

The Magazine for Multiples since 1984!

TWINTMS

Are your tweens
scheduled or
over-scheduled?

THROW A
CHRISTMAS
COOKIE
PARTY

WHEN PARENTS
have a favorite
TWIN

Holiday 2017

www.twinsmagazine.com



How to stay sane
WHILE PREGNANT
during the holidays

10
ways to preserve
your twins' first
CHRISTMAS

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ANOTEFROMTHEEDITOR

Just hear those sleigh bells jingling...

It's hard to believe it's already December. In the mayhem of the holiday preparations, it feels like we're hurtling toward the end of the year at an alarming rate, and before we know it, we'll be in 2018.

It only seems like a few short months since I took the helm at TWINS, but this issue means that it has been a whole year... and what a year it's been. The magazine has seen a lot of changes since January. 2017 was TWINS Magazine's first full year under the management of Panoptic Media, and it has gone from strength to strength.

In January we had a fresh new look with the launch of our new website. Since then, subtle changes have been happening all year in preparation for the biggest change of all: TWINS Magazine is now completely FREE! On that note, I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome our new subscribers, and to say thank you for taking the plunge and joining the TWINSphere!

Although 2017 may have been a year of rapid change, our core mission is still the same: to be the world-leading resource for parents of multiples by providing relevant content, and helpful hints and tips that only those with twins or more would ever need to know.

We hope you enjoy this special Holiday issue of TWINS Magazine. We're very thankful and appreciative of all of your loyalty and support over the years! We have just wrapped up our 33rd year as the leading magazine for everything twins and multiples, and look forward to a very bright and exciting 2018.

From our family to yours, we truly hope you can capture the magic of this wondrous season. Many blessings to you and yours, and we wish for great things for you and your families in 2018!



Sincerely,

Laura Cunningham

Laura Cunningham,
Editor-in-Chief

TWINS IN THE NEWS

Winklevoss twins are now bitcoin billionaires



Identical twins Cameron and Tyler Winklevoss have become bitcoin billionaires following a surge in the value of the currency over the past year. The pair are famous for their legal battle with Mark Zuckerberg over the ownership of Facebook.

Can twins provide the secret to understanding sexuality?



Twenty-nine year old twin sisters Sarah Nunn and Rosie Ablewhite are genetically identical and had the exact same upbringing.

They are considered a mystery to researchers at the University of Essex in the U.K., as

one identifies as straight, and the other identifies as a lesbian.

Sarah and Rosie are just two of 56 participants in the study of twins with “discordant sexual orientations”. The researchers are hoping to discover how, when and why human sexuality is produced.

Chinese twins reunited after investigation into identity fraud



A pair of identical twins have been reunited in eastern China decades after being adopted separately, thanks to police unwittingly investigating them for suspected identity fraud.

The authorities had initially suspected one person of using two identities, after their uncannily similar profiles were flagged during a population data check.

Both sisters live in Jiangsu, and have met up for DNA tests to confirm they are indeed

siblings. They are thrilled to be reunited, and have already met each other’s families.

Britain's oldest twins celebrate 101st birthday



Irene Crump and Phyllis Jones topped their birthday cakes with a whopping 202 candles, which nearly set their house on fire. The pair, born in 1916, celebrated their 101st birthday on 20 November.

Phyllis’ son, Carl, said: “Everything was under control and I was there with a damp cloth to put it out.

“They both found it very funny, they had a good chuckle.

“You could always say they have been risk takers, my Mum more so than Irene, as she was a keen gardener and would cut down trees her.

“I think they will be scared to add the extra candle next year.”



THE *Real* SANTA

by Nancy B. Gibbs

When my identical twin sons were four years old, the three of us jumped into the car and off we went to visit Santa Claus and do some shopping. They had their lists complete in their minds, knowing exactly what to say when Santa asked that very important question, "And what do you want for Christmas?" We visited several stores before we went to sit on Santa's lap. In all the excitement, I noticed the boys got very quiet, only whispering to one another.

The twins looked and acted so much alike that very few people could tell them apart. Even I couldn't tell them apart at times, without careful consideration and thought. Of course, they were the center of attention everywhere we went that day. They were so much alike, so cute and had personalities that would knock you off your feet. There were times, even at the age of 4, however, that they would get frustrated because no one could tell them apart.

As we were shopping that day, they began to notice that there were a lot of different Santas—not just one as they had believed. This concerned them because they wanted to tell the real Santa what they wanted, not some impostor. Finally, after all the quietness, Chad spoke up and said, "Mama, why are there so many Santas?"

Like all good mothers, I explained that they were Santa's helpers and that there were too many places for only one Santa to be. He just had to have some help.

Brad then spoke up saying, "But Mama, we want to talk to the real Santa."

"OK," I said, as we headed toward the mall, our last stop. "The real Santa is at the mall."

They were very excited about seeing the real Santa. Again, the whispering began. I wondered what they were whispering about. When we arrived at the mall, we jumped out of the car and we all ran to see the real Santa. One at a time, the boys sat on good old Santa's lap and as they left him they both wore a giant smile.

I asked Chad what Santa had said that brought such a big smile to his face. Chad said, "I know he is the real Santa!"

"How do you know?" I asked.

"Because he knew who I was, without me telling him", said Chad. "He called me Chad and he called Brad, Brad. He's the only person who could tell us apart today. He's got to be the real Santa."

I wondered how Santa knew their names in the first place; much less who was who, but I was also very relieved that he did.

As they ran to the car ahead of me, I noticed the back of the sweatshirts that they were wearing clearly read "Brad" on one, and "Chad" on the other. I was so glad that the real Santa was not only a jolly old fellow, but an observant one too! ♡



My name is Félicité du Jeu.



*I was born a quadruplet
in 1975 before IVF.*

by Félicité du Jeu

Paris. June 1975.

The labour ward was packed; the tension was at its peak.

We were in the starting blocks, ready to come out and take center stage. The delivery had been planned to the last minute.

Considering my mother's young age (she was 25 years old) it was decided she was to give birth naturally to the 4 of us and so was induced seven months into her pregnancy.

A large and impatient group of people was waiting for us. A preeminent obstetrician, 4 pediatricians, 5 anesthetists (one for each baby and another one on guard, syringe ready at hand, for any complications). Added to that was a battery of midwives, a group of students eager to be in the front row and, last but not least, my poor apprehensive father.

An ambulance, specially fitted with four incubators was on standby to take us to another hospital, on the other side of town, which held better facilities to look after premature babies.

The game was on.

As each of my brothers came out, alive and well, the atmosphere rose and apparently was akin to a rugby match in the overcrowded delivery room. So much so that when my turn arrived to come out last, people were taking bets on my gender. Eager to play to the crowd, I decided to take my time and

make myself desired but worried I might be struggling for breath; I was beaten to post and dragged out by my feet.

