



The Book of New Family Traditions: How to Create Great Rituals for Holidays and Every Day

Meg Cox

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Quality family togetherness—everyone wants it, but it seems increasingly harder to achieve. In a world run by cell phones, computers, and virtual networking, the comfort of human connection grows more important—and rarer—all the time. In a guide newly updated for the next generation, family expert Meg Cox offers a solution. Family rituals provide a sense of home and identity that kids and parents both need. From holidays and birthdays to bed times, meal times, pets, and even chores, *The Book of New Family Traditions* spotlights hundred of ways to bring the fun and ritual back to family life.

The Book of New Family Traditions: How to Create Great Rituals for Holidays and Every Day Details

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Author : Meg Cox

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Frances says

Great book to spark some new ideas for family traditions and rituals. There was definitely a lot things to pull from, many of which can be used interchangeably for any time of the year. I really enjoyed how the author highlighted different families and what they did. It is nice to relate. Also of note, there were a lot of spelling errors and grammar errors throughout the book.

Celeste says

I didn't really find any new, fun traditions in this book that I would actually like to try. They were a bit cheesy and not my style.

Adrienne says

This was a small step above the Family Magazine type articles. This author has tons of examples of real family traditions from around the country. She identifies the three parts of a ritual: preparation (verbal cue, music, tapping fork on a glass), action, and integration/celebration. So in a simple birthday celebration the "beginning" is turning out the lights. The "action" is when the candles are blown out and we sing. Final stage is celebration which involves eating cake and opening gifts. So using those three elements as a basic recipe, you can make any ritual you want.

But make sure it has a purpose, and make it personal. Some rituals can solve problems, like getting kids to happily buckle seat-belts, or saying good-bye at school or whatever.

Basically, rituals aren't that hard to pull off, and they can actually ease family stress instead of being one more thing to check off on your list. Traditions are a family's way of consciously choosing happy, meaningful memories.

Douglas Lord says

Cox (The Heart of a Family: Searching America for New Traditions That Fulfill Us) packs her book with simple, encouraging ideas for getting back to the basics of family life. Establishing rituals is not always quick and easy; some of these ideas are time-consuming, but they are uniformly peppy and easy for committed readers to absorb. Though free rein is afforded creative readers, basic recipes for creating rituals abound. The first of four topical sections, "Holidays," is arranged by date and suggests ideas for adding zing to the holidays (like celebrating Big Bird's birthday on the first day of spring). Sections then focus on "Family Festivities and Ceremonies" (e.g., birthdays or special school days, travel, and vacation), "Daily, Weekly, and Monthly Rituals" (e.g., mealtime grace, full-moon walks, and kids cook night), and "Rites of Passage" (like graduations). Like Julie Tallard Johnson's The Thundering Years: Rituals and Sacred Wisdom

for Teens, this is a great choice and highly recommended.

Miranda says

Well done with a variety of ideas.

Emily Davenport says

I loved all the family traditions for holy days and ordinary days. My only complaint was that were some odd typos that should have been caught in editing. Hopefully the print version is better than the ebook. I would love to own this as a reference guide.

Milka says

A very thorough book on the many ways you can create traditions and rituals specific to your family. These apply to everyday rituals as well as religious and non-religious holidays. Lots of ideas to make family life more interesting and fun, and increase communications between family members.

Sylvester says

A good collection of ideas for adding some fun and interest to family life. Liked the "Full Moon Walk", and the pre-Christmas ideas. Also appreciated the list of resources at the back of the book. An over-all good compendium.

Jamie says

My overall impression of this book:

Had some good ideas, but I think family rituals and traditions are better if they evolve organically.

Lori says

Three stars because I got some good ideas from this book, and I borrowed it from my library so it didn't cost me anything. I would have been very disappointed with it had I spent money on it.

