

Jacob's Ladder Cooperative Christian Preschool
7316 Nolensville Road
Nolensville, TN 37135
615-776-7362
November 1, 2011



Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done. (I Chronicles 16:8) "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matthew 9:37-38)

Halloween has **not** been a favorite time for me since I became a parent. My mother was extremely creative and through 6th grade, I always had a prize winning costume. One year I was one of the three little pigs and my brother was the big bad wolf. Another year I was a Christmas tree, complete with decorations, most of which had been removed by the end of the parade. As a parent, I tried to carry on that tradition with my own children. However, I did not have the talents of my mother, nor did my children want to wear a "home-made costume!" But the day after the parade always turns my heart toward Thanksgiving and the blessings of the harvest.

Jacob's Ladder invites you to a Thanksgiving Feast on Wednesday, November 16 at 10:45 when we will thank God for the harvest of the preschool. Our feast is "potluck:" **each family brings one of their family favorite dishes to share on the banquet table. At a potluck, there is no set menu—whatever is brought is what we share together!** Parents, siblings, and even grandparents are invited to the feast. This is a wonderful time to fellowship with other families. The preschool will provide all the paper products, the beverages, bread, and, of course, some of our special recipe applesauce that the children made in October. We will need you to make a reservation so we know how many places to set up. Mark your calendar today and don't miss our harvest celebration!



Meet Concepcion

Three years ago Jacob's Ladder "adopted" Concepcion as a mission sponsorship project through Pueblo a Pueblo. Our sponsorship of \$300 a year pays for education and medical care for the girl at the far right of this picture taken at her home in Santiago, Guatemala. Concepcion is now approaching 15 years old, a critical time in the life of a Guatemala teen. Without educational support, Concepcion is likely to follow the path of her sister (pictured to my left) and marry to begin a family. When Jacob's Ladder took sponsorship,

Concepcion had five siblings. Her sister has moved, but there have been two additional babies in the last two years. The family shares a 12 x 12 block building with one bed, a dirt floor, no

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In a way, simply by including this article in the November 1 newsletter, I feel almost as guilty as I am judgmental of retailers who have already flooded our senses with holiday fare. Yet, I believe it to be a timely piece as we face the next 8 to 10 weeks of crowded calendar pages. I hope you will take, both with humor and resolve, what is helpful for your family from this article in Parent Exchange.

Holiday Frenzy: Don't Let Stress Steal Your Spirit, Holidays promise joy. They also bring crankiness, anxiety, whining, demanding pleas, and temper tantrums. And then there's the kids' behavior to endure! (Oh, you thought I was talking about the kids. I think you're an adult in denial . . .) Chaos and over-commitment are energy draining. At this time of year it contributes to what I think of as the "holiday frenzy." You know what I mean. Children bouncing off the walls. Parents burnt-out before December rolls around.

Why is it so easy to lose the holiday spirit? For starters, families experience a time crunch—so many people to see, so many things to do. Divorce, remarriage, and blended families make it even harder to make sure all bases are covered. Children are bombarded with noisy, over-stimulating advertising that primes them into a frenzy of "I-wants, gimmes, and I-gotta-haves." The drawn-out anticipation of holiday events (translation: gifts) can be excruciating for children. Overwhelmed children act up or withdraw into their own protective shells. Both responses tell us children are experiencing stress rather than joy — not the goal of any parent I know.

Can this holiday madness be avoided? It's a challenge not to cave in to the mayhem. But with wise prioritizing and planning we can help children experience the feelings we want them to associate with the holidays, such as warmth, togetherness, magic, and love. Following are tips to ward off holiday-related stress in your home.

- Create a "to-do" list and a manageable time line. This season eats away hours like they were minutes, so put your time management skills to work. Time management books await you at your neighborhood library or book seller. Pick one up. (And yes, I know, you won't have time to read it until the holidays roll around next year, but better later than never!)
- Don't start "talking up" holidays too early. Often stores promote holidays five months ahead of time — like tree ornaments displayed during an August heat wave! It puts a strain on children. As you know, waiting isn't their strong suit.
- Don't over-plan festivities. You don't have to indulge in every holiday tradition each and every year. Prioritize and delete those events of lesser importance. Keep your most treasured holiday rituals the same yearly. Rotate other activities every few years so they're fresh and rejuvenating.
- Plan holiday events that are developmentally appropriate. Attending the Nutcracker Ballet is a wonderful family tradition, but not when your child is a toddler.
- Set priorities. What traditions and values do you feel most passionately about passing on to your child? Let your answers guide your selection of holiday activities.
- Make sure everyone in the family gets regular sleep, balanced meals, and exercise. Healthy routines are the best protection against stress and stress-related illnesses.
- Keep daily routines as consistent and predictable as possible. Continuity provides a security blanket that keeps children (and parents) on an even keel. Maintain regular family rituals. Read bedtime stories despite being dog-tired from shopping. Holidays should add to our lives, not take them over! Overwhelmed children act up or withdraw into their own protective shells.