And so I was born, a bundle of 3lb, the fourth in a bunch of 4.

3 boys and me.

From what my parents recall, the response in the room went from quiet fear to ecstatic relief. Was it this initial ovation that motivated me to become an actress and defined my career path? Maybe. Suffice to say, I was born with an audience and have always felt better at ease in a crowd.

Eager to mark the moment, my parents named me Félicité which in French means happiness but also congratulations. If you think my surname du Jeu means "for the game" the pun is almost too good to be true.

The second oldest quadruplets in France, we were fortunate to be born naturally at 7 months in relatively good health (One of my brothers had a hydrocephalus which luckily resorbed itself).

The first two years of our lives were a bit of a merry go round. We circulated viruses and were sick virtually all the time. To cope with the feeding schedule, my parents together with the au pair organized a sleeping Rota whereby they were each to sleep one night out of three.



There wasn't any support in place at the time to assist multiple birth families, and the situation could bring up a huge economic strain. The psychological and financial burden such multiple births can bring is not always fathomable.

Imagine 28 milk bottles a day/ 20 nappy changes a day, 80 nails to cut ...and so on and so forth). Everything has to be measured exponentially.

Conscious of the difficult situation for families raising multiple birth babies, my parents created a charity which went on to become the NGO "Jumeaux et plus". They lobbied the government for recognition and support. Thanks to them, benefits were pressed to become better aware of multiple births growing number and assist financially.

I guess it is only now that I have my own nappied urchins yomping around, that I realize the peculiarity of my own upbringing.

Growing up together at a similar pace, we were always level. Today none of my points of reference apply to my children. I have to learn and understand their age gap.

Along the years I have been asked so many times if I have a favorite or if there is any telepathy going on. My answer remains invariably the same, I may have more complicity with one or another depending on the circumstances, but I have never felt I should choose one over the other, my brothers

and sister are my best friends, and I love each one alike. As for telepathy, just like with siblings, we intuitively understand each other because we share a common experience but we do not read each other's minds. What we do have is a pack mentality with no social hierarchy or acknowledged leader involved. It is more a case of assisting and looking after each other.

To help differentiate who was who and what was whose, my parents assigned us each a colour. They were fixed colours. Blue, green, yellow and red. Our sister however could alternate between, white, black and pink. Red was my colour, my toothbrush, my mug, my plate were red...I owned the colour red. And so what was initially intended to facilitate the mundane became intrinsically part of my identity.

I am red.

Identity is the one thing you cling onto as a quadruplet. Being part of a group, there is a real need to know where you stand within the group.

Despite our living in different countries, we have spent our birthday together almost every year since we were born.

We each have our own cake, our own candles, and a smile on our faces. We share and cherish the day.

I just know my cake will be strawberry red. ♡



WHEN PARENTS HAVE A FAVORITE TWIN

by Christina Baglivi Tinglof

Mary McDonnell* has a secret, one that she's carried with her since her four-year-old fraternal twin boys, Adam and Brian, were just babies. Is she a CIA operative? A federal air marshal? No. McDonnell is simply a mom who feels more connected to her twin son Brian.

"I feel closer to Brian and I'm having a hard time coming to terms with this," she explains. McDonnell realized that she had different feelings towards her twins early on when her boys were just babies. It was their opposite temperaments—Brian is mellow, Adam is intense—that had an effect on her bond. "When someone came over to help out, I would always hand Adam off first. Just saying it makes me feel so horrible! But it's true."

Although she's talked to other parents about having one child that's more difficult than the other, she's never confided to anyone that she likes one of her twins better. "I feel guilty, like I must be a bad person," she says. "It's as though there's an important good parent gene missing from my genetic make-up."

So is McDonnell a terrible mom? Not at all, says Dr. Ellen Weber Libby, a psychotherapist in private practice in Washington D.C. and the author of, *The Favorite Child: How a Favorite Impacts Every Family Member for Life*. According to Dr. Libby,

having a favorite child is normal and nothing to be ashamed of. Furthermore, favoring one child more than the other doesn't mean you don't love them equally. Love and favoritism, Libby says, are completely different. "There's a lot of confusion between love and favoritism," she says. "People know a lot less about favoritism which is a reflection of an attitude and varies by time and children." Loving parents are committed to all their children's overall wellbeing, safety, and health, and in return their children feel secure within the family. Favoritism, on the other hand, depends on how well the child makes the parent feel. That's why easy-going children are usually favored over difficult siblings, for instance.

HOW DOES FAVORING ONE TWIN BEGIN?

In families with multiples, favoring one twin or triplet over the others can often feel glaring, at least to the parent who feels the pull. After all, they were born on the same day, reaching developmental milestones at nearly the same time. So why don't you feel the same bond with each child?

"Even with identical twins there are no identical experiences," Libby explains. "Everybody has his own place in the womb from the very beginning and somebody does come out first. Each

twin is born with his own personality and with his own character traits that will affect how a parent resonates with one or the other." In other words, it's normal to have different relationships with each of your children.

But from the moment of birth, a mother's bonding experience with her twins is different than that of a mother of a singleton, especially if one of her twins needs to stay in the hospital longer than the other.

For instance, when Arlene Norbert's boy-girl twins were born two years ago, her daughter required a 22-day stay in the NICU while her son could go home right away. "I was able to spend more time with our son than our daughter when they were infants," she says. "I felt a much stronger bond with him."

So was it that three-week head start in mother-child bonding that helped cement Norbert's stronger attachment to her son? Probably so, experts say. In fact, research has shown that mothers often develop a stronger affection to the twin that left the hospital first. And the longer one twin remains hospitalized the less favorably the mothers in the study felt towards that baby prompting some in the twin community to call for a reevaluation of when infant twins should be released from the hospital, preferably at the same time. Or, at the very least, hospitals should consider offering counseling to those families whose newborn twins require a long stay in the NICU.

In Norbert's situation, she had uninterrupted one-on-one bonding with her son each day as she fed, bathed and rocked him. Furthermore, she had to travel nearly an hour to the NICU— not the most intimate of environments—to visit her daughter.

Yet for other parents, like Allison Neiman, it's her twins' opposite personalities that made the difference. "When my daughter began talking and really started to express herself, I saw more of my personality in her and we just clash in that sense," explains Neiman, the mother to three-year-old boy-girl twins. While her son is more laid-back and loves to snuggle, her daughter is like a tornado constantly on the go. "I feel awful about it," she says of favoring her son. "I've seen how favoritism has affected my husband as his mom blatantly prefers her daughter to him, and I don't want that for my kids."

THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAVORITISM

When a parent showers one child with more attention and/or privileges than the other children in the family, it can negatively affect everyone. For instance, Dr. Libby points to the brother who is the star athlete, living out his father's dream while the rest of the family is expected to schedule their lives around his practices and games. Other examples of unhealthy favoritism is when a parent brags repeatedly about one child and little about another, disproportionately agrees to the requests of one child, or rarely holds a favored child responsible for his actions.