This book is mostly comprised of very brief examples of rituals used by real-life families, which makes it

feel more like a very long blog post or magazine article than an actual book. Or, for that matter, a manuscript-version of someone's "Family Rituals" Pinterest board. The rituals tend to be extremely cheesy, even to a sap like me, but I did take away notes on a few that I plan to tailor for my own family, so I would say it was worth the very quick read.

A note for those who don't teach English for a living and are therefore less tolerant of rampant abuse of the language: I read this as a kindle e-book and it was filled with errors--"manager" for manger, spelling errors, a lot of Ks in place of Hs, etc. Still completely understandable, but if this sort of thing hurts your eyes, perhaps try a hard copy. This one particular error made me giggle, though: "I bet lots of bat mitzvah boys would say the same thing."

Jamie says

I found a few fun ideas to try. I would have preferred this book in a shorter list format.

Jan says

Nice, easy to read book of ideas. I liked the recommendations of some websites I didn't know or hadn't thought about, such as pbs.org for family ideas for birthday parties (and other things) and the motherdaughter bookclub.com. I want to look up Chase's calendar of events after seeing it listed here.

Danielle Wells says

I enjoyed this book because of the many creative ideas for celebrating holidays and creating family rituals. Because I've read a few books similar to this in the past, I didn't find too much new information, but it's good to be reminded to some of these ideas too!

This book will make you want to be intentional about creating new traditions for your family. In fact, I started a list of ideas for different holidays and celebration times so I wouldn't forget to incorporate them into our year. (On a side note, I think I'm going to have to schedule these new ideas into the calendar so that I won't forget!)

I give this 4 stars based on 2 facts: that the information found within the book was not totally new to me and it was written in a conversational style (not every word was essential and some was a bit of a waste of time [no offense meant]). Because of the elementary style of writing, it doesn't take long at all to read this.

It's a good read and I think every mother should peruse through it.

Elizabeth Jackson queiroz says

I have to admit this book gave me some pretty good ideas...but I just kept thinking that Pinterest is easier if

you're looking for good family traditions that you like and can put in one place. According to research, it is best for families to have atleast one ritual/routine to connect with daily (they suggest a family meal), and it is also good to have an activity once a week together (kind of like FHE)

My favorite family traditions that I read about were these:

- *Taping streamers and newspapers on the door for the birthday kid to burst through to their new age on their birthday
- *Plant something when someone in your family is born that can grow with them (can also be when you start something new...like a new job, or a new house, etc.)
- *Eat together in a family as often as possible
- *Have a seat of honor to celebrate a major triumph in the family
- *Have your kids pick out a book to donate to the school library when they graduate elementary school
- *Dates with dad

There were a lot more, but I think the magic of family traditions are that they are born and tweaked.

Mary Lou says

A lot of the traditions (or "rituals" as Cox prefers to call them) were not new (to me, at least) and weren't all that clever, e.g. reading bedtime stories, saying grace, or playing Sousa marches on Independence Day, to name a few. All great, but nothing we need to be told about.

Others were (again, to me) incredibly unappealing (see the entire section on celebrating your daughter's first period. I would have died if my mother had subjected me to that!). Many ideas seemed forced; entirely too much thought went into them. Others were simply volunteering or activism disguised as family tradition. Some ideas created messes that somebody (most likely Mom) is gonna have to clean up. And many of the ideas had reward as a component, often with a suggestion of gifts. I hated each and every one of these ideas.

But there were four - count 'em - *four* ideas that were new to me and worthwhile. As the book only took a few hours to read, I thought these four ideas were good enough to warrant a three star rating. I shan't tell you what the ideas were -- I imagine each family will have different responses to the suggestions presented.

I would just say that, in my experience as a mom and now a grandmother, the best new family traditions occur organically. One just needs to pay attention. And, of course, there is nothing more meaningful than the traditions passed down through generations, which give children a sense of history and belonging, whether it be a special recipe made every Easter, a baptismal gown worn by all the babies in the family for generations, or special ornaments for the Christmas tree. But you don't need a book to tell you that.
