

Decorating at Christmas
It's sheer madness
Compiled by Kay Rogers

Every December I go
through hoops
decorating the house for
Christmas.



As the kids and I teetered on a ladder Thursday evening putting up Christmas lights on our front entrance, Jacob and I both looked at each other and asked, “*Why?*”

Do you know why?

Jacob and I shook our heads and laughed a little, holding the garland as Tyler wobbled up on the top of the ladder. I shuddered; it was my direction to do all of this crazy.

Don’t worry though, I had him put on his bike helmet in case he fell and tumbled all the way down the marble stairs. Thank heavens I was on top of things!

It felt like a Clark Griswold Christmas as we wrapped garland and lights, messed it up and then did it over again. We ran around looking to make sure that all the candles were lit in the windows, a maze of wires running through the attic, frustrated with that one candle that wouldn’t turn on.

On Friday night and Saturday, we decorated the inside of the house.

We have two Christmas trees. By the time we got them both in, it looked like a bomb went off in the house — furniture all over, pine needles, water from the wet trees and miscellaneous debris that the trees seemed to shed. Seriously. What a mess!



For two hours it seemed that all we saw of Tyler were his feet as he laid underneath each tree, shimmying it up so it wouldn’t fall.

And somehow it seems that no matter what the tree base is that you have, it never works very well. It's either too small, too big, the screw's break off at the most inopportune time, or the thing is not wide enough to hold the tree's trunk, and you are messing with it every step of the way.



Why do we do this again?

Jacob and I took turns holding the trunk, lifting and turning, pushing and pulling. Sam was bored as he looked on, yet ready to run when we asked him to go grab one more zippy tie or screw or small piece of wood. It's a good thing I have a fleet of children to help with these projects. We even pulled in my "4th son" Henry to help out a bit.

What's funny is that Henry is Jewish. As he explained to Sam, it doesn't take very long to put up a Menorah — 2 minutes ... maybe?

There were totes filled with Christmas decorations everywhere, lamps moved off of pianos, furniture rearranged to accommodate the trees, and extension cords running everywhere to deal with the extra electricity load required for window lights and trees.

Saturday morning, as I stood in the middle of all the chaos, I once again asked myself, "*Why?*"

As I sit here now, writing, the trees are lit, and a warm light spreads through my house. Things are put back together, and order has been restored.

The Department 56 Village is set up. I think of simplicity when I gaze into the miniature-ness of it all. White snow, warm lights, singing carolers.

Did the people who live in the little New England Village houses run around and decorate like their hair was on fire like I do?

The kids stockings are hung by the fireplace, the white candles are in the windows, and my house feels cozy.

I remember the way it was when I was a child. For a moment, I forget that I am 45. I am safe and warm in my parents' house. How exciting it was to lay in bed Christmas Eve, brimming with excitement at the thought of Christmas morning and what might be under the tree. It was *magical*.

Now, I make Christmas for my children. I set the stage with decorating. I set the tone with my attitude.

The way my parents did. The way my kids will, and then their children. It's the tradition.

For a brief moment in time, when we are little, there is magic, and we believe.

And that is why.

Merry Christmas!

With love,

Kate

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