Christmas Eve Books and Pajamas

Madeline Thomas

Date Collected
Fall 11-2-2018

Place item was collected
Smithfield Utah

Informant
Madeline Thomas

Point of Discovery/Informant Bio
My name is Madeline Thomas, and I am a 19-year-old college student attending Utah State University, majoring in English. I was born and raised in Lebanon, Oregon, but now reside in Smithfield, Utah while I go to school. My parents and three siblings still live in Lebanon, and I am second in the order. My entire family belongs to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. I find Christmas to be the most delightful time of the year.

Context
I told a group of people about this tradition while part of a larger Christmas Eve tradition discussion, informally taking place while driving. We were on our way to get Italian custard, and I was sitting in the passenger seat while four other people sat around me in the sedan. Everyone wanted to share their traditions, but the only one I recorded at this time was my own. Christmas music was playing on the radio. This is a tradition that my family had been participating in for as long as I can remember, but I’m not sure where it came from. It is something that my family does every year, regardless of where we are or who is absent. This tradition always took place at my grandparents’ house, where we spent our Christmas Eves. It was always followed by a reading of The Night Before Christmas.

Text
Every Christmas eve we would go to our grandparents’ house for dinner and the rest of the evening, and our parents would take our ‘Christmas Eve’ presents from under the tree and hand them out when everyone was settled in the living room. All at once, everyone would open their gift and look at whatever pajamas and books our parents got us that year. Usually, we all went into one of the back rooms and change into our new stuff. Most of the time our pajamas were Christmas themed, flannel, and super soft. As the oldest three siblings grew up, we sometimes got to pick out our own pajamas if we were with my Mom while she was thinking about buying them, or if we were all black Friday shopping. I almost always got a book that I wanted cause books were always on my Christmas list, but my brothers had to depend on Mom’s choices, which sometimes worked out for them and sometimes didn’t.

Texture
This tradition was shared to kick off the rest of the group, and as such I was fairly slow and methodical as I shared it. Several of the people around me made nods of agreement, signaling similar traditions within their own experience. I was fidgeting and talking with my hands for much of the telling, as I do often, to try and create a more expressive pattern of telling for other people to emulate if they wanted to share their own traditions as part of the collection project.

Course
ENGL2210

Instructor
Lynne McNeill

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Christmas Eve Box. All activities should be supervised by an adult. By using this site, you agree to our Terms of Use. This post may contain affiliate links. Read our disclosure policy here. It's officially December now and Christmas is just around the corner. Have you had fun trying some of our Christmas crafts? "I put in Christmas P.J.’s, a Christmas book and DVD, a Christmas cup, popcorn and coloring book or dot to dot. I keep the same box every year and stick a photo of that year inside the lid. Then after Christmas, I use the boxes for decorations. They get new pajamas, a film and they get some Christmas crafts to do. Also a little Christmas cuddly to have to cuddle with during the film and a new tree decoration." – Jodie. How to Make a Christmas Eve Box.