

Children's Activities

DEC 24 — **Winter Solstice Family Activities**, Rochester Museum & Science Center, 657 Elm Ave., Rochester, Sun. noon-7 p.m. Mon.-Wed. & Fri. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. \$7 adults, \$6 seniors & college students, \$5 ages 3-18. 585/271-1880.

DEC 26-31 — **Exhibit: Alice's Wonderland: A Most Curious Adventure**, crafts, activities, Strong Museum, Manhatlan Sq., Rochester, Mon.-Thurs. Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Fri. 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Sun. noon-5 p.m. \$7 adults, \$5 ages 3-17. 585/263-2702.

DEC 27 — **Monday for the Young**, 1000 Ave. of the Arts, Rochester, Mon. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. \$2.50. 585/263-2702.

DEC 28 — **Monday for the Young**, 1000 Ave. of the Arts, Rochester, Mon. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. \$2.50. 585/263-2702.

DEC 29 — **Monday for the Young**, 1000 Ave. of the Arts, Rochester, Mon. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. \$2.50. 585/263-2702.

DEC 30 — **Monday for the Young**, 1000 Ave. of the Arts, Rochester, Mon. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. \$2.50. 585/263-2702.

DEC 31 — **Monday for the Young**, 1000 Ave. of the Arts, Rochester, Mon. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. \$2.50. 585/263-2702.

Traditions focus on family

Jennifer Burke/Catholic Courier

Each year before Christmas, Rick and Jane Constantino invite 80 people to their house for Mass and dinner, while Dave and Donna Cole open the Bible on Dec. 25 to read the story of Christmas to their four children. About 30 members of Bob Daley's extended family attend midnight Mass at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish every Christmas Eve, while Jean and Bill Murphy serve their family a meatless Christmas Eve dinner.

These holiday traditions, whether big or small, focus on two main things — family and the Catholic faith. Many diocesan families strive to preserve the true meaning of Christmas by finding unique ways to focus on the birth of Jesus rather than the arrival of Santa.

When her son, Adam, was 3, Donna Cole said she and her husband, parishioners of Church of the Assumption Parish in Fairport, decided to read him the Christmas story from the Bible, then trek downstairs to open presents. Now, 12 years later, the couple's three other children, ranging in age from 6 to 12, also look forward to this tradition. The reading is a nice way to take the focus off the presents and put it back on Jesus, where it belongs, Cole said.

Each year the Murphys, who are also Church of the Assumption parishioners, fast on Christmas Eve before eating a meatless meal. The meal — which is made up of 12 different dishes to symbolize the 12 Apostles — includes pirogis with three different types of filling, mashed potatoes, sauerkraut, peas and prunes. The family also leaves



Mike Crupi/Catholic Courier

Connie Noun of Webster (from left), Perry Noun of Oswego, William Noun of Oswego and Christopher Noun of Penfield perform Christmas carols Dec. 13 during a holiday gathering and Mass for family and friends at the home of Rick and Jane Constantino of Canandaigua.

Parenting

some straw in the middle of the table to symbolize the empty manger. A small figure of baby Jesus is put in the straw later in the evening in celebration of the Nativity, Jean Murphy said.

"We put a lot of celebration and emphasis on the family," she said.


For years, Rick and Jane Constantino have opened their Canandaigua home to the rest of their family for a Mass, meal and visit with Santa in the weeks before Christmas. Guests usually bring cookies or hors d'oeuvres, and pizza is served following

the Mass. The gathering will be a bit different this year, Jane Constantino said, because it has a theme — tastes of Italy. The Mass is said by Father Thomas Mull, pastor of St. Mary's Parish in Canandaigua, where the Constantinos are parishioners. Santa Claus also pays a visit after the meal.

Constantino said that her children have always looked forward to the party. Some of them are in college now, and have brought friends from school to the party. Constantino said the friends are now looking forward to this year's party as much as family members are.

"It's a way of keeping the family together," Constantino said.

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