

MARRIAGE MOMENTS

Dec. 3: (Advent) A key Advent theme is WAITING for Jesus to come again into our world. What else have you had to wait for in life? Did you have to wait long for your beloved before you were married? Ponder those days.

Dec. 10: "For richer or for poorer. . ." These words, said so easily during your wedding vows, may seem to haunt you during times of financial stress. Christmas is a time when too many families go into debt. Lavish gifts will not bring you happiness. Agree to make it simple this year.

Dec. 17: "A husband always prefers his wife's mother-in-law to his own." (Anonymous) Think of one trait or talent that your mother-in-law or father-in-law passed on to your spouse for which you are grateful.

Dec. 24: (Christmas Eve) As we remember the birth of Jesus on this Christmas Eve, let it be a call to honor our human nature. Christ honored humanity by humbly taking on our human condition. Allow yourself and your spouse to be human today; even to make mistakes.

Dec. 31 (New Year's Eve) Ask your spouse if there's one little annoying habit that he/she would like you to work on changing. You don't HAVE to do it, but the best part of a New Year's resolution might be making an effort to please the one you love most.

PARENTING POINTERS

Dec. 7: Advent is about waiting and preparing. If you don't already have an Advent wreath, get one and light one candle this week; two candles starting Dec. 9. As the candles increase, children see the gradual movement toward Christmas. Let the light teach your child about waiting.

Dec. 14: If you have small children, the intensity of this time right before Christmas can be fun but also draining. When you feel stressed, keep repeating the mantra, "Whose Birthday is it anyway?" If you keep this in mind, what's important and what is not will sort itself out. Actually this applies to all ages.

Dec. 21: (Solstice) As we approach the Winter Solstice, let it be a day of balance between meeting one's personal needs and those of others. Since our own family's needs are usually quite obvious, take a moment to balance it with listening for the needs of the world at large. Ask your child who he or she would like to pray for or give a gift to who is not a family member, friend, or classmate?

Dec. 28: On this fourth day of Christmas, presents have probably all been opened (and hopefully still cherished) but Christmas is not over. Could your family still do a gift of "four calling birds"? Don't know where to buy "calling birds"? Consider calling up a distant relative or taking a family hike to look for birds and listen.