

Christmas Decorating...

As I write this, there are thirty-eight shopping days until Christmas. Normally, this would grate on me to no end. I saw Christmas displays popping up in stores BEFORE Halloween. Normally, this would grate on me to no end. Our house has a Christmas tree up, with a few presents already sprinkled underneath, a full ten days before Thanksgiving. Normally this would grate on me to no end. This year it doesn't. I'm certainly no Scrooge, but I do like my holidays to arrive in an orderly fashion. This year feels different.

This holiday season is my most anticipated since the *original* Transformers hit stores in the nineteen-eighties. It seems I just cannot wait to see what Santa has up his sleeves this December twenty-fifth. I doubt it will be anything for me (I think I made the naughty list again,) but I just cannot wait for Christmas morning.

As a father, I feel I am entering the Golden Age of Christmases. I want to enjoy every single minute, as I'm not sure how long it will last. They grow up too fast. Our kids, two and four years old, are at an almost perfect Christmas age. They know it's coming, but haven't been ruined by years of commercialism. Plus their presents are a bit simpler than cell phones and other expensive gadgets. Statements like "Can I have that for Christmas?" are still tinged with innocence and love. Parker corrects his little sister's bad behavior by telling her Santa is always watching. Every visiting family member still gets a big, loving bear hug at the door. Something tells me those things might change a bit when they turn thirteen.

In the true spirit of Christmas, I sat the kids down after we finished decorating, for a brief lesson. Mom was worn out from cleaning up broken ornaments and had taken a few moments to herself. The kids sat on my lap on the couch, eagerly anticipating why I had called this holiday huddle. Christmas music played in the background. Dad started his brief story about baby Jesus and the reason we celebrate Christmas. We discussed being thankful at Thanksgiving and what we plan to give to those in need. Soon, my three minutes of attention were up and Parker raised his hand.

"Yes, Parker?"

"Dad, can we go back to play with the train, now?"

"But what about Baby Jesus," I said.

"Dad, He likes trains too. Peyton can watch the Baby."

With that, my son jumped to the floor and ran toward the track. Peyton grabbed my cheeks, kissed me on the eyelid, and laughed. She then ran to her room and came back with a doll in a stroller. She parked the stroller, facing the track and they resumed their train game. The Baby watched with a bit of a smile.

Maybe I got through, after all.

Until next week, keep smiling.

-Please send comments to Drs. Parrish through their website: www.ParrishDental.com.