

# 7



# Our Whānau Traditions

Traditions can be found everywhere. They are in schools – at assemblies or prize giving – and they are found in church services. Families have traditions too. For some whānau, it's about how traditions work when they host people in their homes, how they have their whānau meals, and so forth. Children especially, love and cling to, whānau traditions because they are predictable and help them to feel more secure.

In this activity your whānau can focus on the importance of traditions and the ability of good traditions to teach values to improve communication, to give security to the children, and to give your whānau true and lasting strength.



1. Start by talking about your own whānau traditions.
  - a. What do you do on each holiday?
  - b. What do you do on each whānau birthday?
  - c. Do you have some weekly traditions, such as a special Sunday dinner?
  - d. Are there some monthly traditions, such as going over the calendar and the whānau's schedule for the month ahead?
  - e. What are your whānau's favourite traditions and why?
2. Take out some whānau heirlooms or taonga and other arts and crafts and talk about them and their importance to the whānau and the traditions that they uphold.
3. Suggest that the whānau share their thoughts about what makes their whānau traditions different and unique. They can talk about the songs, dances, food, customs and rituals that the whānau has.
4. Make a list of your yearly, monthly, and weekly traditions.
5. Then, as a whānau, ask yourself four questions:
  - a. How much fun comes from each tradition?
  - b. What values are taught by each tradition?
  - c. Are there some gaps – some months without a holiday or birthday tradition?
  - d. Do they help you in teaching values and in having better communication?
6. With these questions in mind, adjust and alter your whānau traditions to make them meaningful as well as fun.
7. Write them up on a chart or in a special book or put them on a whānau calendar so that the whānau can plan for and look forward to them.
8. Make them a priority until they take on a life of their own.