Recent research has shown that less-favored children can battle feelings of low self-esteem, anxiety, and even depression.

Their relationships with the favored child suffer, too, causing a lifetime of resentment and sibling rivalry. It isn't all positive for the favored child either as he may develop a feeling of entitlement throughout his life. Furthermore, the favored child may live with tremendous guilt from his preferential treatment as well as battle anxiety as he tries to live up to parental expectations or lose his favored status within the family.

But the way Dr. Libby sees it, admitting to having a favorite child isn't one of the biggest taboos in parenting, not admitting having a favorite is. Kids are smart sensing when one child is strongly favored over the others. "When kids will say, 'Tommy's the favorite.' Parents are quick to respond, 'Oh, no. I treat all my children equally,'" explains Dr. Libby. It's that defensive response that simply doesn't ring true. "The only way favoritism can be destructive is if you're defensive about it," she says. "What's really important is that parents are open to what's being talked about, and that parents listen to children's perceptions."

BREAKING THE CYCLE

Although a mother's love lasts a lifetime, favoritism may or may not. In healthy families, however, everyone at some time gets to be Mom's or Dad's favorite. As your family grows and life evolves over the years, so too will your favorite. In some families favoritism changes developmentally, some preferring the sweetness of toddlerhood while others are drawn to the challenges of the teenage years. In other families, the favorite is tied by interest— sport, hobbies, even books.

"Once you know that favoritism is normal, then you can be open to people who say, 'I know you have a special bond with Tommy but the privileges you give him are a little excessive, and the other children are feeling a little neglected,'" explains Dr. Libby. "Then you can look back and reflect and admit to that being true." Without the defensiveness, a parent can then figure out the best strategy to even the playing field among all her children.

One way is to spend quality time with the less-favored child doing what she likes to do. "If you're going to spend time with your less-favorite child you have to be thoughtful about the activity that has meaning to this child even if doesn't have meaning to you," says Dr. Libby. If you love sports but your less-favored child likes to play with Barbie, it will be meaningless for her to take her on an outing to the park.

Allison Neiman agrees and is working hard at connecting more with her daughter. "I've been trying to spend more one-on-one time with her," she says. "I think it's important for us to have that time to really build a relationship with each other and embrace our likeness." It's her openness and willingness to change her relationship with her daughter that will make all the difference. She's on the right road. ♡

(* To protect privacy, all names have been changed.)



Are your
tweens
scheduled
or
over-scheduled?

from the staff at TweenParent.com

The vision of a super busy person isn't a new concept; it's certainly familiar to all of us. In fact, it can sometimes be perceived as a badge of honor. Perhaps it's because the more we're involved in, the more we believe it says about our own drive and achievement orientation, right? Why should we expect our preteens to march to the same drum?

Maybe it's part of the picture that focuses on keeping our tweens busy while we're occupied or making sure our kids aren't, gasp, bored. Or, maybe it's a drive to push our kids to be the best they can be. Or, maybe we want to give our children what we didn't have access

to when we were their age. Or...maybe we just haven't paused our own lives long enough to really think about it. Our guess is that it's some combination of the above.

WE'RE ALL BUSY!

The parallels with adult life are apparent. Compared with 1960, the average American family is working 160 hours more each year (that's an additional month of average work weeks each year!). In the past 20 years, some important family activities have been on the decline (family dinners have declined 33% and family vacations have decreased by 28%). On top of the dramatic increase in work, there are different stresses in the world than

when we grew up. First, we live in a society where safety, on many levels, is a real concern. Second, most families don't have childcare readily accessible from within their family and community. Also, we're in a state of significant financial insecurity; gone are the days of retiring after 40 years with the same company.

EVERYONE NEEDS BALANCE!

One thing is certain. There's a great deal of debate over where to draw the line between our children being busy enough and being too busy. The balance that needs to be achieved will be different for every child on the basis of his/her academic needs; temperament; environment; and the family's needs.

TOO MANY ACTIVITIES?

Some experts contend that children who are involved in a near constant flow of activities don't have the opportunity to learn to be at ease when they're alone. Having lived by activity schedules and often being around other people, they aren't able to learn the joy of solitude and they aren't given an opportunity to express creativity, daydream and self-reflect. More important, perhaps, they haven't realized the value of making time for fun. This, along with achievement pressure and a decrease in family time are the frequently cited issues.

Research has shown that an overbooked child can lead to a less active teenager. Simply put, over-scheduled children may become burned out later in life. Research also suggests that children who have played a sport with intensity for an extended period of time eventually tire of the activity as it becomes routine and the love of the sport is lost (which might explain why 70% of kids quit playing their favorite sport by their teens!).

TOO MUCH FREE TIME?

On the flipside, Susan M. McHale, Ph.D., of Penn State led a study that monitored how fourth and fifth graders spent their free time. Her team examined school grades, depression levels and parental reports at the beginning and end of a two-year period. Devoting more free time to structured and supervised activities such as hobbies and sports appears to enhance a tween's academic, emotional and behavioral development at this age.

Spending more time playing outdoors and hanging out, in contrast, appears to have a negative impact on development. Contrary to popular belief, recent research rejects the notion that most kids are over-scheduled and are suffering as a result. In fact, less than one in ten could be described as over-scheduled and involvement

in those extracurricular activities can be linked with positive social, behavioral, and psychological outcomes.

Other research also indicated that extracurricular participation up to ten hours per week was almost always positive, and participation up to 15 and even 20 hours per week was generally associated with positive development. Academic performance and emotional stability levels off or declines after extracurricular involvement beyond 20 hours per week (as a point of reference, only 3-6% of the child and youth population participate more than 20 hours per week).**

DETERMINE THE BALANCE

It's important to consider what the right balance is, so that your tweens have enough to keep them stimulated and challenged, but not so much that they're overwhelmed.

Experts suggest that, with your guidance, let your preteen choose their after school activities, along with how busy they want to be, but watch for signs of burnout. To help you think about whether your tweens may be participating in too many activities, consider the following:

- Do your twins go from one activity to another with little or no enthusiasm?
- Do they have trouble sleeping at night?
- Do they complain of not having enough time to spend with friends?
- Is the phrase "hurry up or we'll be late" used excessively?
- When did they last participate in "quality" family time?
- Do they have time to explore different interests (other than activities) that they may have?
- Do they enjoy the activity or are they particularly self-critical as an outcome of some/all activities?

