



No portion of this article may be reproduced without
express written permission of Style Publishing Group, LLC.
©2007 • All rights reserved.



Style Publishing Group
P.O. Box 1676
Frisco, Texas 75034
Phone: 972.335.1181
Toll Free: 877.781.7067
Fax: 214.722.2313

E-mail: info@friscostyle.com
Web: www.friscostyle.com

Ad Sales: (972) 335-1306

Editor, Beth Robinson, age 4 with her cousin, Julia Files. (left); Saleswoman, Liz Bovard with her sister, Lucille Nowaski, on Santa's lap in 1964 (right)



youthful holiday spirit

by amanda vancura

FOR MANY, THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS SPENT RUSHING AROUND FOR LAST-MINUTE GIFTS, preparing for the perfect holiday party, getting the decorations up before the relatives arrive, or even battling shoppers for the last in-stock "hot toy" of the season. Fortunately, for children, the holidays are about simpler things: snow, family, the birth of the Christ child, hot chocolate, Santa, putting a star or angel on the tree, and even making sure Santa's reindeer get a snack before they move on to the next house.

First-grade students at Sparks Elementary School shared their insight about this time of year and what it means to them. Although getting presents is a highlight, it did not define the true meaning of the holidays. "Happiness," is how one little girl described it when asked what she thought of the holidays. Other children chimed in with visions such as friends and family, flowers, elves, going to Grandma's house and Santa Claus.

FAMILY FUN

Each child had a story that reminded him/her of this special time. For one little girl, her memories were about spending time with family. "Everyone comes to my house and we celebrate

Hanukkah and have lots of fun," she said. "We have a big bowl of matzo ball soup. I get to take the plates to everybody!"

Another child had memories of traveling during the holidays and spending time at the "Christmas hotel." "This is where we stay and it is really cool! We wake up in the morning, get our clothes on and they have breakfast downstairs," he says with excitement.

Many of the children traveled to places where they get to experience a white Christmas. "I go to my aunt's house," chimed in one little girl. "We bring our ice skates so we can go skating when we get there. We [skate] on a real pond."

"I like making a snow house," said one little boy. "My cousins are there and if it's snowing, we build Mount Everest!" A little girl added, "Me and my sister have been in snowball fights, but my Dad is a great thrower and snowball maker." One little girl said her favorite time was when they are all done in the snow. "We go in and drink some hot cocoa, then we put a blanket over ourselves." Another child added that, even though there's usually no snow in Texas, her family gets in the hot tub in the backyard when the weather gets chilly.

HOLIDAY PREPARATIONS

For kids, a big part of the holidays comes before that special day. Children enjoy decorating, preparing food, attending holiday events and anything else that helps them to feel the holiday spirit. "At Christmas time, we go see the Nutcracker," remembered one child. "My favorite part was when the Nutcracker and the mouse were fighting."

Preparing the dinner was a highlight for another little girl. "I help my family make turkey and decorate the table for my grandparents."

Decorating the tree is a sign for many children that the holiday season has officially begun. “We set up our tree and put train tracks around it... and we get ready to celebrate Christmas,” explained a little boy. “I make my ornaments,” one proud little girl said. One little boy summed up his decorating experience by adding, “The bestest part of all is putting on the star!”

Many children and their families take time to remember the true meaning of Christmas. “Every year we bake a birthday cake for baby Jesus. We have it on Christmas day,” said a little boy. Another little girl added that her family attends a special Christmas Eve church service together every year.

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

“I’ve heard him!” claimed one little boy. “I sneaked down the hallway until I saw him,” said another child. “I heard him laugh,” said a little girl.

The anticipation of Santa Claus is enough to make any little boy or girl tremble with excitement. The first-graders at Sparks are no different. Many of them have special cookies they set out for Santa, as well as treats



for the reindeer – after all, Rudolph can’t go hungry on Christmas Eve night!

“I woke up and went to the bathroom. Then I went downstairs because I was scared ... then I saw him!” remembered one little boy. “I went back upstairs because I didn’t want him to see me.” “When he ate [the cookies] I heard a sound and I woke up,” another child recalled.

These children could have gone on and on about their holiday memories and eagerness of the season to come. It’s easy to lose sight of the simpleness of the holidays, but these kids are quick to remind anyone what it’s really about. Decorating the tree with grandma, making cookies with mom, building snowmen – it all adds to the magic. This season, take a moment to remember the holidays from your own childhood and try to see the season through the eyes of a child.

Amanda VanCura is a freelance writer living in Plano.

Saleswoman, Jennifer Wittstruck’s daughter; Veronica finding money in her stocking. (top); Publisher, Chris Johnson’s son, Nathan, age 3 months, at his first Christmas. (middle); Art Director, Leah Beckham, age 3, with cousins A.P. & Erik Hasbrouck in front of the Christmas tree.(bottom)