

In This Together... Learn. Share. Laugh.

Honoring the Holiday Spirit

- ❖ **Observe a moment of silence.** Silence or prayer before the meal or at another time you deem appropriate is a simple and gracious way to honor your loved one.
- ❖ **Family Album.** Spend some time together as a family with the family album. Make it a special celebration when the past is discussed, reviewed and re-lived.
- ❖ **Your favorite story.** Reserve some time to tell a favorite story at the table or around the Christmas tree about your loved one. This could accompany the special toast to your memories.
- ❖ **Buy a Christmas present for your loved one.** A gift for the home, which will have a special place or take on a special meaning for the holidays to come, can be the gift to your loved one.
- ❖ **Buy or create your own advent calendar.** You may wish to place a photograph of members the family or close friends behind each window from December 1st to December 25th. This tradition anticipates coping slowly, day by day as the season passes.
- ❖ **Garnish your tree.** This year you may wish to decorate your tree or a small special tree with fresh flowers, berries, or other products of nature.
- ❖ **Create luminaries.** Line your sidewalk or driveway with luminaries. These are a Mexican tradition and are simple to make, yet lovely, as they light up the night in a soft glow. All you need are brown paper sandwich bags, small candles and sand. They signify a warm welcome.
- ❖ **Decorate the altar at church.** Your decoration may be simple or elaborate as you share the memory of your loved one with the congregation.
- ❖ **Make a donation to charity.** An established agency will welcome your gift in memory of your loved one. You may also wish to help a needy family by providing Christmas dinner for them or sending small gifts for the children.
- ❖ **Discuss the values you share as a family.** Set aside time before opening gifts to discuss the values you share as a family and how your loved one contributed to the quality of your life.
- ❖ **Drink a toast to the future.** The New Year may bring with it your one resolution toward hope. Drinking a toast to the future does not neglect the past, but gives us the time to look ahead and regain some sense of control over our lives. For the newly bereaved, this opportunity is even greater. There is something about planning a new or renewed direction which is very encouraging.

