

✔ Avoid buying gift cards from unknown sites. The cards may be counterfeit or stolen, so be sure to buy gift cards from sources you know and trust.

✔ If you are buying a card from a retailer, check it before purchasing. Make sure that the codes on the back of the card haven’t been scratched off to show the PIN number.

✔ Be sure to read the gift card’s fine print. Know the terms and conditions. Is there an expiration date? Are there fees to use the card? Are there fees if the card is not used for a certain period of time?

✔ If possible, register your gift card. This may help protect you in case the card is lost or stolen.

Now that you are better informed, be sure to share this information with the receiver of your gift, so they can be prepared too!

~Teresa Hunsaker

Resources:
Federal Trade Commission: www.ftc.gov
Federal Deposit Insurance Corp: www.fdic.gov

This material was funded by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact 1.800.221.5689 or visit online at http://fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/coalition/map.htm. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture’s policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.