

# Toledo **AREA** PARENT

FREE DECEMBER 2016

News



## HOLIDAY HULLABALOO

FESTIVE EVENTS  
ALL MONTH LONG!

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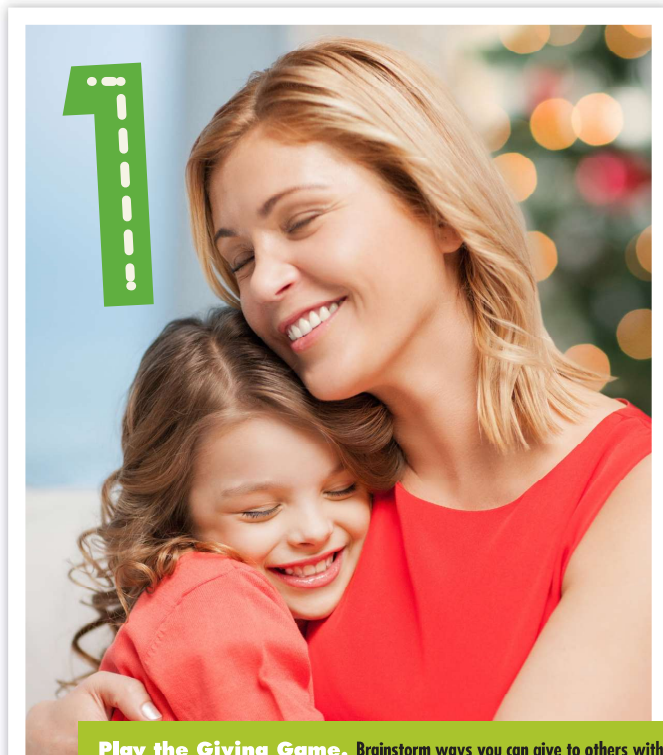
# 10 Simple Ways to Countdown to Christmas

Get in the spirit of the season

by Lisa A. Beach

As the holiday season approaches, a whirlwind of activity ensues that leaves families almost breathless by the end of December. Instead of rushing through the month, be intentional about when you say “yes”. Rather than over-committing to too many activities that take you away from your home, focus instead on infusing the holiday spirit with family.

But how? Create an advent calendar, with 25 days of simple, meaningful holiday activities that focus on giving, family, friendship, and fun. Starting on December 1st, focus on one intentional, memory-making activity each day.



**1 Play the Giving Game.** Brainstorm ways you can give to others without buying something (i.e., give a smile, a hug, a helping hand, etc.). Post the list on the fridge as a reminder. Each night, ask kids to share how they gave to others that day. Track everyone's daily “gifts,” and at the end of the week, whomever gave the most gets to choose a holiday flick to watch on family movie night.

# 2

## Adopt an international Christmas tradition.

The Swedes celebrate St. Lucia Day on December 13, which focuses on St. Lucy being the light during the long, dark Scandinavian winters. Light up your own holidays by eating breakfast together by candlelight. Or adopt the French tradition of making buche de Noel, a traditional cake resembling a Yule log with bark-colored frosting and a buttercream filling. Decorate it with “snow” by sprinkling confectioner’s sugar on top.

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# 3

**Blow holiday bubbles** outside by adding red food coloring to one jar of bubbles and green food coloring to another. For a crafty twist, blow the bubbles onto sheets of white paper and watch a Christmas color-burst emerge.

# 4

**Play holiday decoration bingo** by driving around your community checking out yard displays while searching for Christmas items like snowflakes, inflatable Santas, and Rudolph.

# 5



**Do a “ding-dong-ditch”** by secretly placing a poinsettia plant on a neighbor’s porch, ringing the doorbell and running away without getting caught.

# 6

**Make holiday S’mores** by adding crushed candy canes to a classic S’more recipe for a festive spin on a classic summertime treat.

# 7

**Allow your kids to decorate their bedroom doors** for Christmas with garland, ornaments, ribbons, etc.

# 8

**Invite Grandma** to a craft or baking day at your house to ensure your holiday fun extends to other family member.

# 9

## Designate a “chores for charity” week.

If you normally pay your kids for chores, ask them to donate their weekly earnings (which you’ll match) to a charity of their choice. If you don’t pay for chores, create a menu of special paid jobs to choose from (i.e., raking leaves, washing windows, etc.). Pool everyone’s wages and let the kids drop the family donation into a Salvation Army kettle.

# 10

**Play Christmas tourist** in a neighboring town. Pop in a local gift shop to check out holiday treasures. Walk along storefronts and look at window displays. Grab a sweet treat at a neighborhood bakery.