Beyond the sheer volume of activities, we also need to focus on the participation impact to our preteens. The intense and critical focus on performance in these activities may be the greater impact, causing stress and other issues. While the research says extracurricular activities provide a positive outlet for children and lower the likelihood of risky behavior, over-scheduling a child can introduce other stress factors that might potentially lead to a burnedout child. Remember, some of the best interactions with our tweens occur during downtime — just talking, preparing meals together, and working on a hobby or art project, playing sports together, or being fully immersed in childhood. ♡

Where have all my friendships gone?

by Kitty Just

Calling old friends! Calling old friends! Come out... Come out, wherever you are! As the mother of two singletons and 1-year-old twin boys, I created this slight "fun" variation on an old children's game to make a serious point. You see, I am often home alone with my twins, and fun is a word that I recently had to look up in the dictionary to recall its meaning.

I know just by writing this that I am bordering on self-pity (not to be confused with remorse) over the fact that raising four young children can be tough. But is that why my old friends are rather invisible these days? I often ask myself. Are they afraid that my condition is contagious?

To put it bluntly, I'd like to know where all my friends have gone. I seem to remember them from the not-too-distant past whooping with joy when hearing about my impending multiple birth. They were the same ones who daily called to get the "twin pregnancy update" and who promised to be that extra pair of hands when the babies arrived.

So, there I was, egotistical old me, feeling very special and flattered by all the attention. I could not wait to deliver my babies— the only twins, by the way, ever born in the whole world! Finally my boys entered the world amid much "oohhing" and "aaaahing" from friends near and far. They visited; they left; and they didn't come back... so much for feeling special.

Excuses! Do I get excuses! Some of the most popular ones are: "I'll try to come by!" "I'm so busy!" "You don't need visitors!" "I don't want to bother you!"

Please bother me, I think when hearing those comments. I want to be bothered! Yes, my hands are full; my home is crazy; and someone is crying or hungry or wet, but I still need my friends to bother me. Now more than ever, I need the security that friendships give!

Maybe it's a fear I have that I will never return to my pre-babies state of mind. Granted, my life has changed, but I haven't, I hope and I wonder how my friends perceive me? Their absence is disturbing, if not depressing.

If I thought the fault lay with me, I would readily admit it. But in talking to other mothers of multiples, I find the same trend. It distresses them as much as it does me. For some

reason, our old friends consider us off limits now that our families have grown.

I realize that most people fail to understand how I cope with my topsy-turvy life. 24-hours a day of doing double diaper changes, juggling two bottles in two hungry mouths and attending to stereophonic screaming (not to mention the voices of my other children who would also appreciate some of their mother's attention) is a tough schedule for an outsider to grasp.

I don't lightly dismiss the fact that many of my friends have similar days with their children. I'm not trying to outdo them on the misery index, but I have come to believe that nobody can appreciate what two babies the exact same age, running in opposite directions, can do for one's psyche, unless they have experienced raising multiples.

Had I delivered a single baby, I would probably be a lot more mobile, running to the mall or lunching with a pal, baby in tow. But I cannot do that comfortably. The hassle and exhaustion of getting two babies revved up for a fun day spent strapped in a stroller and dressed in parkas when naps and meals have to be considered can be a monumental, if not impossible challenge for me to meet. Quite honestly, I don't really know if I can blame some of my friends who have older children for their excusing themselves from joining me on those excursions. I'd like to stay home, too!

So I stay home often, nursing my wounds, hoping for an impromptu visit or telephone call from a buddy who just wants to get together for old times' sake. I love my kids, but I love my friends, too. It seems that "never the twain shall meet!"

I think that I know what the real problem might be: My friends are all afraid that I am going to put them to work chasing babies! Never mind that they volunteered to be that extra pair of hands anytime I needed them. In fact, I know just the thing that might wake them up. If they need an invitation, so be it:

Mrs. Kitty Just requests the honor of your presence for coffee, some sympathy and general chit-chat any day of the week including evenings. Expect several interruptions, but diaper changes unnecessary. Regrets Only (Running Shoes Optional)! ♡



SPECIAL HOLIDAY SECTION

***GOT
CHRISTMAS
WORRIES?
DON'T PANIC,
WE'VE GOT
YOU COVERED***



by Nicole Johnson
Founder at The Baby Sleep Site

Five Ways to Help Your Twins Sleep Soundly this Holiday Season

The holidays are fast-approaching! But while the holiday season spells delicious food, family celebrations, and special gifts for many, for those of you with multiples, all that celebrating can also mean missed or shortened naps and crazy night waking for your little ones.

So how can you celebrate and enjoy the holiday season while also safeguarding your twins' usual sleep schedule and routines? Simple: use these five strategies!



5 STEPS TO BETTER HOLIDAY SLEEP FOR YOUR TWINS

1 Allow your twins' personalities and dispositions to guide you. If your twins adapt well to change, then you can likely party to your heart's content and not worry much if bedtime and naps are out of whack for a week or two. However, if your twins don't

respond well to change, it may be in your best interest to stick to the usual schedule as much as possible, and choose your "schedule-busting" activities carefully. If you have one of each - that is, if one twin is adaptable and one isn't - then it's usually best to plan around the less-adaptable twin.

2 If you value your tandem schedules, prioritize them. If you have your twins on the same schedule - and if you value those mirror schedules - then prioritize them as much as you can over the holidays. That may mean you can't let Aunt Carol rock one twin to sleep if it's not nap time yet, and it might mean you have to leave a party early to preserve bedtime, even if one twin is still rarin' to go.

3 Minimize those late bedtimes. A few late nights (ideally not consecutive) are fine for most children, but avoid too many. Late bedtimes tend to result in overtiredness, which in turn means early-waking and nap issues for most babies and toddlers. And if your twins share a room, a too-short nap or middle-of-the-night crying from one twin will likely disturb the other - something no parent wants to deal with!

4 Prioritize the first morning nap. Some of your holiday activities may mean missed or shortened naps, and that's okay, as long as you plan well. If your twins are still taking two naps and you know your twins will have to skip their afternoon naps, be sure to prioritize the morning nap, as that nap is usually the most restorative of the day. And in general, avoid activities that will force your twins to miss the morning nap; it's better to schedule those activities in the afternoon.

5 Give your twins plenty of time to adjust once the holidays are over. Actually, you may need this adjustment period just as much as your twins! After a few weeks of rich food, busy activities, late nights, and out-of-the-ordinary schedules, everyone needs a few days to get back to normal. This is especially important if your twins have gotten out-of-sync with their sleep schedules. Plan for a few at-home days during which you can get your twins back into their typical eating and sleeping routines by putting them down for naps and bedtime about 15-20 minutes earlier than usual until you can ease them into their normal schedule. These days will no doubt feel "off" as you get back to normal, but spending this kind of concentrated time will help sleep get back on track quickly and (relatively!) painlessly. ♡



Throw a Christmas Cookie Party

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PEPPERMINT TRUFFLE COOKIES

- 8 ounces bittersweet baking chocolate
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter
- 1 cup sugar, divided
- 1 egg
- ½ teaspoon McCormick Pure Peppermint Extract
- 2 cups flour
- 36 milk chocolate kiss-shaped candies, unwrapped

Heat oven to 350 F.

