

Parents

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MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM THE CENTERPEACE FAMILY!



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IF YOUR CHRISTMAS ISN'T A HALLMARK MOVIE

By Dena A Edwards

Twinkling colorful lights bedeck houses, greetings of "Merry Christmas!" are called out by friends and strangers alike, advertisements emphasize family time and shared memories. Holidays can be such special times as extended families gather and share time together. But once your child comes out as LGBTQ+, new feelings, blessings and challenges fill the season. What that looks like is completely shaped by your own family dynamics and beliefs.

Some families are still in the closet and their larger family doesn't know their kid is LGBTQ+; some are still struggling within their own core unit. Even if your core family is on solid footing, often Grandma, an aunt, cousin or other extended family member is not onboard with your precious kid's sexual or gender identity, which can put strain on the entire holiday season. A toxic relative or two might continue to attend family gatherings but manage snarky comments and even private conversations with the LGBTQ+ person to share damaging spiritual beliefs with them. Other families have a mom and dad who

can't agree between them whether or not to fully support their child's newly revealed authentic self. Family can be hard in the best of times, but issues of sexuality and spirituality often exacerbate those challenges. And when family says or does something that hurts our kid? MamaBear and PapaBear jump in to protect and defend, and that often intensifies the drama.

Ultimately, the holidays post-closet might look very different from the holidays pre-closet, and that is one more thing deserving of some grieving. But once you process those feelings of loss, look around you at what you gained. At what you have. At the weight that has been lifted off of your child. Notice the new nuances and bonding of your family as you all come to the table truly as you are.

Our families in CP Parents wish you a Merry Christmas and address the question: How do you navigate the holidays with extended family, especially with those who might not be supportive of your LGBTQ+ child?

Merry
Christmas
from
The Altrocks

Thankfully, our extended family is supportive of us as a family and of our son who is gay. We're able to relax and lean into this important season without worry. We recognize how special this is, and that not all families like ours experience it.



The Blaylock Family



The holidays are easy to navigate thankfully because all of the extended family we socialize with are affirming.

The Domasigs

Extended family gatherings used to be difficult with the whisperings, stares, and judgmental conversations. We believed that the only way to change this was to love our children well, and love our extended families without condition. Through the years, our extended families have witnessed the love Jesus teaches. They watched us navigate holding faith and loving our children. Now most conversations with extended family and friends have become more loving, the stares more warm, the whisperings more grace filled.



HAPPY
Holidays!

From
The Moores



We are so fortunate around the holidays because our family and extended family are fully supportive. We all learned a long time ago that we will love ALL of our family, no matter what. Isn't that what Jesus is all about?

Season's Greetings!

Our extended family is shrinking as several members have chosen to remove us from their lives. We grieve their loss, and pray that one day they will chose unity. We don't need them to agree with us, but to respect our beliefs and be kind and loving. They aren't willing.

But our core family is happier and closer than ever before. Our holidays consist of merging traditions with new ways to celebrate our beautiful family.



From the Edwards

Merry
Christmas!



From The
Lindsays



There have been a couple of times when we celebrated holidays separately with certain family to avoid uneasy situations. However, we are fully accepting of our two LGBT children so if others in the family don't want to come around, then that's their decision.



Peace on Earth!

We are literally 1,000 miles from parents, siblings & cousins. As our kids have gotten older and schedules for all of us a bit more hectic, we don't have the chance to travel back to see family like we once did. However, when we have traveled, we haven't experienced any outright hostility or negativity. So far, family has been accepting and supportive. But Christmas will be mostly just our own crew.

Merry Christmas!

The Hamlins



We as a family are not out to extended family. So, we navigate the holidays very carefully. This usually means I'm nauseous for several days, we avoid any talk about religion or politics, and our visits are brief.

The Junek Family

Merry and Bright

HRC TIPS FOR DEALING WITH HOLIDAYS

- If anticipated, prepare for conversations about LGBTQ+ issues and spirituality. Have a few crafted answers for expected questions to avoid being caught unaware.
- Avoid conversations in which scripture about a vengeful God are cited. Religion and faith are much more than scriptures. Remind people that God lives in all of us and loves each and every one of His creations.
- If you are anxious about potential confrontations with family members, make a plan. If you are traveling to visit family and can afford it, stay in a hotel, or with friends so you have a refuge if needed.
- Remember, you don't have to spend the entire week or weekend with your family. Sometimes a shorter visit is best for all. It's okay if you choose to spend time with your family of choice where you know you can feel accepted and affirmed for who you are.

["Home For the Holidays: Tips on Navigating Tough Conversations on LGBTQ Issues"](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

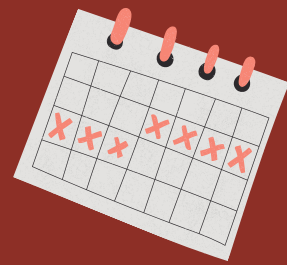


PeacePrints Retreats

A safe place for parents to express their feelings with fellow believers in Christ

[More information](#) on PeacePrints

- Mar 25-27, 2022 - North Texas



Group Spiritual Direction for Parents

A place to help grow your awareness of God's work in your and your family's life and to share this spiritual journey with others

[More information](#) on Group Spiritual Direction

CenterPeace Conference

- Nov 3-5, 2022 - Wilshire Baptist Church, Dallas, TX
[More information](#) about Conference



All family members with whom we'll be gathered this Christmas are fully aware of our son's sexuality and an unspoken agreement has evolved to simply not speak of it. Though much of our extended family would not agree with Joey's sexuality, they are able to compartmentalize this attitude while we're together and love him as they always have. Like most blessings, it is an imperfect one since Joey can't be 100% himself without fear of disrupting the peace. But he (and we) have not insisted that everyone's acceptance be perfect, preferring instead to celebrate the rare times we have together as best we can, when we can. We are blessed that the time spent accepting imperfect acceptance has provided time for softening hearts.

MERRY & BRIGHT



The Harbert Family



WE ARE BLESSED TO HAVE A FAMILY WHO TRULY LOVES US AND ARE GENUINELY HAPPY THAT CONNOR AND LANDON GOT MARRIED. WE HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN THAT MY PARENTS AREN'T AFFIRMING, BUT THEY HAD CHOSEN TO EXHIBITE THE LOVE OF CHRIST. WE WERE HURT WHEN THEY INITIALLY DECLINED COMING TO THE BOYS' WEDDING, BUT THEY DID EVENTUALLY ATTEND. OUR FAMILY WILL BE TOGETHER FOR THE HOLIDAYS AND WE ARE ALLOWING GOD'S GRACE TO HEAL WHAT WAS TORN.



Vollmering Family



CenterPeace

A place to belong

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