

Celebrate Family: Strategies for Creating Lasting Joy in the Home

Don Voss

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Celebrate Family: Strategies for Creating Lasting Joy In the Home is a readable and delightful directive that provides families with practical ideas to help them encourage warmth and closeness.

Don Voss chronologically and logically takes the reader through the year as he describes different traditions attached to holidays. Early pages of the book provide background information on Voss's family as well as his motivations for writing. The first-person point of view and the input of various members of the Voss family make the text personable and relevant. For instance, Voss quotes his daughter Joanie as he describes the family's Christmas traditions: "Daughter Joanie, now married with three children, wrote: 'I remember how excited I would get to know a "secret" of who I had for Kirstkin.'"

The practical steps Voss shares are intended to help readers easily incorporate his ideas into their lives. He shifts from one practical idea to the next with clear progression: "The time from Thanksgiving through Epiphany always seems to pass by so rapidly, rife as it is with celebrations and anticipation of joyful events. Within just a few more weeks, Lent follows with its own opportunities." Voss also includes accessible visual directions in the text, such as those for the Voss Family's Epiphany Kings' cake.

Celebrate Family does contain some editorial sloppiness. At points, Voss's warm, personal dialogue becomes too much like casual speech. For example, he writes, "Very unique and creative—and delicious!" as he describes one of his daughter's artistic creations. This undermines the professional integrity of the work. In addition, the author's easygoing style sometimes turns into awkward writing. Voss notes, "And now the name selection is managed by daughter Mary who enlists the help of cyberspace technology to assure that each person gets but one name and identities are protected." The shift into passive voice makes the section difficult to follow.

The book also contains evidence of careless proofreading, as when Voss writes "inter-net" rather than "Internet." However, the author's personal relationship to the contents of the book means that he is comfortable and knowledgeable about the material and his readers' needs. This quality is evident throughout and overshadows the occasional editing errors.

Overall, *Celebrate Family* is a helpful, practical guide that any family, young or old, big or small, can use to encourage closeness and the building of fond memories.

EMILY ADAMS (September 13, 2012)

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