In large, microwavable bowl, heat chocolate and butter on high 1-2 minutes, or until butter is melted. Let stand 10 minutes to cool

slightly. Add ½ cup sugar, egg and peppermint extract. Beat with electric mixer on medium speed until well blended. Gradually beat in flour on low speed until well mixed.

Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Press chocolate candy into center of each ball, forming dough around candy to enclose it. Roll in remaining sugar to coat. Place 1 inch apart on greased baking sheets.

Bake 9-11 minutes, or until cookies are set. Cool on baking sheets 5 minutes. Remove to wire racks; cool completely.



The next best thing to baking cookies for many home chefs is baking cookies with friends. Dust off your favorite recipes, create a festive playlist and fill your home with the tantalizing aroma of baked goodies for the ultimate Christmas cookie party.

Turn things up a notch and swap classic sugar cookies for these festive Red Velvet Crinkle Cookies, Peppermint Truffle Cookies and Almond Gingerbread Cookies. Along with those tasty treats, don't let your guests go thirsty. Add peppermint extract to a slow cooker hot chocolate so guests can sip and be merry throughout the party. Find more holiday recipes at McCormick.com.

ALMOND GINGERBREAD COOKIES



- 3 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons McCormick Ginger, Ground
- 1 teaspoon McCormick Cinnamon, Ground
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon McCormick Nutmeg, Ground
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup (1 1/2 sticks) butter, softened
- ¾ cup firmly packed brown sugar
- ½ cup molasses
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon McCormick Pure Vanilla Extract
- 1 ½ cups sliced almonds

In large bowl, mix flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda, nutmeg and salt.

In separate large bowl, beat butter and brown sugar with electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add molasses, egg and vanilla extract; beat well. Gradually beat in flour mixture on low speed until well mixed. Press dough into thick, flat disk. Wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate 4 hours, or as long as overnight.

Heat oven to 350 F. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Roll in sliced almonds, pressing almonds into dough. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased baking sheets.

Bake 8-10 minutes, or until edges of cookies just begin to brown. Remove to wire racks; cool completely. Store cookies in airtight container up to 5 days.



SLOW COOKER PEPPERMINT HOT CHOCOLATE

- ½ gallon (8 cups) whole milk
- 1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk
- 1 package (12 ounces) dark chocolate chips
- ½ teaspoon McCormick Pure Peppermint Extract

Place whole milk, condensed milk, chocolate chips and peppermint extract in slow cooker. Cover. Cook 60-70 minutes on high, or until chocolate is melted and mixture is heated through, stirring every 15 minutes. Reduce heat to warm or low to serve.



RED VELVET CRINKLE COOKIES



- 1⅔ cups flour
- ⅓ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter, softened
- 1 ¼ cups granulated sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 ½ teaspoons McCormick Red Food Color
- 1 teaspoon McCormick Pure Vanilla Extract
- ½ cup confectioners' sugar nonstick cooking spray

In medium bowl, mix flour, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt; set aside. In large bowl, beat butter and granulated sugar with electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add eggs, food color and vanilla extract; mix well. Gradually beat in flour mixture on low speed until well mixed. Refrigerate 4 hours.

Heat oven to 350 F. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Roll in confectioners' sugar to completely coat. Place 2 inches apart on baking sheets sprayed with nonstick cooking spray.

Bake 10-12 minutes, or until cookies are puffed. Cool on baking sheets 2 minutes. Remove to wire racks; cool completely. ♡

A pregnant woman with long brown hair is smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a light beige cable-knit beanie, a matching chunky scarf, and a vibrant red winter coat with large buttons and pom-poms. Her hands are tucked into her coat, wearing light-colored knit gloves. She is standing on a balcony with a metal railing, and the background is a soft-focus winter landscape with snow-covered trees and a bright sky.

Pregnancy

Being pregnant at Christmas doesn't mean the usual festivities are off the table, but it does mean you'll need to take a step back from your usual hectic duties.

Enjoy this time and relax before the babies come!

HOW TO STAY SANE WHILE

pregnant

DURING THE HOLIDAYS

by Laura
Cunningham

Is your baby bump bigger than Santa's belly? The holidays can be a stressful time of year, and if you're pregnant – especially with twins – you might need to take a step back.

Don't be overwhelmed by your usual responsibilities, and try to make the most of this special time, even if you're plagued with morning sickness, or you're missing your traditional festive tippie. Remain positive and stay sane during the holiday season by trying some of our top tips.

1 KEEP IT SIMPLE

If you're in charge of hosting the celebrations, don't stress out by taking on too much. This time of year should be about the time you spend with your family and friends, not whether the stuffing is cooked to perfection. Take a step back and focus your priorities.

2 ONLINE SHOPPING

Avoid traipsing to the mall and shop from the comfort of your own home. Browsing online is a lot less stressful than battling the crowds of desperate shoppers, and you can check multiple sites with ease to make sure you're getting the best bargains. Just be sure to check the delivery dates though!

3 BE THE DESIGNATED DRIVER

If your loved ones have places to be and have had a drink or two, offer to drive them where they need to go. You'll earn serious points with them, and you'll also feel great for doing a good deed during the holiday season.

4 KEEP A DRIVER ON HAND

If your due date is getting close, keep your hospital bag packed and ready to go. Make sure you have someone sober and ready to drive you at all times – babies aren't great at stick-

ing to a schedule, and finding a cab on Christmas Day is no mean feat.

5 TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HOLIDAY SALES

Baby stuff is expensive. Use the sales to stock up on clothing and accessories for your new arrivals. Be sure to think ahead – don't just buy stuff for newborns. Your babies will grow quickly, and every penny saved will help in the long run.

6 TAKE IT EASY

Take advantage of being excused from the usual clean up extravaganza that typically happens after a huge family meal. Let someone else take control of the washing up for once and put your feet up.

7 ASK FOR HELP

If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed with how much there is to do, don't be afraid to ask for help. Even something as simple as addressing the Christmas cards or wrapping presents can be outsourced to a loving partner or mother. You are not alone, so don't be afraid to rely on your support network if you find you've taken on too much.

8 INDULGE IN FESTIVE FOOD

This is the one year you can really go all out. Nobody can be judgemental when that second plate of turkey is "for the babies", and you can totally skip the goals to lose weight in the new year. Better yet, you might be lucky enough to have family who will cook to suit your cravings! Stretchy maternity pants are your savior here – enjoy your post-meal snooze in your cocoon of elasticated comfort.

9 EMBRACE MOCKTAILS

We get it. Missing out on the prosecco and mulled wine at this time of year *sucks*. Search

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the internet for some new festive non-alcoholic drinks and you might find a new favorite. We love a November Sea Breeze: mix equal measures of cranberry juice and grapefruit juice, then serve over ice with a lime wedge garnish. You can even perk it up with carbonated water or a dash of soda!

