

Ten

tips to get through the holidays



1. Stay connected to family and friends

Purchase or make cards to send out to family and friends during the holidays. It's a great time to create or update an address book. Be respectful of a foster family's privacy and check with them to see if you should place the return address of their house on the envelope or if you should use an alternative, like the address of the foster care agency (some people may have concerns about the safety of the home if too many people have the address). Make phone calls to friends from an old neighborhood or to previous foster families.

5. Write on

If you like to write, keep a daily journal for the holiday season. Use your writing as a way to vent feelings, work through anxiety and worries, and to reflect on the true meaning of the holidays. Some find it helpful to write "letters", even if they will never be sent, to loved ones you are missing or who have passed away. If you are inclined, you can send your stories into FosterClub!

7. Lend a hand

Volunteering can unite people with similar values. Offer to help the Salvation Army or local soup kitchen with their Christmas dinner. Hold reading sessions for kids at your local library or bookstore where you can read their favorite Christmas stories to them. If you're uncertain where to start, ask your foster parent, caseworker or a neighbor to help you research the possibilities (who knows — they may even join you!).

8. You'll make it

Everyone appreciates a homemade gift. Consider making holiday ornaments, knitting scarves, or crafting bookmarks. Search the internet for ideas and instructions about making inexpensive holiday crafts. Most everyone loves homemade cookies or candies wrapped in pretty boxes. And in case you are interested, FosterClub's address is 620 S. Holladay Dr. #1, Seaside, OR 97138. ;)

2. Advocate for visits

Let your foster parents and caseworker know how important visits are to you during the holidays. Do what you can to help arrange the visits, whether that means being flexible with your schedule or helping to make the arrangements with those you wish to visit. Understand that the holidays can be a busy time for everyone, so you may need to "remind" them frequently to do what it takes to get a visit arranged. If they need a little help in understanding where you're coming from, give them a copy of this publication to back you up!

6. Be Yourself

Chances are you'll naturally be meeting and running into lots of people during the holiday season. The simplest things can connect you to someone, and one of the easiest places to get started is by being yourself and showing kindness. Compliments always make people feel special and recognized. Start by noticing something unusual or unique about the person. Admire a piece of their jewelry, a tie they're wearing, or their impressive vocabulary. By pointing out something remarkable and singular, you can easily start up a conversation or make a new friend.

3. Let 'em wag

If you're a dog lover, you're in a category with lots of other people who adore their pets. Throughout the holiday, the Humane Society often needs help in adopting out animals. During this rewarding work you can walk and bathe dogs, teach them new tricks, and help them find good homes. Some shelters hold photos sessions as fundraisers so pet owners can have their dog or cat pose with Santa. Check with your local shelter or pet store to see if they might be hosting a fundraiser of this kind and how you can assist them.

4. Connect at church

If you belong to a church, check into all the holiday activities that might be going on and join in! Activities around the holidays might include social gatherings, caroling (singing around the neighborhood), volunteer efforts, and extra services. If you do not belong to a church but have been thinking about joining, the holidays can be a fun time to get involved.

9. Visit others who may feel alone

Older people in a retirement or nursing home may be away from loved ones during the holidays. Check with them or a local hospital to find out if there are people who would enjoy having company during the holidays. Consider bringing a favorite holiday story to read aloud or load your iPod with a favorite Christmas song (you may have to explain how you got the song in there!).

10. Connect at FosterClub.org

Be sure to visit the FosterClub message boards at www.fosterclub.com and connect with your peers who may be feeling the same way. Post your feedback on FosterClub. Let us know how you spend the holidays and give your own ideas about how to find your own joy during the season.

Seasons greetings from your friends at



fosterclub
the national
network for
young people
in foster care

drop by during the holidays! www.fosterclub.org