



# Real Estate w/ Cindy

Holiday Edition  
2024

## It's Beginning to Look a Lot like Christmas!

December 2024

### Parents Share The Little Traditions That Make The Holidays Feel Magical For Their Kids

Story by Kelsey Borresen

Many folks strive to make the holiday season feel magical for the kids in their lives. But with a lot of us feeling exhausted and cash-strapped this time of year, doing that in ways that don't require a ton of effort or money is essential.

Indeed, many parents — and moms in particular — feel immense pressure to create holiday magic for their families, running themselves ragged trying to “do it all.” And often, it takes “a lot of unseen and underappreciated effort to keep everything humming along smoothly,” as journalist Gemma Hartley previously wrote in a viral essay for HuffPost.

We asked HuffPost readers to share how they make the holidays special for their kiddos without sacrificing their sanity in the process. Read on for some fun and festive ideas you might just want to try with your own family.

Responses have been lightly edited and condensed for clarity.

1. “We have a ‘Grinchmas’ party every year — all green-themed snacks and we watch ‘The Grinch.’” — Kelly M.
2. “We bring hot cocoa and snacks in the car while we drive around the decorated neighborhoods.” — Christine C.
3. “We ‘plant’ a pinecone in the Christmas tree skirt and do a magic spell over it. When the kids wake up the next day, the tree is there. Then we decorate together. This gives me a less-stressful chance to get the tree set up.” — Taylor N.

#### In this newsletter you can expect:

Parents Share the Little Traditions that Make the Holidays Feel Magical for Their Kids

How to do the 4-Gift Rule for Christmas

4 Things Guests Immediately Notice About Your Holiday Decor, According to Designers

Popular Christmas movies to stream this holiday season

Ask the Expert

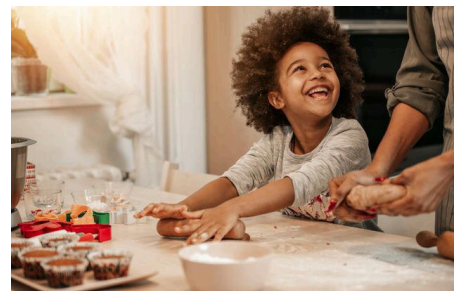
My Holiday Message

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### ... Continued

4. "Last weekend, we listened to Christmas music, put up our tree and then had a family sleepover in front of the tree! The kids loved it and so did my husband and I." — Dr. Stephanie Liu
5. "On Nov. 30, while my daughter sleeps, I change her bedding to a Christmas-themed one. And when she wakes on Dec. 1, she is always amazed at the elves' and Santa's magic. I'm just grateful that she is a heavy sleeper!" — Olly P.
6. "With four kids aged 3 to 16, our secret to a magical holiday season in our home is loosening up: extra late bedtimes, pancakes for dinner, indulging in sweets and extra screen time. Running a tight household is crucial for us, but during the holidays, we welcome a bit of turmoil. For our kids, late nights, outdoor play after dark and unexpected Robux are the equivalent of winning the lottery. We think back to our own childhoods, doing all the things we wished adults would have done for us." — John Marshall
7. "We keep a bucket of fake snowballs in the living room and have snowball fights all season." — April L.
8. "We have a very large and elaborate key that is on a long red ribbon. Until Christmas Eve, it hangs on the tree, but then it goes on our door 'to let Santa in' because we don't have a fireplace. We also go out and drive around the village looking at lights and listening to the NORAD Santa report on the radio after dinner on Christmas Eve." — Kathy H.
9. "My wife and I have family that is Jewish and Catholic, but neither of us are religious. Before kids, we struggled trying to navigate the holidays authentically. We wanted to try something new as parents, so we recently adopted New Year's Day. We exchange gifts and spend the entire day together as a family. Our kids still get to celebrate Hannukah and Christmas with our extended families, but New Year's Day is ours. Knowing it's a special day just for us really adds to it. A holiday I didn't give much thought to before kids has become my favorite day of the year!" — Aaron Martin
10. "I would have an indoor camp-out with my son. We set up a tent next to the Christmas tree, ordered pizza, made cookies and watched Christmas movies until we fell asleep in the tent." — Allison S.
11. "Baking! My son loves rolling and cutting the shapes of the cookies, turning on the mixer and tasting the spoon at the end." — Rosa C.
12. "We cut down our own Christmas tree in the designated forest area near us in Colorado. Our 3-year-old daughter likes the 'hunt' and that she picked it out. The trees are always a little Charlie Brown-ish, but with bows and ornaments, it fills in and can add to the charm. The permit to cut a tree down is \$20 so it's also an affordable option that makes memories." — Leah V.



