

1952

## It's All In the Family

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### Recommended Citation

Gates, Floramae (1952) "It's All In the Family," *The Iowa Homemaker*: Vol. 32 : No. 2 , Article 6.  
Available at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol32/iss2/6>

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# It's All In the Family



by Floramae Gates

Technical Journalism Senior

**I**F THERE'S any one thing that knits a family together—makes it different and special from any other family—that one thing is family traditions.

Don't you remember those little things you used to do with your family that were so much fun and so special to your little group? Maybe it was popping corn every Sunday night as you played cards or listened to the radio with the rest of the family. Part of the tradition was that Dad always salted the corn. No one else could salt it quite to taste as he could.

## Special duties

Perhaps some of your traditions were in the line of *who* did *what* job. Was it mother who always wound the clock at night and turned off the alarm in the morning? Did brother lay all the fires in the fireplace—and if he wasn't there to do it you just couldn't have a fire?

Yes, family traditions are wonderfully comforting things whether you're doing them or remembering them. So if you're about to start a family of your own, how about starting some family traditions? Some traditions can be started by actual thought and effort. Others, like Topsy, just grow.

Lots of people have different definitions for family tradition, but they all agree that tradition is a good thing. Mary Tinley Daly in an article in the November 1948 issue of *Parent's Magazine* says, "It's the little things, repeated over and over that cement families—give a feeling of belonging."

In her book, *Ritual in Family Living*, Dorothy Barclay declares, "It is what the family sees about itself and it likes and wants to continue."

## Chowder by Dad

What are some family traditions? I've asked some of you this question, and here are a few of the replies.

One girl remembers her family's annual spring clam chowder dinner. It's unique because Dad makes the clam chowder. She says he gathers up all the vegetables he can find and makes the chowder in a big black kettle they have for that special purpose. She tells how Dad spends nearly the whole day "brewing up" that chowder in the big black pot. That night all the relatives come to eat Dad's chowder.

Another of you remembers Fourth of July picnics in the back yard. After everyone has eaten all the chicken, potato salad and lemonade he can

hold, the family clears the picnic table, puts chairs on it, and climbs up to watch the municipal fireworks display. In this same family each member gets to order his own menu for birthday dinners.

## Fishing, anyone?

Holidays seem to hold more traditions than any other time of year—perhaps because the family is always together then.

Have you ever heard of a fish-day picnic? One family in northern Iowa takes off from work and school on the first day of the fishing season to go on a picnic. Those members of the family who like to fish take along their poles and try their luck for the first time that season.

In our family Easter held several traditions. About a week before Easter I would busy myself decorating hard-cooked eggs. Then on Easter morning, I was up early to go "hunting." All over the house would be little grass nests containing different kinds of candy—from jelly beans to chocolates that Mother and Dad had hidden. Along with the candy were the eggs I had decorated. Sometimes there were toys in Easter baskets. Mother and Dad seemed to have as much fun with the "hunts" as did I.

## Day of resolutions

In an old article in the January 1948 issue of *American Home*, Lynne Stewart writes how her family celebrates an annual New Year's Day brunch. Promptly at 1 p.m. the unvarying menu is served. Afterwards the family meeting. Each person writes his resolutions, reads them aloud, then enters them in the "New Year's Book."

Next, everyone makes suggestions for a list of what "To Do and See" during the year. A vote is taken and prepared suggestions are recorded.

Then last year's resolution's are read and the family scores each member on his success in carrying them out.

Finally, recorded notes are made on the highlights of last year's things "To Do and See."

Mrs. Stewart calls her family's New Year's ritual and recordings "an informal chronicle of family history."

Helen Reeder Cross is another in favor of holiday traditions. In a December 1948 *Better Homes and Gardens*, she tells of her family's tradition of cutting

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## In the Family—

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evergreens. She admits that it may be just as cheap and less trouble to buy evergreens, but the tradition is too meaningful to break. Here are her comments on holiday traditions.

"Now I know that every family needs a holiday habit or an annual custom that can grow into a tradition. Such little ceremonies casually begun, but repeated faithfully year after year, can knit your family into a unit and build family spirit. It's good for your children to think their family is more pleasant than any other."

If you are starting a new family, try starting some traditions, too. They may be as simple as a certain kind of birthday cake, or a May-morning walk, or reading aloud—but make them your own.



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by *Susan Brown and  
Mary Doberty*

*Home Economics Freshmen*

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*Refreshments for Weddings and Anniversaries* will give the bride ideas for her reception. It can be obtained for 25 cents from the Good Housekeeping Bulletin Service, 57th Street at 8th Avenue, New York 19, N. Y.

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