



NOVEMBER

3 Holiday Activities to Engage with **Loved Ones**

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"3 Holiday Activities..." (Continued from Cover)

Any time can be the right time to enjoy memorable moments with family members, but the holidays present a special opportunity to have meaningful conversations and interactions with loved ones.

One of the best ways to spark creativity and generate memories is through activities that get the conversation started, whether it's remembering favorite moments from the past or simply sharing notes of appreciation. This holiday season, consider these activity ideas from the Funeral and Memorial Information Council, which created the "Have the Talk of a Lifetime" initiative to encourage families to facilitate conversations that become invaluable when the time comes to honor a loved one.

While these conversations can be difficult to engage in and even harder to begin, the natural bonding moments that stem from activities like these can help make the process easier.

Gratitude Tree

Start a new tradition by creating a gratitude tree, a simple decoration you can look forward to using each year as a reminder of what you and your family are thankful for.

To make a gratitude tree, collect twigs or branches, dry them out and cut them to the desired lengths. Put the branches in a vase or decorative container. Punch holes at the tops of fall-colored paper to be used as tags then instruct guests to write what they're grateful for on each tag.

Take turns reading the tags and tie them to the branches then keep the handwritten tags in a safe place until they can be read again each holiday season. Over the years, as the tree fills up, you'll have a lifetime of memories to share.

Time Capsule

Making a holiday-inspired time capsule can help strengthen family bonds while preserving treasured memories and creating opportunities for future holidays when it's time to reopen the contents.

Use a sealed container or plastic bag to protect items from moisture and mold then place the container in a box that can be decorated and stored in a safe place with related holiday decorations. Mark on the container the date it was created for future reference, and pack it with items like family-favorite recipes; notes about significant events from that year like births, weddings, graduations and more; copies of newspapers detailing high-profile happenings; and pictures, drawings and notes from the year.

If you're patient enough to wait, try leaving the contents undisturbed at least five years to give the memories even more meaning when the time comes to relive those special moments.

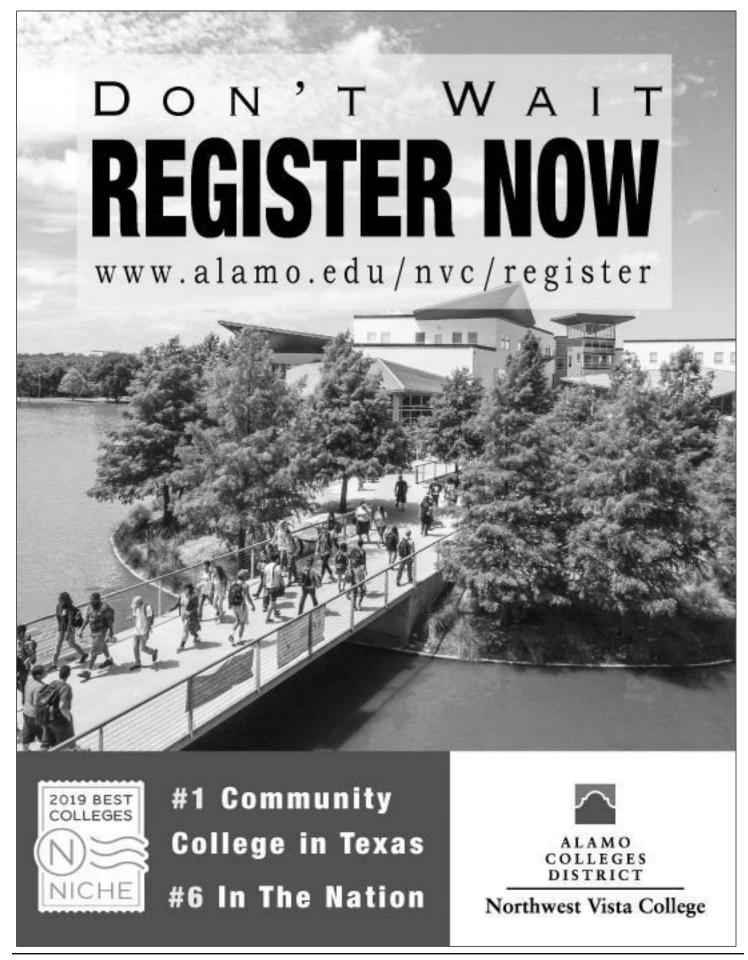
Memories Tablecloth

To help keep important family footnotes front and center during future celebrations, a memorial tablecloth provides each person an opportunity to personalize a piece of popular decor. As you gather around the table for holiday meals, ask each family member to jot down a favorite memory or something he or she is thankful for along with a signature and date.

You can make it an annual event by using the same tablecloth each year and, before long, it will be filled with personal memories as a way to cherish relationships as time goes on. Just use an appropriately sized, inexpensive white canvas drop cloth. Place fabric markers in the center of the table before inviting guests to participate, and to help distinguish each year, try using different colored markers.

Find more ways to celebrate the holidays with your loved ones at talkofalifetime.org.

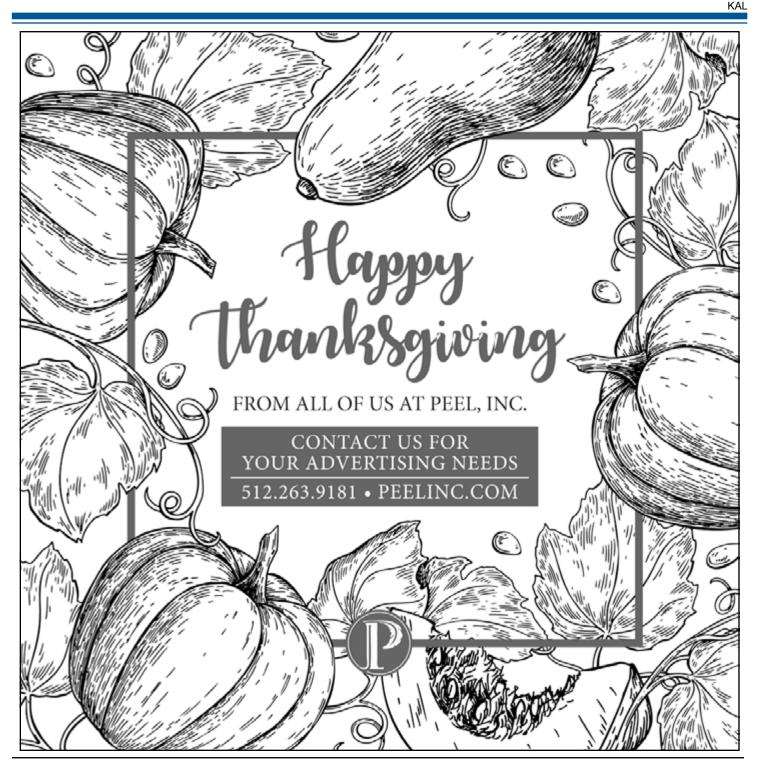
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