

Everyday Confetti

YOUR YEAR-ROUND GUIDE *to* CELEBRATING
HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS

KAREN EHMAN and GLYNNIS WHITWER



a division of Baker Publishing Group
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Karen Ehman and Glynnis Whitwer, *Everyday Confetti*
Revell Books, a division of Baker Publishing Group, © 2014. Used by permission.
(Unpublished manuscript—copyright protected Baker Publishing Group)

© 2014 by Karen Ehman and Glynnis Whitwer

Published by Revell
a division of Baker Publishing Group
P.O. Box 6287, Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6287
www.revellbooks.com

Printed in the United States of America

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—for example, electronic, photocopy, recording—without the prior written permission of the publisher. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is on file at the Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

ISBN 978-0-8007-2201-2 (pbk.)

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, New International Version®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com

Scripture quotations labeled AMP are from the Amplified® Bible, copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations labeled ESV are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. ESV Text Edition: 2007

Scripture quotations labeled NASB are from the New American Standard Bible®, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations labeled NLT are from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Published in association with the literary agency of Fedd & Company, Inc., PO Box 341973, Austin, TX 78734

14 15 16 17 18 19 20 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Karen Ehman and Glynnis Whitwer, *Everyday Confetti*
(Revell Books, a division of Baker Publishing Group, © 2014. Used by permission.)

In keeping with biblical principles of creation stewardship, Baker Publishing Group advocates the responsible use of our natural resources. As a member of the Green Press Initiative, our company uses recycled paper when possible. The text paper of this book is composed in part of post-consumer waste.



Dedication

Karen

Patricia Wnukowski, my mother's only sister, lived in a tall brick house in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The eight-hour car ride around the southern tip of Lake Michigan was worth it because she—and her wonderful cooking—would be waiting at the end. (Pot roast and pineapple cheesecake were my favorites!) She was interested in my life, always asking me to sing or cheerlead for her. She gently brushed the tangles out of my hair and smelled like White Shoulders perfume. Still today, she never fails to send me a handwritten card on my birthday. Aunt Patty sprinkles the confetti of kindness wherever she goes. If I ever do grow up, I want to be just like her.

Glynnis

My little Welsh grandmother, Anna Mae Owens, had braces on her legs due to polio as a girl and lived in a little one-bedroom apartment all the years I knew her. She had no money to speak of due to the fact her husband died while she was carrying my father. But in spite of all her hardships, she still found a way to make me feel loved when I visited. Whether it was tea in the afternoon, homemade macaroni and cheese, calling me her little black-eyed Susan (although my eyes are hazel), or celebrating my mud pie creations, Grandma Owens made my time with her special. My prayer is to leave a legacy like hers.

Contents

Acknowledgments 9

Foreword 11

Part 1: Everyday Celebrations 15

1. Celebrating the Everyday Joys 17
2. Celebrating Birthdays 27
 - We Are Family* 35
3. Spiritual Milestones 37
4. Ways to Stay Connected 45
5. Reaching Out to Others in Hard Times 49

Part 2: Holidays through the Year 55

6. Wintertime Wonderment 57
 - New Year and New Beginnings* 57
 - Backwards Day* 62
 - The Big Game* 64
7. February Festivities 67
 - Black History Month* 67
 - Shrove Tuesday/Mardi Gras* 68
 - Valentine's Day* 71
 - Presidents' Day* 77

7

- 8. Springtime Celebrations 81**
St. Patrick's Day 81
Passover: Then and Now 86
Spring Has Sprung 87
Good Friday and Easter 90
- 9. Other Spring Things 103**
Tell a Story Day 103
Arbor Day 104
May Day 106
Cinco de Mayo 107
Mother's Day 110
Memorial Day 115
- 10. Sum, Sum, Summertime 117**
Best Friend's Day 117
Father's Day 118
Mystery Day 122
Parades and Pondering, Fireworks and Food 123
County Fair Party 127
Camping/Vacations 130
Book Lover's Day 131
Left-Hander's Day 132
Senior Citizens Day 133
- 11. Autumn Activities 135**
Labor Day 135
Grandparents Day 139
Patriot Day 142
Mexican Independence Day 143
Johnny Appleseed Day 143
See You at the Pole 144
Native American Day 145
Halloween 145
Harvest Celebrations 146
Election Day 150
Veterans Day 152
- 12. Celebrate the Sights and Scents of the Seasons 155**
Thanksgiving 156
Christmas 162

Acknowledgments

We toss a handful of confetti to celebrate and thank those who helped us take this project from a bunch of ideas—both those we have done and those swirling around in our minds—to the volume you now hold in your hands.

