

a simpler  
season

Thinking about A Simpler Season

How Can I Make It A Reality?

# Planning for A Simpler Season

A relaxed holiday season doesn't just happen. There's too much going on around you.

Christmas decorations line the stores before you hear the first "trick or treat." Music plays in elevators and outside shops almost incessantly. Radio and television advertisements announce the latest and greatest that you just. have. to. have.

As the Grinch once lamented, "Oh the noise! Noise! Noise! NOISE!"

It's not the sound of children playing happily that's noise. No, it's the clatter of the adults around us:

*Buy this!*

*You need that!*

*Can you \_\_\_\_\_?*

*Why don't you \_\_\_\_\_?*

*When are you going to \_\_\_\_\_?*

*It's only \$19.99!*

*Are you coming to \_\_\_\_\_?*

We put pressure on one another, whether purposefully or unintentionally, to do more, buy more, cook more, "celebrate" more.

**While in reality, we can enjoy more -- with a lot less.**

With thoughtful planning we can celebrate simply and beautifully this holiday season. We can spend our time and our dollars on the things, and more importantly, the *people* who matter most.

The following pages contain reflection questions for you to think about now so that these holidays don't just "happen." You can walk calmly from November to January without freaking out, overspending, or doing more than you should or need to.

Remember what the Grinch finally learned:

*And the Grinch, with his grinch-feet ice-cold in the snow,  
Stood puzzling and puzzling: "How could it be so?  
It came without ribbons! It came without tags!  
"It came without packages, boxes or bags!"  
And he puzzled three hours, `till his puzzler was sore.  
Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before!  
"Maybe Christmas," he thought, "doesn't come from a store.  
"Maybe Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!"*

Experiencing that "little bit more" is absolutely within your reach. But, it won't just happen.

*It's starts with a little self-reflection and this most important question:*

What is most important to me this holiday season?

(God, budget, convenience, experiences, slowing down, etc)

# Activities to Consider during the Holiday Season

As you work through the questions on the following pages, think about these traditional holiday activities. Are these priorities? Are they important to the fabric of your home? Are they doable in real life?

*Feel free to say NO and cross out those things that just aren't happening this year:*

- Christmas cards
- Extra charitable giving
- Gifts for neighbors, service people, co-workers
- Donations to Toys4Tots, food pantry, Operation Christmas Child, etc
- Get togethers with family and friends
- Family fun activities (gingerbread houses, caroling, cookie baking)
- Work parties, church social functions
- Decorating the house
- Special concerts, church events
- Quiet nights at home
- Observing Advent (ie Jesse Tree or advent wreath)
- Making gifts
- Holiday clothes shopping
- Extra baking
- Spending Christmas Day at home
- Roaming from grandparent house to grandparent house on Christmas Day
- New year's parties
- Holiday travel



# Thinking about Thanksgiving

*Thanksgiving starts off the holiday season. Be intentional and think it through before it “happens” to you.*

Did I enjoy Thanksgiving last year? Was I counting my blessings or feeling harassed?

What recipes on Thanksgiving were fantastic?

Any trainwrecks?

What can I delegate or buy premade this year?

What can we do as a family to make the most of the 4-day weekend?

Is it worth it for me to shop on Black Friday/Cyber Monday?



## Thinking about Christmas

Christmas festivities can sideswipe you if you don't practice some defensive driving. Consider these questions so that you can enjoy the ride:

What did I love about last Christmas?

What did *the rest of the family* love about last Christmas?

What did I hate doing that I swore I'd never do again?

- Is it realistic for me to omit this?
- If not, how can I make it easier?

What three events, gifts, foods, etc, are absolute “must do’s” for our family?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

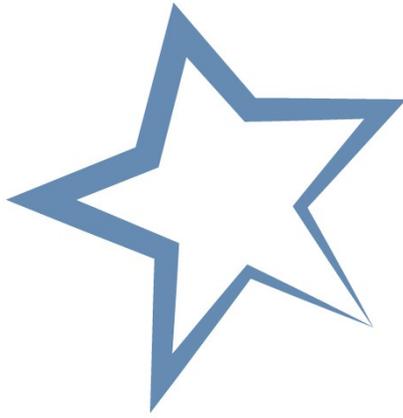
What do I need to do to make those three things happen?

What kind of budget do we have to work with this year?

What needs to “give”? What can we truly live without?

What strategies can I use to manage my time during this busier season?  
Do I need more help from family or friends? Do I need to cross some things off the list? Do I need to look better at how I’m wasting time?

What kind of time do I really have available for “extra” things?



## Thinking about New Year's

*For some New Year's is a last ditch effort to use up the Christmas leftovers. But, it can be a wonderful time to reflect on your family's strengths and weaknesses as well as hope and dream about the year to come.*

What New Year's traditions are important to our family?

What celebrations or activities have I always wanted to do?

- Is it realistic to add any of these activities this year?

What foods would I like to include in our New Year's Eve or New Year's Day celebrations?

How can we, as a family, make goals and dream dreams for the new year? How can I record these?



## Looking for other ways to slow down and celebrate a simpler season?

Visit [Life as MOM](#) throughout the coming months for a range of ideas as well as “grab and go” recipes, gift ideas, and family fun.

As long as you have a computer, a printer, and some paper, I've got you covered.

Together we'll:

- Plan ahead for a simpler season (get your FREE Christmas planning book [here](#))
- Think through the holidays and reflect on Christmases past (you're doing that right now!)
- Count our blessings and practice thankfulness
- Make the days count with holiday time management
- Keep the kids happy while the turkey cooks
- Countdown until Christmas with easy family fun
- Bake someone happy — in a simpler way
- Plan to have fun and make memories
- Wrap presents in style without a lot of stress
- Create a simple and inexpensive gift for children
- Get supper in the bag
- Serve a make-ahead Christmas breakfast
- Ring in the New Year with kids

Don't miss a bit of the fun! You can [subscribe for free emails](#) or [get LifeasMOM in your feed reader](#) each morning

# About the Author

Jessica Fisher is a busy mom of six young children, aged toddler to teen. (Homeschool) mom by day, she moonlights as a freelance writer, blogger, and cookbook author.



Published in over 85 regional parenting publications, Jessica enjoys writing for periodicals as well as the web. She writes about ways to manage a home and family and still keep a smile on your face at [LifeasMOM.com](http://LifeasMOM.com) and posts “delicious ways to act your wage” at [Good Cheap Eats](http://GoodCheapEats.com). She is a regular contributor on [Life Your Way](http://LifeYourWay.com) and [Simple Homeschool](http://SimpleHomeschool.com). Her writing has also been featured on [5 Dollar Dinners](http://5DollarDinners.com), [Money Saving Mom](http://MoneySavingMom.com), [Organizing Junkie](http://OrganizingJunkie.com), and [Simple Mom](http://SimpleMom.com).

Jessica is the author of a forthcoming cookbook in the *Not Your Mother's* series, published by the Harvard Common Press. She has also authored a number of ebooks, including [Organizing Life as MOM](http://OrganizingLifeasMOM.com), [Summer Survival Guide](http://SummerSurvivalGuide.com), and [FishMama's Guide to Cooking with Children](http://FishMamasGuide.com).

For more information about Jessica, go to [Fishmama.com](http://Fishmama.com) or visit her at either of her two blogs, [LifeasMOM.com](http://LifeasMOM.com) and [GoodCheapEats.com](http://GoodCheapEats.com).