



Holiday Survival Tips for Single Parents

November

National Days

11/1 - Daylight Savings Time Ends

11/2 - Job Action Day

11/3 - Sandwich Day

11/4 - Candy Day

11/6 - Nachos Day

11/10 - Marine Corps Birthday

11/11 - Veterans Day

11/13 - World Kindness Day

11/14 - Pickle Day

11/15 - Clean Out Your Fridge Day

11/16 - Fast Food Day

11/20 - Universal Children's Day

11/23 - Cashew Day

11/26 - Thanksgiving

11/27 - Black Friday

11/30 - Cyber Monday

Just think. It's a week before Christmas. The kids are restless, dinner still isn't ready and presents are waiting to be wrapped. You're in a time crunch to get things done for the upcoming holiday. A lot of us have been there. But maybe this year, you're balancing all these tasks as a newly-single parent who's going through a divorce. Perhaps this is your second or third holiday season post-divorce, but you're still trying to find that new normal. On top of everything else 2020 has thrown at us, like learning how to homeschool and keeping masks on the kids, making it through the holidays may seem like a daunting task.

We promise, it's going to be okay. Take a deep breath and follow these five tips to make your holiday season as a single parent a little more bearable.

1. HAVE YOUR HOLIDAY PARENTING TIME FIGURED OUT IN ADVANCE.

To avoid any confusion about which parent has Thanksgiving or Christmas with the kids, make sure you are both in *agreement* as to which of you will have parenting time. This may be difficult for you to decide, but try to think of what will be best for your children and keep them out of any conflict.

2. BE HONEST ABOUT THE THINGS THAT HAVE CHANGED IN YOUR FAMILY.

This one might not be the easiest, but being transparent with your children about the current circumstances will make things a lot easier on you now, and them in the long run.

Let them know what has changed, and what has not. Pretending everything is still the same may end up hurting them in the end.

3. MAINTAIN MEANINGFUL, FAMILIAR TRADITIONS; START NEW ONES, EVEN IF THEY FEEL DIFFERENT.

This will model to your children that it is still possible for life to move forward and for you to experience joy. This will give them permission to celebrate and enjoy life, as well.

4. REACH OUT TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

If you're feeling down and lonely this holiday season, be sure to reach out to your family and friends for guidance, and even extra help. Someone close to you will be willing to lend a hand to reduce the weight of the holidays during difficult times.

5. TREAT YOURSELF WITH A GIFT.

When you're experiencing hardship, your initial reaction may be to shift the focus to your children and other family. It becomes easy to avoid your feelings and forget about your own comfort. Buy yourself something nice and set some time aside for yourself. This will give you time to reflect on what you are grateful for and give you hope that things are improving, even if you are feeling a little more isolated this year.

We hope these small changes can lift the stress of the holiday season and help you maintain a great attitude, even if things seem a bit rocky.

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Kinney Mason would like to extend our gratitude to our amazing clients during this Thanksgiving season. We hope you enjoy the holidays and create special memories with friends and family!



Keeping it Real

“To be in your children’s memories tomorrow, you have to be in their lives today.”
— Barbara Johnson

As a child of divorced parents, I am all too familiar with the tug of war that can come with the holidays. Thankfully, my parents planned out holidays so that I wasn’t spending the majority of my time in a car on Thanksgiving or Christmas, etc. However, when I think about the holidays as a child, I get sad. When I was with my dad, I wanted to be with my mom and when I was with my mom, I wanted to be with my dad. I never could fully just relax and enjoy the family, food, and laughter that everyone else was able to. My dad never remarried after my parents got divorced and to this day, at 43, to think of him alone on a holiday is difficult. He has always put on a brave face and told me he doesn’t mind it. But I do.

I remember the first time my daughter went with her father to celebrate Thanksgiving with his family. This was the first time I wouldn’t be with her on Thanksgiving. The first time I wouldn’t be with the people I now considered family on Thanksgiving. I was going to be alone. And I thought, how did my dad do this? I felt empty and alone and broken. It felt like part of me was missing. And she was. But I will always hope she never knows how hard that was for me.

