



Simplified Holidays During a Pandemic

By Victoria Stephan

We will all experience many types of loss during the holiday season because of the pandemic; loss of holiday activities, loss of family gatherings, loss of financial resources, loss of a sense of security in our lives. With these losses comes all the grieving components; denial, anger, bargaining, sadness and hopefully acceptance. Each of us can become “stuck” in any one of these components, especially anger and sadness for this situation, this pandemic is unfair, scary and out of our control.

However, if we allow ourselves to grieve through all the components, talking through and sharing our feelings with others we can come to a type of acceptance even while we are feeling sad at what is not and cannot occur this year. We can look for and find the positives in this situation... the simpler and creative ways of being together, sharing the meaning of the season and celebrating what we do have. May we offer the following ideas for your consideration:

- **Find ways to connect** with family and friends by writing, sending cards, emailing, facebooking, calling and video conferencing (Facetime, Skype, ZOOM, etc). It is not the same as being together in person BUT it does keep us connected, feeling loved and belonging.
- **Do some decorating** even if you are the only one in the house. Put up your favorite holiday items. You deserve to have a warm and fun environment. It will lift your spirits and give you something to share with others regardless of how you connect
- **Give to others** whether it is sharing baked goods with the neighbors or mailing gifts to loved ones near and far. Contact local non-profits or your Faith congregation who may need help with providing for children, families and seniors less fortunate than you.
- **Make plans** for your days so you have activities to look forward to enjoying. Look for virtual activities; holiday plays, concerts, events you would normally attend in person. Many are now “Online”!
- **Take a drive by yourself** or with one other “safe” person to enjoy holidays lights and special “drive through” events. Play Christmas music on the car radio and bring hot cocoa to sip!
- **Read favorite holiday stories**, sing holiday songs and do holiday crafts with grandchildren, young nieces/nephews or others through video conferencing. It will be fun for all.
- **Share a talent or skill** by making Christmas gifts or providing “coupons” for services and treats throughout the coming year.
- **Watch your favorite holiday movie**, listen to your favorite holiday songs and read your favorite holiday stories. These activities will bring you both good memories and comforting feelings.
- **Connect with your faith home** and worship services by Television, video or online. Experiencing the familiar faith worship rituals, hearing the familiar prayers and readings will bring you peace.

“In the Middle of Every Difficulty Lies Opportunity”

- Albert Einstein