Baking holiday goodies together is festive and can create special family memories.



Letting your kid help pick out the tree is a special way to celebrate the season.

13. "Many years ago, we had a wood fireplace. One year on Christmas Eve after the kids went to bed, we tumbled over the fireplace grate, made footprints with dad's boots in the soot and ate some of the cookies left for Santa. We created a little bit of a mess, but it was totally worth the astonished look on our kids faces!" — Karen H.

14. "I did a treasure hunt with little gifts and clues to find the next one. Took a while to find them all, which added to the magic and didn't blow the budget." — Frany C.

15. "A little random, but Disney+ put out a three-hour 'Frozen'-themed Yule log a few years ago. That Christmas, we turned it on in the living room on a whim. My son liked it so much that last year he asked ahead of time if we could do it again. So guess what's going to be crackling in the background on Christmas morning again this year?" — Rachel K.



**FOR EVEN MORE TRADITIONS  
[CLICK HERE](#)**



# How to Do The 4 Gift Rule for Christmas

Story by Simplistically Living

If every Christmas feels like a gift overload for your kids—and it seems like your home is left overflowing with things—you're not alone! Personally, I've found that an abundance of gifts can actually take away from the magic of the holidays. That's why I love the idea of The 4 Gift Rule.

If you're looking for fewer things, more experiences, and better control over the gifts you give and receive, let me introduce you to The 4 Gift Rule for Christmas. Trust me, it's a game-changer!



girl opening gift in 4 gift rule

As kids, we naturally want more things, and as parents, we want to give our kids the world. But sometimes, that's where we fall into a cycle—buying more, only to end up purging those things a few months later.

Honestly? I'm over it. I'm over the idea that love is measured by a mountain of gifts. I'm over the overspending and the holiday shopping stress. All I want is to sip my spiked eggnog and watch Christmas movies with my family. Is that too much to ask? I think not.

So, let's talk about How to Do The 4 Gift Rule for Christmas. This simple approach will completely change how we think about gift-giving while helping us save money and ease some of that holiday stress.

## How to Do The 4 Gift Rule for Christmas

The 4 Gift Rule is just as it sounds—four gifts total for each person, but with a twist. Instead of just any four gifts, each one falls into a specific category: something they want, something they need, something to wear, and something to read.

Some gifts can certainly fit into more than one category so it's up to you to decide which gift fits into which category. It truly doesn't matter as long as you have 1 gift per category and 4 gifts total.



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## Examples of Wants

Wants can be really anything as long as it falls into your Christmas budget. I like to think of these gifts as things someone can live without but would rather not. Examples include:

- Favorite toy or gadget
- Tickets to a concert, movie, or sporting event
- Video game or game console
- Money or gift cards to shop at their favorite store
- Art supplies or hobby kits (like a LEGO set or craft supplies)
- Gift card to their favorite store or for an experience, like a zoo or amusement park

## Examples of Something to Wear

This gift is pretty self explanatory but basically anything they can wear. Examples include:

- Cozy pajamas, slippers, or a bathrobe
- Stylish jacket or hoodie
- New hat, belt or other accessory
- New piece of jewelry
- Personalized clothing or accessories (like a monogrammed hat or bag)
- Fun or themed socks
- New shoes, sneakers, or winter boots

## Examples of Needs

Needs are more specific in the sense that these are items needed and typically something they can't live without. Examples include:

- School supplies or a new backpack
- Organizational items (like a storage bin or desk organizer)
- New bedding, pillows, or blankets
- Practical tech (like headphones, chargers, or a smartwatch)
- Sports equipment or gear for activities they enjoy

## Examples of Something to Read

This can be anything that can qualify as reading. Examples include:

- A new book from a favorite series or a new release by a favorite author
- A new magazine or magazine subscription based on their interests (like science, animals, art)
- A new comic book
- Interactive books (pop-up, 3D, or activity-based books)
- Educational books (STEM topics, history, or cultural studies)
- Journal or sketchbook if they enjoy writing or drawing

## The Benefits of The 4 Gift Rule

As you can imagine, there are so many benefits to using the 4 Gift Rule for holiday gift-giving. Here are some of my favorite perks:

- Saving time and money on gift shopping
- Teaching kids (and other recipients) to be grateful and humble
- Helping kids understand that less can truly be more during the holidays
- Emphasizing that the real meaning of Christmas isn't about gifts, but about time spent with loved ones
- Breaking the cycle of accumulating 'stuff' and constantly needing to declutter
- Reducing your carbon footprint by cutting down on excess waste



## How to Make The 4 Gift Rule Extra Fun

If the 4 Gift Rule doesn't seem like quite enough, there are ways to make it even more special. Consider adding a personal touch, like customizing each gift for your recipient. You can even make a theme out of the gifts (so each gift goes with one another). You could also use a unique wrapping paper for each person, wrapping all four gifts in the same paper, or choosing a different paper or bag for each item. There are so many ways to make this style of gift-giving both meaningful and fun!

Personally, I'm excited to try the 4 Gift Rule in my own home with my kids. They already have so much, so I'd rather focus on giving them things they truly want and need while cutting back on clutter and centering on what really matters.

The 4 Gift Rule is a gift-giving approach I think everyone should consider. While it's popular among parents and grandparents for kids, this idea can actually work for anyone. And it doesn't have to be just for the holidays—it's perfect for birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, or any occasion where you'd usually give a gift.

The post [How to Do The 4 Gift Rule for Christmas](#) appeared first on [Simplistically Living](#).





# 4 Things Guests Immediately Notice About Your Holiday Decor, According to Designers

Story by Jane Kim



## Meet the Experts

Hayley\_McAteer is an interior designer and co-founder of Cushee.

Kellie\_Sirna is the founder of the Dallas-based interior design firm Studio 11 Design.

*If you're planning on hosting guests this year, you may want to reconsider what holiday decorations you use to make a lasting impression (and not a bad one). Nobody wants to have a party with holiday decor that stands out like an eyesore, after all.*

*We tapped some designers to share the things guests immediately notice about your holiday decor, so you know exactly what to avoid and what to use instead.*



## Cheap-Looking Accessories

Hayley McAteer, an interior designer and co-founder of Cushee, explains how low-quality materials can cheapen the overall holiday decor. Accessories like bows or ribbons may seem minor, but frayed edges can ruin their overall look, McAteer says.

Opt for higher-quality materials like fabric or velvet, so it looks polished and will last longer over time.



## An Empty Entryway

Since the entryway is the very first space guests walk into, you'll want to make sure it's filled with decor that creates a warm and ambient setting. This will help set the tone for the rest of the house, and even the whole night. "The entryway is the first impression of your holiday spirit," McAteer says.



## Clashing Color Schemes

If you love bringing festive colors into your home, you may want to reevaluate what colors you want to mix before doing so, so your home doesn't look like a color explosion.

"Using too many mismatched colors, like neon lights paired with classic gold and silver ornaments, can create visual chaos," McAteer explains.

Since color harmony is key to making your home feel cohesive, McAteer suggests choosing two to three colors in your palette to create a unified look. Your colors should look like they're complementing one another and not competing.



## Too Much Scent

We all love a good seasonal scent to help set the tone for the holidays, but overusing them can actually make your guests feel overstimulated or even uncomfortable.

Stay away from an overload of scented candles or potpourri and lean more into subtle scents that are thoughtfully placed throughout your home and spread out, so it feels inviting and pleasant, McAteer advises.



# Popular Christmas movies to stream this holiday season: Discover our 90+ feel-good picks

Story by Olivia Munson, USA TODAY

*There are plenty of ways to get into the festive spirit, from decorating a tree with ornaments and tinsel to drinking hot chocolate by the fire. Before you know it, ol' Saint Nick will be coming down the chimney.*

*If you're looking for some additional cheer, holiday movies are a great option to help ring in the season. Even though there might not be enough time to find (or watch) every Christmas movie, we've got you covered.*



A Charlie Brown Christmas© Loud Crown Interactive

From the disputed *"Die Hard"* to the classic *"A Charlie Brown Christmas,"* here is a list of where you can find many of the holiday movies available for streaming this season.

