

the essential  
guide for parents

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Joy

## 'Tis the season for TRADITION

Whether it's hauling home a tree, lighting a menorah, or going to a Kwanzaa feast, holiday rituals give kids special memories to cherish. BY GAIL E. HUDSON

**W**HEN I WAS A YOUNG CHILD, CHRISTMAS WAS THE DAY when magic happened in our household. Stepping out of my bedroom on Christmas morning, my fantasy world of make-believe would blissfully overlap reality when I'd see the piles of gifts and stuffed stockings—all delivered by a loving Santa and his trusty flying reindeer.

By the time I was 8 years old, Santa Claus had gracefully aged into myth. Although I still relished the onslaught of gifts and fun on Christmas morning, I was becoming more and more enthralled with the entire season—a month of time-honored family rituals. Year after year, my siblings and I opened Advent calendars in the December days preceding Christmas. We drank cocoa from Santa mugs and sang carols. Most of all, I delighted in hanging the striped flannel stockings that my mother sewed for us—each one unique, yet clearly

