



December 16, 2020

**‘Twas the night before Christmas Eve.
And all through the house.....**

Holidays are a great time to gather family and friends. Holidays can be a stressful time too, whether the celebration happens virtually through technology or in person. During this year of the Pandemic, it can be stressful for celebrations, but wherever we are celebrating it can be a magically time if we follow CDC’s guidelines of masking up, socially distancing from each other, washing our hands often and only have small family gatherings.

Some tips for having a special celebration even if only with your household family:

Plan ahead – meals in a slow cooker or prepare freezer meals.

Simplify Your Plans – if you usually make 10 kinds of special holiday food, ask your family what their top five special foods are. Start some new easier holiday traditions.

Have a theme party such as healthful appetizers, baked potatoes with all the toppings, or a homemade pizza party.

Stretch your budget – be creative in your Christmas giving – who wouldn’t like some home-made candy or cookies. What about the makings of a meal for that shut in neighbor?

Get some exercise – take a fun walk outdoors or put on an exercise DVD.

Get enough sleep – Adults need seven to nine hours of sleep plus children need more sleep.

The 2021 Essay and Artwork theme is “Responsibility”. All of the forms are on our website and can be downloaded from there. Since some schools are doing distance learning, hybrid or meeting in person this will be a time to think outside of your box to have the 4th graders participate. Some ways you can find 4th graders would be through 4-H, Girl or Boy Scouts, or those that are being home-schooled. Contact the school and see if you can visit with the elementary principal or 4th grade teacher to see how you can get the info to them. You are asking how do we get the completed essays from what ever group they have been given to? If it is a school have the essays be put in an envelope and leave at the main office or have them mail them to one address. Be creative on how you can receive them. After the essays have been received by the club, etc. then copies could be made and given to each member to read and score it. Have one person from the club or county call and get their scores, comply then and send to whichever level is next. As FCE members we are very adaptable and creative.

Our FCE members have definitely been adapting to this Pandemic by making many face masks which we all should be wearing to keep from spreading COVID and the way that members are holding meetings, presenting lessons for their state FCE members with the use of zoom. What an inspiration our FCE members are in thinking outside the box.

As you light up your holiday with shining stars and shimmering snowmen staying safe around electricity will keep the holidays bright. Here are a few tips for a safe and happy holiday taken from an electric cooperative article.

Inspect electrical decorations for damage before using.

Fasten lights securely to trees, homes, and make sure when working outside they are marked for outside use.

Turn off, unplug, and extinguish all decorations when going to sleep or leaving the house. Half of the home fire deaths occur between the hours of 11PM and 7AM.

Never connect more than three strings of incandescent lights and protect cords from being pinched by furniture, placed under rugs, located near heat sources or attached by nails or staples.

Keep the live tree fresh by watering daily. Dry trees are a serious fire hazard.

Use battery operated candles. Candles start almost half of home decoration fires.

As I was listening to the radio the other morning 5th graders were being interviewed about their favorite board game they liked to play and why they choose it. One answer was Monopoly because it lasted longer. Even though 2020 holidays may look different they don't have to be. How about playing a board game or put together a puzzle as everyone is visiting? These activities can even be done over zoom or face time. What a great time to connect the family and also be a learning tool for none of us are too old to play Monopoly, Yahtzee, or Uno.

Please remember to check the websites for National FCE, www.nafce.org and our international counterpart ACWW, www.acww.org.uk for they have the latest information.

The national office will be closed from December 18, 2020 to January 5th due to vacation time for Judy Jones, our office manager.

Happy Holidays to each and every one of you from National FCE.

Hugs and Prayers for Everyone to Stay Safe and Healthy!

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