10 DON'T CRAM YOUR DIARY
Don't be overwhelmed by your usual festive obligations. You need time to relax, and now you have the perfect excuse to get out of those dull office parties. Just smile sweetly and rub your bump and people will be sympathetic. Make the most of your extra time by curling up on the sofa with a nice warm drink and watching Christmas films.

11 TAKE NAPS
Don't be afraid to sneak away from social situations to take a nap. Your body is going through so many changes – no wonder you're so exhausted! Get as much shut-eye as you can now before the inevitable torment of broken sleep that accompanies newborns. Family and friends will understand that you need to power up to enjoy the festivities.

12 YOU WON'T FEEL THE COLD
Enjoy being able to nip to the shops in the middle of winter without a coat. How many other years have you been able to climb into bed without freezing cold toes? Embrace your extra body heat and follow your instincts. If nothing else, you'll be saving on your utility bills!

13 OTHER CHILDREN
If you have other kids, use the holiday season to make sure they know how special they are. The arrival of a new sibling can be an unsettling time for youngsters, and this will be their last Christmas without the adults being distracted by the new baby (or babies).

14 NEXT CHRISTMAS
If you find yourself feeling down, just think ahead to how magical this time next year will be! You'll be celebrating your twins' first Christmas, and their delight will make up for all the discomfort you're feeling now. ♡



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10 WAYS TO PRESERVE YOUR TWINS' VERY FIRST CHRISTMAS

by Karin A. Bilich

A Baby's very first Christmas is certainly an event to be treasured, especially a twin babies' first Christmas. Here are some creative ways to record your first holiday together.

1 MAKE OR BUY A PERSONALIZED ORNAMENT. Hang an ornament painted with your baby's name and birthdate. Every year you can take out this ornament and remember your baby's first Christmas.

2 CREATE YOUR FIRST ANNUAL PHOTO ORNAMENT. Place your baby's picture in a tiny frame and hang from your Christmas tree. Do the same thing next year and hang the two ornaments next to each other. As the years go by, you'll have pictures of your baby from each Christmas.

3 MAKE A CHRISTMAS STOCKING FROM YOUR BABY'S SOCK. Hang an adorable miniature Christmas stocking next to yours. Decorate it with your baby's name and the year of his first Christmas.

4 SAVE YOUR BABY'S FIRST CHRISTMAS OUTFIT. Dress her in adorable green and red Christmas clothes. These can get stored away and revisited whenever you feel like reminiscing. When you come across it again next year, you'll realize just how much your child has grown.

5 GIVE YOUR CHILD A CHRISTMAS THEMED STUFFED ANIMAL. There are miniature Santas, reindeers, angels, and

elves. As your child grows, you'll always have it around reminding you of your baby's first Christmas. It might even become your child's best friend for a while.

6 MAKE OR BUY A PERSONALIZED CHRISTMAS BLANKET. You can store this with your child's first Christmas clothes and or hang it on the wall in your baby's room — assuming you can persuade her to let go of it.

7 GIVE YOUR BABY A CHRISTMAS MUSIC BOX. These are treasures that can last a lifetime. He'll want to fall asleep every night to the peaceful Christmas music.


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8 TAKE PLENTY OF PICTURES. Get pictures of your child's face when he first sees the Christmas lights or when he gets his first present. Make sure to also get pictures of your newly formed family.

9 WRITE A LETTER TO YOUR CHILD. Even though it'll be a while before your child can read it, this letter can mean a lot to you for years to come. In your letter, tell your child how happy you are to be celebrating your first Christmas with her. Thank her for her first Christmas present to you— being born.

10 START A CHRISTMAS SCRAPBOOK. Decorate the cover with your child's name and birthdate. Fill it with some of your Christmas pictures and any Christmas cards to your baby. You can also write a short description of your baby's first Christmas—what you gave him, what he ate, or what he found scary—and add it to your scrapbook. ♡

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Tips to Survive the Season with Toddler Twins

by Jodie Richelle

What plans have you made for the coming holiday season? Will you fill your house with elaborate decorations? Do you look forward to wandering through quaint village shops, searching for that perfect gift? Maybe you just want to sit back and relax at parties given by family and friends.

I'm pretty sure I won't be doing any of those things this year. I am the mother of toddler twins. Decorations are a waste of time. My toddlers would pull them down and stuff them into the DVD. Quaint village shops lock their doors when they see our double stroller and 20 sticky fingers coming. I do go to parties, but I don't sit and I certainly don't relax.

If you're parenting toddlers this season, keep their needs and abilities in mind as you make your holiday plans. Don't frustrate yourself by expecting too much from them.



Keep your needs in mind as well. Caring for young twins can be demanding. It won't take many extra holiday chores before you're feeling overwhelmed. Cut back on your activities before that happens. No one will enjoy your homemade cookies and beautiful decorations if you're grouchy because you're doing too much.

KEEP DECORATIONS SIMPLE

If you have a Christmas tree, decorate only the top half. Otherwise, your toddlers will remove whatever they can reach. They'll chew on the Christmas lights, break the glass ornaments and spread those metal hooks everywhere. Don't use tinsel this year. It finds its way to the floor and could be dangerous if your twins swallowed it.





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If you can't get into the holiday spirit without a sleigh load of decorations, take your efforts outdoors. Decorate your bushes or fences with outdoor lights. Put a big wreath on your door. These things will give you the feeling of the holidays without sacrificing your toddlers' safety or your sanity.

If you must decorate an indoor tree with your finest glass ornaments, complete with presents under the branches, enclose the tree with indoor play yard fencing to keep your little ones out.

BE SMART ABOUT SHOPPING

We all know that we should start shopping in August. We also know to leave our twins at home when we shop. Unfortunately, most of us don't—or are unable—to follow this excellent advice. Here's what to do when you must venture into the holiday crowds with your toddlers.

Make a list...before you leave the house. List all the stores you want to visit and beside each store list things you must buy there. Next, prioritize your list. When you shop, go to the most important store first and make your way down the list. Don't expect to get to every store.

Head for the mall. One stop shopping when you have twins in tow is the way to go. You have to load them into and unload them from the car and strap them into their stroller only once. That's much easier than loading and unloading twins, stroller and supplies at every store. Plan to arrive at the mall when it opens. Crowds are

thinner and you and your twins will be well rested.

Be Prepared. Bring along plenty of supplies. Cups of juice and some snacks will keep your toddlers from getting hungry and crabby. Animal crackers, graham crackers and Cheerios travel well. Or you might stop for a soft-pretzel break. Bring along some toys that your twins haven't seen for some time. One desperate mom I know bought new toys to keep her kids busy while she finished her shopping. (But I only did it once.)

