

HAVING A BLENDED SPLENDID HOLIDAY SEASON

blended families and holiday schedules, they can be harmonious

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Blended families and holiday schedules can be a challenge for the most gifted of organizers, and yet, there are some commonalities that can assist in celebrating more fa la la la and less ba-humbug. Blending in the holidays is best served pre-concluded much like a James Bond cocktail; everyone knowing the preferred recipe before the order is placed. Blendeds' holidays will fare much smoother if discussions regarding what traditions will be kept, discarded and newly created happen before the I do's have inked the marriage license. That being said, if the turkey's feathers are not the only things ruffled, below are a few guidelines to help (you may want to pass this along to your extended families;-):

BE A PURSUER OF PEACE: Jesus, the step-son of Joseph, is giving his directive sermon in Matthew chapter 5 on how to live life 101. Hmm... have you thought about that? Jesus was part of a blended family reared by his birth mother, Mary and his step-father Joseph. He gives us a clue into sharing the holiday spirit in verse 9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." Who better than Jesus would know the benefit of being called God's child? Isn't the holiday season the epitome of the time to walk in peace?

BE FLEXIBLE: In-laws and other family members may have to take a back seat to the availability of the children's schedule. Children of blended families have boasted this is the one time a year when having multiple sets of parents and grandparents is an advantage (something to do with extra presents), so let them reap the benefits. If your holiday is off by a day, or even a week, it's okay. Wrap yourself in the traditions anyway. In Genesis 13, Abraham and his nephew, Lot, decided to part ways as they had been abundantly blessed and needed more space for their families. Like blendeds, they had a lot of family! Abraham did not want to argue with Lot about semantics; instead he gave him first choice, "8 So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herders and

mine, for we are close relatives. 9 Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left." Lot, of course, chose the better lands for himself, as might your children's other parent. "10 Lot looked around and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt." Rest assured God is able to bless you beyond what you see in the natural as he blessed Abraham, the peacemaker. "14 The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. 15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. 16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. 17 Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you." In fact, the blessing was not only for him but for his children also. A fluid schedule that allows the children to maximize their holiday will be a blessing to all.

BE CREATIVE: A simple way to encapsulate holiday traditions is to embrace the exchange date as your Christmas Eve and the next morning as your Christmas morning, regardless of the actual date. If Santa came last week and you have already celebrated New Year's Eve before the kids are home again, then perhaps a treasure hunt is more in order for Santa's big reveal. Let the fun begin to this alternative Christmas with riddles that must be solved to find the next clue and ultimately discovering the hidden present(s). Even the Lord likes a good treasure hunt and after all, it is his birthday. Isaiah 45:3 "I will give you hidden treasures, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, who summons you by name." *cont'd on page 32*



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