



## **Common Waldorf Festival Days:**

**Michaelmas:** (Sept.29) - The feast of St. Michael. Known as the conqueror of the dragon (and also the one who through Satan out of heaven) with his starry sword, Michael gives us strength to slay the dragons of materialism and egoism. You can feel a change in the air. It is a time to harvest what was sown in the spring and what grew all summer. The earth is beginning to contract as we begin to prepare ourselves to go inward, and to prepare for the coming winter.

**Samheim-**(Halloween Oct.31)- Halfway between the equinox & solstice, the beginning of the season of “dark”.

**Martinmas-** (Nov.11) The feast of St. Martin, The most famous legend of his life is that he once cut his cloak in half to share with a beggar during a snowstorm, to save the beggar from dying of the cold. Traditionally a lighted lantern walk and singing is how it is celebrated, lighting the way through the dark nights of this time of year.

**St. Nicholas-** (Dec 6)- My girls favorite! There is a lot you can read about this as in European countries he is the bringer of gifts. Put your shoes out Dec. 5th and in the morning treats and trinkets fill them. Great resource is <http://www.stnicholascenter.org/pages/who-is-st-nicholas/> (stories and tons of info)

**St. Lucia-** (Dec.13) The feast day for St. Lucy where the eldest girl wears a crown of candles, white gown and red sash. She serves breakfast. We had a lot of fun with this!

**Advent-** (Nov & Dec) Starts 4 Sundays prior to Christmas- It is the coming preparations for the Christ child

**Winter Solstice/Yule-** The birth of the Sun is the shortest day of the year. After which the sun starts shining longer each day. My favorite festival! Solstice Sun, Shining Bright! Shortest Day & Longest Night. Solstice Wish of Hope & Cheer: Peace on Earth, throughout the Year!

**Candlemas/Brigid/Imbolic-** Marks the growing presence of the sun and when the candles were made and blessed for the year. (also GroundHog day in US)

**Spring Equinox-** (Mar 21-22) First Day of Spring Day and Night are equal. We always plant our spring garden then and our wheat grass for our Easter baskets. Easter- Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox. Coloring eggs and the Hare or Bunny is always fun. Nature is waking up and everything is new and reborn.

**May Day** – (May 1) May Day may be best known for its tradition of dancing the maypole dance and crowning of the Queen of the May. In ancient times, it was considered the first day of summer (thus Midsummer being mid June) There are many traditions on this day for fair maidens and the fest of fertility.

**Summer Solstice/Midsummer Night-** The celebration of Midsummer's Eve (St. John's Eve among Christians) was from ancient times a festival of the summer solstice. Some people believed that golden-flowered mid-summer plants, especially Calendula, and St. John's Wort, had miraculous healing powers and they therefore picked them on this night.



## **Simple Festival Template**

- Choose your festival, read about it, familiarize yourself with the mood of it. Is it light and joyful, solemn and reverent, busy and bright, calm and subtle?
- Choose a time to celebrate your festival, invite friends and family or keep it simple with just your family.
- Celebrate by sharing a story, song, poem or verse related to the festival
- Make a craft related to the festival, use the craft to create an activity related to the theme
- Share simple seasonal beautiful food

**Here is an example of autumn festival and how to celebrate it according to the template:**

- Martinmas - celebrated mid autumn as the light dwindles and we move toward the darkest days of the year. The mood is one of reverence and of connecting with our own inner light.
  - Cool days, wind blowing, colored leaves falling, walnuts scattered in the yard , apples falling off the trees.
  - Nuts and leaves on the nature table with a little wooden fox and rabbit
  - Early Evening celebration with family
  - Tell the Story of St. Martin, sing “ this little light of mine”
  - Make lanterns with colored tissue paper, glue, and little mason jars with wire handles. Put a tea light in the lantern and walk outside at dusk each person carrying their own little light.
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- Share a simple meal of soup and bread and then deliver some soup to a neighbor or friend in need of a little light in their lives!

## **Resources**

Festivals, Family & Food book

[Little Acorn Learning](#)

[Winter Festivals Guide](#)

[Home Music Making](#)

[Sing a Song of the Seasons](#) music cd & book

Earthways: Simple Environmental Activities for Young Children – Carol Petrash