Shop from home. Are you unable to face another outing with your twins? This time of year my mailbox and email in-box are filled with catalogs and special online offers for shopping from the comfort of your own computer. Just be sure to leave plenty of time for deliveries and returns.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR HOLIDAY VISITS

Accept all invitations to parties given by parents of toddlers.

Their houses likely will contain a room that's safe, unbreakable and filled with toys. That's the main ingredient for a good party these days.

Toddler-proof other homes.

When you enter a party with your twins, quickly scan for dangers. Depending on the occasion and your relationship with the hostess, decide what you can ask to change. Few people will object to keeping the bathroom door closed, if it's nearby. If your twins are attacking the cheese tray on the coffee table, ask if you can move it to a higher location.

If you are going to stay with family members for a few days, call ahead and ask your relatives to stash the crystal, hard candies and delicate decorations up high, or forego them altogether this year. Your twins probably will be starving before the turkey is ready, so plan to keep them on their regular meal schedule. (Visiting another home filled with people who fuss over them and give them more gifts than you or they can handle will be disruptive enough; they don't need to have lunch delayed for turkey and dressing that probably won't appeal to them anyway.)

Protect Fido. Pets are tricky. Most owners believe that their pet would never harm anyone. Of course, the pet never had two 18-month-olds try to ride him like a pony. Small children simply do not know how to treat animals. Do the pet and your twins a favor and keep them separated.

Be prepared. Carry a bottle of syrup of ipecac with you when you travel. The American Association of Poison Control Centers reports that many poisonings occur when daily routines are disrupted. Be on your guard this holiday season. (By the way, poinsettias are not poisonous, but mistletoe and holly berries are.)

Toddler twins need a lot of attention. Don't expect too much of them or yourself. Cut back on your commitments this holiday season in order to have plenty of time to enjoy your little angels and don't forget to take lots of pictures! ♡

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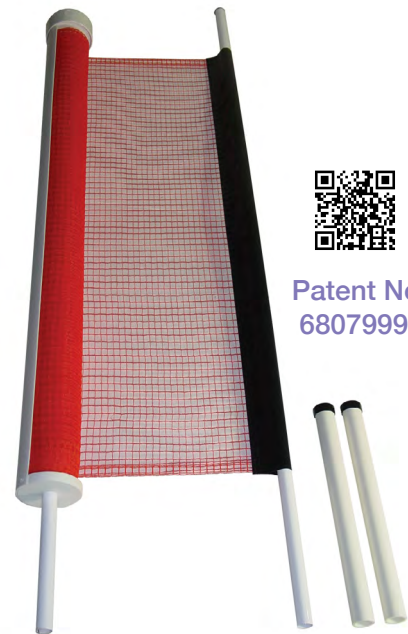
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Double the Gifts Double the Giving

by Patricia Edminster, Ph.D.

How to handle their hectic holiday wish lists

As the holidays approach, many parents of multiples begin to agonize over gift giving options.

- Do I have to give each child the same thing?
- Do I have to spend the same amount of money on each child?
- Does each child need to receive the same number of gifts?
- Do I give them things they want or things they need? What if only one of my children needs certain things—will the other one(s) feel unfairly treated?
- What should I tell relatives and friends to do?

Actually, these questions aren't very different from the same ones asked by parents who have children of differing ages. Although most parents try to be as fair as possible, in the process they sometimes lose sight of what gift-giving is all about—showing other people that they are cared about by demonstrating sensitivity to their wants and needs.

The first step, then, in choosing gifts for children is to determine, with input from them, what they want and need.

Parents might start by trying to see each of their children's desires from their respective perspectives. Why does each of my children want a particular item? Is it because a friend or co-twin has or wants one? Or has the desire been created through media hype, something that happens a lot around holiday time?

Then parents are advised to evaluate the desired item from their own perspectives, starting by looking at its health and safety factors and moving on to its appropriateness for their child's developmental level. To determine appropriateness, the parent should ask:

1. Is my child ready (in terms of her cognitive and motor abilities) to use this gift appropriately?
2. Is this item something that will stimulate her creativity and imagination, or does it serve only one function, which will bore her after a short period of time?

- Is it worth the asking price? Many toys featured in the media or in connection with a holiday movie promotion are greatly overpriced, may be of poor quality and are one function-only items.

THE "WISH LIST" SECRET

One way to handle this problem of children constantly barraging parents as the holidays near with "I want this," and "I want that" is to develop wish lists, one for each child, which parents can start either at holiday time or maintain throughout the year.

To begin this special list, parents need to first explain the concept to their children, saying that it is a list of the various items they've mentioned throughout the time period prior to the holiday (or birthday, for that matter) that they really want you, relatives, friends and Santa (if appropriate) to think about when it comes time to gift giving. Parents should emphasize that putting an item on a wish list doesn't ensure that the child will receive it, but that it will be considered by others.

Then, when a child says, "I want..." in a store, while watching television or while looking through

catalogs or magazines, ask him whether he wants that to go on the wish list. If so, add it to the list. Shortly before the actual holiday, parents need to sit down with each of their children and his list and go over it, scratching off whatever the child no longer wants. Everyone will be surprised by the number of items requested early in the year that don't make the final cut at the end of the year.

By keeping an individual list for each child, parents are better able to purchase individual gifts for each child. And children are better able to understand that they don't necessarily want the same things, nor are they likely to get the same things. This way, parents are demonstrating respect for their children's individual preferences and desires.

MONEY MATTERS

Children at the preschool age don't have a good sense of monetary values, so it isn't critical that parents spend the same amount on each child. If they compare gifts, it is much more likely to be in terms of the number of gifts received or the size of the gifts. These concepts are much more within their developmental level.

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Thus, if co-twins are into such comparisons, and one child wants a lot of small things, like several Barbie outfits, and the other wants a particular Lego set, it might be wise to package the Barbie outfits into a big box, to be counted as one gift.

Again, the parents' goal is to try to give each child what he or she wants, while trying to keep comparisons to a minimum.

If they observe Christmas in their household and hang stockings, parents may want to wrap small items as stocking stuffers, ensuring that each child has lots of presents to unwrap.

FAMILY RITUALS

Some families have established family practices around giftgiving that make it more fun. For example, a family might give each child at least one gift to fit each of several standard categories, such as: Something to Read; Something to Wear; Something They Need; Something to Listen To; and Something to Eat. That way, over the year, it becomes a ritual to try to guess what each person will receive by

WATCHWORDS TO BUY BY!

- Does the toy you are purchasing reflect your values—for example, is it educational, non-violent and cooperative in nature?
- Is this toy appropriate to your child's cognitive and motor skills?
- Will it stimulate your child's imagination and creativity, or is it a single-use toy?
- Does the toy promote sex-role stereotyping and is that a message you want to convey?
- Are you buying the toy based on your child's wishes and/or needs?
- Is the toy safe?
- Is the toy a good value and worth what it costs?
- Is your child going to maintain interest in this toy or might he be asking for it in response to media hype?
- Are you buying something for your children to share?
- What basis will the children be using for comparing gifts, and are you being responsive to that?

category, and at the same time, makes giving them something they need more pleasurable.

