

Traditions are very special in my family. My sisters and I talk about special events that happened as we were growing up and our desires to recreate them for our children. My mother was a person that liked routine and this lead to having many rituals and traditions. Every week end we would have the same meal. Saturday evening we would have steak baked potatoes, garlic toast and a tossed salad. On Sunday's we would have chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy and glazed carrots. The only thing that would vary was the kind of pie that we would have for dessert.

My mother's routine nature also spilled into the holidays. As each holiday would come around she would put up the same decorations in the same place. She would also take out her rolling pin and make a batch of decorated sugar cookies. When we were small and anxious to help in the baking process she had many different cookie cutters. She had cutters for every possible holiday and also a selection of generic cutters. Her decorated sugar cookies were well known in the neighborhood. She made large batches so we could share them with our friends. As we got older she no longer bothered with the different shapes, but the round decorated sugar cookies tasted as good. She would comment that with the seasonal sprinkles that are available in the decorating aisle, it was not longer necessary to shape the cookies, the sprinkles let you know which holiday is being celebrated.

Now that I am a mom I have started making the decorated sugar cookies for my family. The children love to help frost and so does my husband. It has become a competition to see how can decorate the most elaborate cookie. This means that I have several icing bags with multiple colors of the frosting. My co-workers ask me how I can stand the mess. I told them that I buy the plastic bag icing bags and the cheap plastic icing tips. I also stock up on the plastic table clothes from the dollar store. I cover the work surface with the plastic cloth and when we are done with the decorated sugar cookies I roll up the frosting tubes in the plastic and throw it all away. This leaves the frosting bowl and the cookie sheets to wash up. I hope my children will fondly remember the times that we have spent together frosting the cookies. My sisters and I have talked about all getting together before Christmas to make the decorated sugar cookies. I think that would be a fun event during the holidays that does not include giving gifts.