

How to Keep Christmas Joyful (Not Overwhelming!) By Paula Fellingham

It's that time of year again, and Moms are feelings overwhelmed. Christmas trees need to be bought and trimmed; homes need to be decorated; presents need to be purchased and wrapped; school plays, musical concerts and company parties consume our evenings. The list goes on and on....this is a busy time of year! In their efforts to be "perfect moms" some women simply dread Christmas, with its worries and work. I'd like to suggest that moms CAN "do it all!" Do you agree?

It's a sort of a trick question, but yes, I believe Moms CAN "do it all" at Christmas... all that they CHOOSE to do.

The secret is to *choose* to do what you *want* to do, and don't even try to do the things you don't like. Ask yourself, "What do I enjoy doing?" Instead of reacting to everyone's expectations, be in control and choose.

Act instead of react. For example, when the elementary school class Christmas Party Chairman calls and asks if you'll help with the party, don't say "yes" unless you *want* to do it. There are mothers who really do enjoy putting on class parties. Maybe you did it last year, and don't mind doing it but you'd like to take a year off and perhaps do it next year. So tell the truth to the sweet Christmas Party Chairman and say, "You know, I did it last year, and I may help next year, but I'll pass this time. Is that okay?" Of course it's okay!

Your family comes first. If you're spread too thin and are unhappy, you can't keep Christ in your Christmas - AND you'll be cranky!

Here's another idea: Make a list of everything you *want* to do to celebrate Christmas in your family. After you've finished your list take off 2 or 3 things because your list is probably too long. When making your list ask yourself 3 questions:

1. What activities can our family do that we all really enjoy?
2. Can most of our activities help us keep Christ in Christmas?
3. Will we remember this activity 5 years from now because it will become a cherished tradition?

Discuss your ideas with the family and enlist their approval and help. Tell them you can't do all the Christmas preparations alone, but as a family working together it will be fun, much easier, and it will help make Christmas truly a joyous occasion.

Above all, remember the reason for the season. Doing *less* will give you *more* time to enjoy Christmas with your loved ones.