



Holiday Greed: The Grinch Who Really Stole Christmas

Before we even had a chance to finish off the Thanksgiving leftovers, we were bombarded with holiday catalogs and commercials commanding us to buy, buy, buy. The messages are not lost on our kids either, as younger and younger children are targeted as the consumers the marketers most want to reach. For some families, their children's desires are far beyond what they can afford. But even for families who could afford almost anything, such materialism is NOT the way they want to define the holidays. So, as the December Christmas countdown proceeds, how can parents help their children move beyond commercialism and greed to find the real meaning of the holiday season?

I. Why is it so important for families to think about this?

- Marketers have been thinking about it for a long time, and kids are highly suggestible
- Young children are, by nature, egocentric and have trouble delaying gratification; it's a parent's job to help them learn to focus on others and to understand they can't have everything they want
- By being intentional and starting early, parents can define the holidays in the ways that are meaningful to them; Otherwise, we let the marketers define them for us!

II. Tips for parents

- Help your child form realistic expectations
For example, make "dream lists," then prioritize. Give you child an honest message that you – and Santa – have to work within a budget
- Limit children's exposure to TV ads
- Emphasize giving more than receiving
For example, try asking a child, "What are you doing for your brother for Christmas?" instead of, "What do you want for Christmas?"
- Focus on time together with family and friends
Creating simple traditions builds lasting memories
- Reach out to others in need – together!