

# Winter Vacation: 10 Reading Ideas for Families

By Lydia Breiseth

Winter vacation is a great time to read with your kids. It's also a good time to make reading (and writing) fun! Try some of the ideas below — and remember that it's ok to do these activities **in your home language!**

## Being together

- **Read together:** Look for some time to read together and talk about the books you read. If you have extra time, read a longer chapter book or children's novel out loud to your child. You will enjoy being together and discovering a good story.
- **Tell stories:** Use some of your holiday time together to tell stories from your childhood. Ask relatives and friends to share their own stories too. Storytelling helps children become better readers. **Family stories** are also an important part of your child's heritage.

## At the library

- **Visit the library:** Check your library's holiday hours and, if you have time, take your children **to the library**. Encourage your child to browse the children's section — it's the perfect opportunity to see what's on the shelves.
- **Learn about new traditions/holidays:** Look for children's books or Internet articles about holidays you celebrate, special traditions, or other winter celebrations. Your child may have friends at school who celebrate different holidays. You can probably find information about Christmas traditions around the world, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Las Posadas, Three Kings Day, and the Winter Solstice at the library.

## The gift of reading

- **Give books:** Give your child a book for the holidays. It doesn't have to be new — you can share one of **your favorite books** or look for a special old book from a used bookstore! If relatives are looking for gift ideas for your child, ask them to give a book this year.
- **Look for other reading and writing gifts:** Give your child some **comic books, magazines, or special note cards** for writing letters. This is a great time to find something connected to your child's interests, like sports, nature, or art.

## Holiday travel

- **Make travel fun:** If you are traveling during your vacation, look for maps and tourist books about your destination. These are a great way to prepare for the trip — and to pass time in the car or on the plane.
- **Listen to audiobooks:** If you will be in the car for long trips, rent an audiobook from the library. (You can also buy books from **Audible.com** or iTunes.) Ask your child to help choose a couple of books for the trip.

## Writing ideas

- **Write letters and thank-you notes:** Help your child **write letters** or e-mails to relatives and friends. Show your child how to write thank-you notes for holiday gifts.
- **Make lists:** Ask your child to help write shopping lists, activity ideas, or television and movie schedules. This is good writing practice — and a big help to the adults too! Even if your time is limited, a few extra minutes or hours reading together can make an important difference to your child. Who knows? You may even create a new reading routine for the New Year!