## Hulu

- "Love the Coopers"
- "The Night Before"
- "Miracle on 34th Street" (1994)
- "Happiest Season"
- "Arthur Christmas"
- "Almost Christmas"
- "12 Dates of Christmas"
- "Deck the Halls"
- "The Mistle-Tones"
- "Santa Games"
- "Trolls: Holiday in Harmony"
- "Christmas Cupid"
- "The Nutcracker"

## Max

- "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation"
- "Elf"
- "Krampus"
- "Last Christmas"
- "A Christmas Carol" (1938)
- "Arthur Christmas"
- "Four Christmases"
- "Fred Claus"
- "A Christmas Story"
- "A Christmas Story Christmas"
- "The Polar Express"
- "8-Bit Christmas"
- "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone"
- "Harry Potter And The Chamber Of Secrets"
- "Harry Potter And The Prisoner Of Azkaban"
- "Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire"
- "Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix"
- "Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince"
- "Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows Part 1"

## Amazon Prime

- "Scrooged"
- "A Christmas Carol: The Musical" (2004)
- "Last Holiday"
- "The Holiday"
- "Christmas with the Kranks"
- "It's A Wonderful Life"
- "The Best Man Holiday"
- "The Man Who Invented Christmas"
- "Snow Day"
- "Something From Tiffany's"
- "Frosty the Snowman"
- "Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town"
- "White Christmas"
- "Love Actually"
- "Jingle All the Way"



## Paramount+

- "The 12 Days of Christmas Eve"
- "Home for the Holidays"
- "Happy Christmas"
- "Mistletoe Ranch"
- "The Smurfs Christmas"

## Netflix

- "Falling for Christmas"
- "The Merry Gentlemen"
- "Our Little Secret"
- "Holidate"
- "Hot Frosty"
- "Meet Me Next Christmas"
- "Best. Christmas. Ever!"
- "Love Hard"
- "Let It Snow"
- "Family Switch"
- "Father Christmas is Back"
- "Christmas As Usual"
- "Christmas in Notting Hill"
- "The Christmas Chronicles"
- "The Christmas Chronicles: Part Two"
- "A Christmas Prince"
- "A Christmas Prince: The Royal Wedding"
- "The Knight Before Christmas"
- "Single All the Way"
- "The Holiday Calendar"
- "The Princess Switch"
- "The Princess Switch: Switched Again"
- "The Princess Switch 3: Romancing the Star"
- "A Very Murray Christmas"
- "Christmas Inheritance"
- "I Believe in Santa"
- "Klaus"
- "A Nonsense Christmas with Sabrina Carpenter"
- "Dolly Parton's Christmas on the Square"
- "Mariah Carey Merry Christmas to All!"
- "The Great British Baking Show Holidays"

## Apple TV+

- "A Charlie Brown Christmas"
- "It's Christmastime Again, Charlie Brown"
- "I Want A Dog For Christmas, Charlie Brown"
- "Charlie Brown's Christmas Tales"
- Mariah Carey's "Magical Christmas Special"
- "Mariah's Christmas: The Magic Continues"
- "Spirited"
- "Twas the Fight Before Christmas"



©AARDMAN ANIMATIONS FOR SONY PICTURES ANIMATION

20. "Arthur Christmas" (2011): The underrated, animated British gem centers on Santa Claus' son Arthur (voiced by James McAvoy) who works on a deadline to get a present to the one girl forgotten by his family's militaristic, high-tech delivery system.