Notice the similarities here? As a child of divorced parents, I was never fully happy during the holidays. As a divorced parent, I am never fully happy during the holidays. In fact, I dread parts of them. Like it or not, divorce affects everyone, family wide. One can act like it doesn’t and if it hasn’t yet, it will. Kids get older and begin to verbalize their feelings. They may not want to split days, leave town, or miss certain holidays with their loved ones, or leave their mom or dad.

I’ve been living these split holidays in one way or another for 38 years now. I have become all too familiar with the feelings, patterns, habits, and behaviors that go with them. As such, I ask you to consider the following:

1. Ask yourself if you are planning your child’s holiday activities based on what he or she wants? Or is it what you want?
2. Kids are fragile and intuitive little people. They can sense sadness and it hurts when they see that a parent is sad. Find your brave face and wear it like a crown. You will get through the hard times.
3. Remind yourself that you are the adult. Let your child be just that, a child. If your son or daughter wants to stay an extra hour with his or her dad, ask yourself whether it is a deal breaker.
4. Roll with the punches. Be flexible. Be fluid.
5. Communicate. It can be extremely difficult to communicate with an ex-spouse but remember, your child’s wants and needs come first. Communicate efficiently and without emotion.
6. Rise above. Not everyone is mature and levelheaded. If you are dealing with one of those people, take the high road. Your child will remember it.

Tis the season. Be grateful. Be centered. Be present.



Find your brave
face, and wear it
like a crown.



Kinney Mason in the Community

In October, the Kinney Mason team participated in the Food Bank for the Heartland's 1st Annual Food from the Bar campaign. Food Bank for the Heartland is a private nonprofit organization in Omaha, Nebraska that acts as a central clearinghouse distributing food to 610 network partners across 77 counties and 16 counties in Western Iowa. This event took place from October 1 to October 16. Our team had a friendly competition against other law firms in the surrounding area to donate the most funds to distribute food to the growing number of individuals and families who need help during the COVID-19 pandemic.



This holiday season, Kinney Mason is excited to celebrate special traditions with our families, like leaving shoes out for St. Nick and making a totally chocolate dinner for the kids!



This November, Kinney Mason is teaming up with Heartland Family Services for a book drive. Operating in Nebraska and Iowa, Heartland Family Services provides a variety of housing, counseling, and family resources. To support them in their efforts, we will be collecting books for children of all ages throughout the month of November. Some of our favorite picks include "Where the Wild Things Are," "The Story of Ferdinand," and "The Polar Express." This drive will be open from November 1 through November 18. If you have a book you would like to donate, please coordinate with our front office.



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bound by innovation
— not tradition

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Butternut Squash Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 large butternut squash, halved vertically and seeds removed
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- half cup shallots, chopped
- 1 tsp of salt
- 4 cloves of garlic
- 1 tsp maple syrup
- 1/8 tsp ground nutmeg
- ground black pepper
- 3 to 4 cups vegetable broth
- 1 to 2 tsp butter

Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 425° F
- Place squash on a pan lined with parchment paper and rub lightly with olive oil, add salt and pepper
- Turn squash face down and roast until soft (40-50 min.)
- Add 1 tablespoon of olive oil to a pan (medium heat) and begin to cook the shallots, add salt, and once soft, add garlic and cook thoroughly
- Scoop the butternut squash out into your food processor, add the shallots garlic, maple syrup, and black pepper
- Add vegetable broth, careful not to fill the processor exceedingly, and blend well
- Thin your soup out to your preference by adding more broth as you like

Rum Hot Toddy

Ingredients:

- 4 to 6 ounces hot water
- 1 to 2 ounces spiced rum
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1/4 lemon
- cinnamon sugar

Instructions:

- Combine rum and hot water
- Next, stir in the honey and squeeze the juice out of the lemon
- Top with a dash of cinnamon
- Serve warm

