



LIGHTING OUR WAY

Parenting can lead to conflict during the holidays. How much Christ do we want in Christmas? Discuss.

Softly glowing candles lit to warm the deep darkness of winter, gifts bought or made for those we love, special meals prepared with care and shared with joy – these are some of the markers of the winter holiday season.

Whether we light the menorah or the Yule log at the end of the year, it is a time to gather with those we love and celebrate those relationships. Prior to being parents, perhaps you and your partner used the days off during this time to go somewhere special (and potentially sunny) to celebrate your relationship, bypassing the sometimes hectic pace and consumerism that can add a tin glint to the intended glow of the season. Perhaps you alternated years celebrating with each other's families, or perhaps the two of you hosted your families of choice for the holiday celebrations. Whatever you did before you became parents, the activities were likely geared towards the tastes and traditions of your adult peers.

Like most of the rest of your life, now that you are parents, what you do for the holiday season takes on more significance. Whereas in the past you and your partner might have casually cobbled together traditions from both of your histories to create a collage experience of the holidays, now you are aware of passing on and creating new traditions for your wee one. Like the rest of your life now, you find yourself basing decisions on a reflected response to your own upbringing. If the holidays were a time of great cheer as a child, you likely will try to recreate that magic for your little one. Conversely, if the holidays lacked the glow and cheer anticipated for the season, you likely will try to do everything you wished your care givers had done for you during the holidays.

Will you have a
Christmas tree and
a menorah?
What about
Solstice or Kwanza?

The cobbling of traditions between you and your partner that worked previously may now become a point of tension. A previously casual or semi-disdainful relationship with the sacred aspects of your holiday traditions may suddenly become a point of great contention as you and your partner discern how much Christ you actually want to keep in Christmas, so to speak. If celebrating Christmas, do you want the holiday to be about the birth of Jesus or do you want it to be about Santa Claus