## Disney+

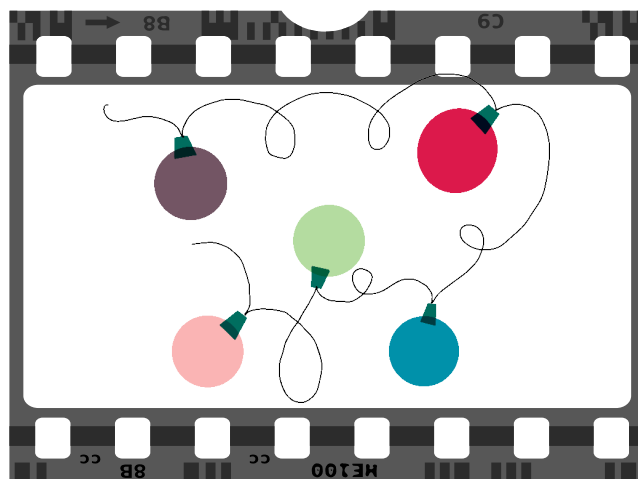


- "Home Alone"
- "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York"
- "Home Alone 3"
- "Dashing Through the Snow"
- "The Santa Clause"
- "Santa Clause 2"
- "Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause"
- "The Santa Clauses"
- "Mickey's Once Upon a Christmas"
- "Mickey's Twice Upon a Christmas"
- "Disney's A Christmas Carol" (Jim Carrey version)
- "Mickey's Christmas Carol"
- "The Muppet Christmas Carol"
- "Prep & Landing"
- "I'll Be Home for Christmas"
- "Noelle"
- "Beauty and the Beast: The Enchanted Christmas"
- "Godmothered"
- "The Nightmare Before Christmas"
- "Ernest Saves Christmas"
- "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe"
- "The Guardians of the Galaxy Holiday Special"
- "The Nutcracker and the Four Realms"
- "While You Were Sleeping"
- "Frozen"
- "Miracle on 34th Street" (1994)



## Peacock

- "Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas"
- "The Grinch" (2018)
- "Die Hard"
- "The Family Stone"
- "It's a Very Merry Muppet Christmas Movie"
- "Notting Hill"
- "Jack Frost"
- "Mixed Nuts"
- "Genie"
- "The Family Man"
- "The Housewives of the North Pole"
- "Feast of the Seven Fishes"







## Ask the Expert

**A question real estate agents get asked a lot this time of year is ...  
*Should I wait until the New Year to list my home?* 🙌👶**

The decision to list your home now or wait until the new year depends on several factors. Here's a balanced perspective:

### **Pros of Listing Now:**

1. **Less Competition:** Fewer homes are typically on the market during the holidays, giving your home more visibility.
2. **Serious Buyers:** Those searching for homes during this period are often highly motivated and serious about purchasing.
3. **Festive Appeal:** Homes decorated for the holidays can create a warm and inviting atmosphere, which can appeal to buyers.

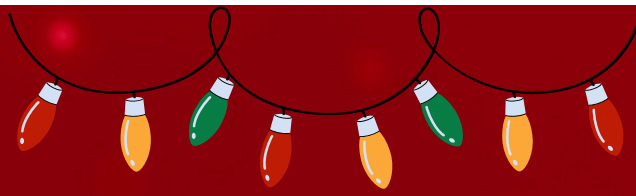
### **Pros of Waiting Until the New Year:**

1. **New Year Resolutions:** Many buyers start their home search with the new year, potentially increasing demand for your home.
2. **Improved Market Conditions:** Depending on market trends, waiting could mean better market conditions and possibly higher selling prices.
3. **Personal Convenience:** The holidays can be hectic, and waiting might make the selling process less stressful for you.

Ultimately, the best decision depends on your personal circumstances and the current market conditions in your area. I'm always here for any questions you may have.

*Have a question for me? Let me know and I'll feature it in an upcoming newsletter! Chances are other folks are asking the same question!*

**ASK AWAY!**



# Happy Holidays from All of Us at Home Group Realty!

*As the holiday season is upon us, I want to extend my warmest wishes to you and your loved ones. This time of year is all about gratitude, and I am incredibly thankful for your trust and support throughout the past year. It has been a privilege to assist you with your real estate needs, and I look forward to continuing to help you achieve your dreams in the years to come.*

*Reflecting on the year behind us, I am proud of the milestones we've achieved together and the relationships we've built. Whether you're settling into a new home or considering new opportunities in the market, I'm here to guide and support you every step of the way.*

*As we move into the new year, may your days be filled with peace, joy, and prosperity. Here's to new beginnings, continued success, and countless moments of happiness.*

*Thank you for choosing me as your trusted real estate advisor. Wishing you and yours a wonderful holiday season and a happy, healthy New Year!*

*Warm regards,*

*Cindy & Kris*

