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Christmas Traditions - Mathew

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Mathew Andersen
Mendon, Utah
December 2018

“Christmas Traditions”

Holiday Custom

Informant:

Mathew Andersen is the only child of his family. Mathew was adopted as a newborn by his parents. He was born at only twenty-four week and is often called as “their little miracle baby” by his adopted parents. He graduated from Mountain Crest High School the same year as his now girlfriend. After graduation he moved to Pocatello, Idaho with his parents. Two years ago he started dating his now girlfriend and moved back to Cache Valley this past April to be closer to her.

Context:

Mathew spends the few days before Christmas with his dad's parents in Mendon, Utah. The holiday was spent with his dad's three brothers and one sister and all of their children and grandchildren. They would then spend Christmas day with his mom's parents in Nitter, Idaho. Mathew's mom only has one sister who is unable to be around for Christmas. He spends the day with his parents and his grandparents.

Text:

Every second Sunday in December my dad's extended family would have their family Christmas party in Grace, Idaho because his family was originally from Thatcher, Idaho. We have the party at Grace High School because my aunt is the head lunch manager there. We have dinner, usually ham, rolls, and salads that people brought. After dinner we eat the cinnamon rolls that my aunt makes and they are the best things ever. When the food is all done and cleaned up, Santa comes. He gives all the little kids a present and a candy cane. When he leaves the kids go into the gym to play a bunch of different games. The adults then do their own gift exchange. The men and women separate into groups and everyone who brought a gift participates in the game. The game is different every year. The only thing that stays the same is the men have our own gift exchange

and the women have theirs. After this Christmas party we don't do anything special until two days before Christmas. This is when we go to my grandma Andersen's house. We start out by eating dinner, usually ham, turkey, funeral potatoes, and salads. After dinner grandma and grandpa round up all of the grandkids and have them reenact the Nativity, sometimes they dress them up, while the read the story from the scriptures. Not all of the kids follow the directions but that is what makes it fun. After that is over, we have an ugly Christmas sweater fashion show. It is so much fun and you get to see a lot of the goofy personalities of my cousins. I remember one year when my cousin Brad wore a Christmas sweater dress. After the fashion show, we exchange gifts. We start with the youngest kids and go to the oldest. This way everyone can see what everyone else got. Grandma and grandpa get to open their presents last. Then we just hang out and talk the rest of the night. On Christmas Eve we get up and have breakfast at grandma Andersen's house. Then we hang out for the day and go home. Christmas morning we open presents, clean up the mess, then eat breakfast and watch t.v. After a while we drive to Grace and open presents with grandma and grandpa Burke at their house. Then we just spend the weekend with them.

Texture:

Mathew had a hard time remembering what his family did for Christmas when he was younger. When he couldn't think of any of those we moved on to parties that his family does. He seemed happier and had an easier time talking about those traditions over childhood memories.

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