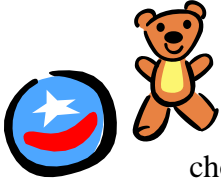
- Help children anticipate what will happen during special events, such as a sibling’s recital. Knowing what to expect helps reduce anxiety and fear. Gentle reminders, and a role-play rehearsal, help children conduct themselves appropriately.
- Alert children to schedule changes. Inform children of holiday trips so they can anticipate and prepare for them. It’s not fun to be taken off guard.
- Keep most of your festivities geared to your children’s interests. Children benefit from activities geared to their understanding, skills, and abilities. Resist making children tag along to adult parties and marathon shopping sprees.
- Empathize with your child’s feelings, and respect your child’s wishes. If your toddler is afraid of Santa, don’t push it. Walk as far away from Santa as you can. Kids get confused when you preach not to talk to strangers, and then you turn around and pressure them to talk to, and even sit on (!) a stranger’s lap who is obviously trying to disguise himself with a fake beard and stuffed belly! You loved Santa’s lap when you understood his holiday legend. Your warm and fuzzy Santa memories were probably from 4 or 5 years of age, not age 2. Give kids time to ease into what you had a whole childhood to experience.
- Avoid duplicating holiday experiences. Tell teachers and caregivers of your holiday plans so they aren’t repeated at school or child care. There are some holiday rituals so precious they should be reserved for families to experience fresh together.
- Plan relaxing activities. Sensory play, such as playing with play dough or finger-painting, is soothing for children. Ten minutes playing with water and water toys can be relaxing. Outdoor rambunctious play and indoor dress-up play let children use their imaginations while releasing pent up energy and tension.
- Prevent frustrations. Have enough materials such as wrapping paper, scissors, and tape on hand. And don’t forget laundry, groceries, supper, homework, or child care pick-up!
- Plan for quality time with the kids. Children can feel abandoned amidst the holiday rat-race. Children lost in the shuffle whine to get parents’ attention. Children lost in shopping aisles scream!
- Assign age-appropriate holiday jobs to all. Delegation makes holidays easier for everyone. Jobs may include shopping for gifts, making invitations, preparing simple food, or setting out napkins for a meal.
- Breathe deeeeeply. It’s easy to get carried away with a harried holiday pace. Deep breathing promotes relaxation. (But beware, hyperventilation results in public embarrassment.)
- Think “calm.” Consciously think about slowing down so you and the kids don’t get too physically and emotionally exhausted. A “hurry-hurry-ding-ding” mentality ushers in the holiday frenzy with open arms.
- Make time for adult companionship. While holidays focus on family, it’s also important to maintain your adult friendships. Make time for your own holiday interests, too. This may mean finding a reliable night-time caregiver to allow you to attend an evening concert or adults-only pizza party. It’s good for your mental health to occasionally have a break from the kids, even during the holidays. With wise prioritizing and planning we can help children experience the feelings we want them to associate with the holidays, such as warmth, togetherness, magic, and love.

www.ParentingExchange.com

About the Author — Karen Stephens is director of Illinois State University Child Care Center and instructor in child development for the ISU Family and Consumer Sciences Department. For

nine years she wrote a weekly parenting column in her local newspaper. Karen has authored early care and education books and is a frequent contributor to Exchange.

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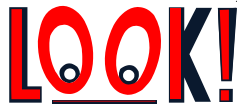
Jesus' Closet is a mission outreach of Nolensville First United Methodist Church. It started about the same time as Jacob's Ladder opened. Each year in November, we offer needy Latino families in the nearby communities an opportunity to choose one gift per child in the family as well as a time to meet together to worship and hear about Jesus Christ. The date of this year's "closet" is Saturday, November 19. In preparation we are collecting new and gently used toys and clothing for infants through teens. If you care to have items you are no longer using find an appreciative home, please bring your donations to Jacob's Ladder before Thanksgiving break.

Belk's Charity Sale

Friday evening and Saturday morning several of our Jacob's Ladder staff and parents will be working at the Belk's Charity Sale. On Saturday morning, between 6 and 10:00 AM, only those shoppers holding a ticket will be admitted to shop. The ticket is worth \$5.00 toward a purchase of the many items greatly reduced in price for the sale. A portion of ticket sales is divided among those non-profits who send workers for the sale. If you are interested in a ticket, please see Terri. Shoppers may set aside purchases and still use their tickets for a discount this week if unable to shop on Saturday.



Looking Ahead



Christmas Program – Tuesday, December 13, 6:30 PM in the sanctuary.
Details will follow in December, but please mark your calendar.

December Parent Helpers:

December 1 Patrick Barton
December 5 Valerie Mauro
December 6 Andrea Barnes
December 7 Heather Bell
December 8 Tonia Smith
December 12 Honora Bates

December 13 Amy Miller
December 14 Laura Newman
December 15 Corrie Blair
Thelma Gomez
Amanda Pharr
Jennifer Dunn

FUND RAISING OPPORTUNITIES

Please remember to recharge your Kroger Gift Card
Each time you recharge your gift card, Jacob's Ladder benefits.



Thursday, November 3 is JL day at Amico's Restaurant
JL receives 10% of your order. You must tell them you are From Jacob's Ladder when you place your order.



Belk Charity Sale November 5: 6:00 AM – 10:00 AM Tickets are \$5.00 and are good toward \$5.00 purchase



Ink Cartridges and Cell Phones Bring in your used cartridges and phones to recycle and JL benefits!