It is important to begin differentiating gift-giving early so that children do not develop unreasonable expectations as they get older. If two children have the same item on their wish list as a priority, it's okay to give it to each of them, as long as they realize why—that they didn't get the same thing just because they are twins.

There may be times as they get older when they want an expensive gift that they will have to share. Parents will make their learning to share more difficult if they've always given each his own. Parents may even want to start a family practice of giving twins one gift a year to be shared between them, provided a common item can be found on both their wish lists.

When it comes to helping family and friends with their gift-giving; pass on ideas from the wish lists. Rather than saying, "Oh, they'll be happy with anything you want to give." Too often, the latter sets everyone up for unhappiness—the children, who receive gifts they don't want, you, if the gift is not appropriate for the children developmentally or in terms of safety, and the relative, who does not feel appreciated when the children "turn up their noses" at it.

It's much better for parents to take a pro-active role by making concrete suggestions for successful gift-giving. And, if you have specific toy-buying guidelines you'd like relatives to respect, now is the time to mention them—not after the buyer is embarrassed by the children's response to their gifts or when tears and tantrums follow the children's being unable to play with the toys. ♡





Mom & Dad

The holiday season isn't just for kids. Give your loved one something to cherish that they'll remember for years to come.

**SHOP SMART
WITHOUT BREAKING
THE BANK THIS
HOLIDAY SEASON**



**by Rachel Namoff,
Arapahoe Asset Management**

LIMIT YOUR GIFT LIST

If your shopping list includes more than five people outside of your immediate family, cut down on the number of people on your gift list. Then, make a homemade gift, like baking some cookies, to give to all the people you snipped from your original gift list. Ensure you spread the holiday cheer without looking like a Scrooge. And enjoy a fun activity with the family!

GIVE PERSONALIZED GIFTS INSTEAD OF EXPENSIVE GIFTS

Start the holiday by taking a moment to think about what those on your list could really use. For example, if your sister loves to bake but can't get the hang of homemade piecrusts, you could buy her a simple pastry-making tool for less than \$10 and include a copy of a fool-proof recipe. A small, individualized gift is priceless.

BUDGET BASED ON YOU

Your sister Susie always gets you the fanciest presents. However, if you are in a different place in your financial life you shouldn't follow suit. If you are doubting if those on your list will appreciate the less expensive presents you buy them, think back to what you received from loved ones when their budgets were

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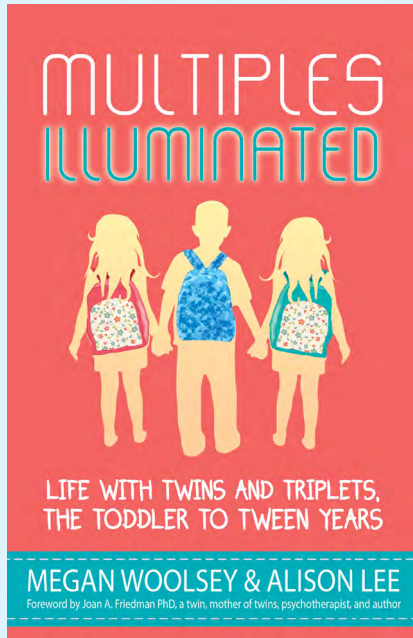
tighter. You are likely to be better friends in the New Year if you are not creating debt loads for each other this year.

GIVE YOUR TIME

It is your most precious commodity, and constantly depleted. Your time. Far-away family and friends might love nothing more than a visit from you. Give small gifts and large hugs from afar. If you're tight on cash and want to send a gift, try a 'FaceTime' calling card. If long distance minutes aren't part of their phone plan, an old fashioned calling card is a great way to reach out. Give family extra minutes to call you when you can't fly to see them - it's a great way to let them know that you miss them!

GIFT YOURSELF A BETTER SPENDING HABIT

Hmmm, wondering how am I going to pay off my credit cards next month? Get over the anxiety by gifting yourself a new and improved spending habit. Try this, for every dollar you spend on gifts, find a way to remove that dollar from your regular spending. Around the holidays, use those savings to buy presents. Next month — and the rest of the year — what you save can go into your savings account. ♡



Multiples Illuminated: Life with Twins and Triplets, the Toddler to Tween Years will give you a glimpse into the amazing lives of families with multiples between the age of two to 12. Told from the perspective of 21 storytellers from all walks of life, you will find yourself feeling less alone on this incredible journey

parenting multiples. Stories include encouraging individuality in multiples; the dynamic relationship between multiples; the complicated and often delicate relationship between multiples and their siblings; and what it's like when twins and triplets start school. *Multiples Illuminated: Life with Twins and Triplets, the Toddler to Tween Years* is available from Amazon for \$12.95.

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DOUBLE TAKES

1



2



3



We asked for your best Holiday-themed Double Takes, and here they are!

We hope you all have a magical holiday season, and a fantastic start to 2018!

4



6



5





- | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Lacey & Chaden
<i>Williamstown, WV</i> | 5. Luke & Daniel
<i>Hamilton, NJ</i> | 9. Orvy & Oakes
<i>Sedalia, MO</i> |
| 2. Mason & Ellaina
<i>Manitoba, Canada</i> | 6. Jacynth & Jasper
<i>Beaumont, TX</i> | 10. Hannah & Grace
<i>Albuquerque, NM</i> |
| 3. Willow & Evie
<i>Newport, UK</i> | 7. Ava & Yuna
<i>Brooklyn, NY</i> | 11. Payton & Riley
<i>Howe, OK</i> |
| 4. Danny & Brodie
<i>Des Plaines, IL</i> | 8. Kallie & Kacie
<i>Sutton in Ashfield, UK</i> | 12. Lillian Grace & Ella Rose
<i>Hastings, NE</i> |

DOUBLETAKES

13



14



15



16



17



13. **Jianne & Anneji**
Olongapo City, Philippines

14. **Jaxon & Jordan**
Hadley, NY

15. **Lora, Victoria & Marie**
Bulgaria

16. **Paislee & Jaylee**
Raymond, IL

17. **Brooklyn & Jayda**
TN

18. **Jamielyn & Jessica**
Lake Arrowhead, CA

19. **Camden & Braxden**
Wichita, KS

20. **Mason & Gavin**
Mentor, OH

21. **Alexander & Taylor**
Culver City, CA

22. **Joshua & Nicholas**
Bok Tower Gardens, FL

23. **Garrett & Olivia**
Jay Cooke State Park, MN

24. **Amelia & Jacob**
Weston-super-Mare, UK



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