To our Proverbs 31 Ministries sisters under the leadership of Lysa TerKeurst: We love doing life with you and trusting God together for the ministry he has for us as a team. We are grateful for your endless encouragement and prayer support. You are all so very “graceful, godly, and ready to go.” Also, a special thanks to those who shared some of your celebration ideas with the readers of this book.

To agent Esther Fedorkevich: Your professionalism and hard work along with your love of serving Jesus and enabling others to touch lives through the written word make you the best at what you do. Thanks for believing in us and in this project.

To Andrea Doering, Twila Bennett, Lindsay Davis, Lindsey Spoolstra, Cheryl Van Anandel, and the rest of the fabulous team at Revell: Thank you for all of your expertise as you guided this project from idea to manuscript to a book in the store. Your tireless efforts do not go unnoticed. We love doing ministry with you!

To the many online friends we have through our own blogs and through Proverbs 31 Ministries: You are the reason we write, speak, and serve. A loud shout-out to the ones who contributed your own unique ideas to this book that helped to round it out. We appreciate the time you took to share them with all of us.

To husbands Todd E. and Tod W. and the eight Ehman and Whitwer children: Thank you for your patience as we talked on the phone brainstorming and then headed to our computers to craft our manuscript, a

feat that meant a few rounds of fast food and nights of leftovers for you all. Making our homes a haven for you, celebrating your many milestones in life, or just sharing a simple meal on an ordinary day—these are among our greatest joys as wives and mothers.

And to our heavenly Father—the One who created celebrations and gave us the greatest gift of all—Jesus. We love You. May You be glorified in the pages of this book and in the lives of those who read it.

Foreword

When you hear the word “confetti,” what pops into your mind? Party noise-makers and streamers, as handfuls of the glittery stuff are tossed into the air on New Year’s Eve? A shower of colorful paper pieces wafting through the air as an award-winning team returns to a welcoming hometown parade? Or a scattering on your kitchen table as your family celebrates a birthday or anniversary?

The calendar is filled with special occasions and holidays that certainly call for a little confetti. But what about ordinary days? Those seemingly routine days when the calendar doesn’t indicate an occasion to buy a card, bake a cake, or toss some confetti? By bringing a little confetti to an otherwise ordinary day, we can make it a celebration. A celebration of life, of each other, and, most importantly, of God’s goodness.

Our desire with this book is to spark your creativity and provide you with ideas for planning and implementing wonderful holiday and holy day celebrations with your loved ones. But we don’t want to stop there. We hope that with a little ingenuity and a slight shift in your spiritual perspective, you will learn to toss a little confetti into the everyday too—to be on the lookout for days and ways to make the ordinary *extraordinary*.

As the caregivers of our homes and families, something deep within us calls us to pause and savor the moment we are in. Maybe it’s because there were too many years that are a blur now. Too many moments we wished would hurry up and pass. Those are the times of regret.

As we look into the faces of children growing up too quickly, of parents growing older, of friends packing to move, we often want time to stop while we breathe in the holiness of the moment God has given.

Remember this moment, our heart whispers. Remember what this feels like.

We hold on to a tiny frame just a minute longer, rest our head on his chest and sigh, grab a wrinkled hand and draw it to our cheek, and gaze into eyes we adore.

Life goes by too quickly, and at the end of the year we can look back and wish the simple moments had been celebrated more. We wish there'd been a few more pauses. We wish we'd made more opportunities to look at someone we love and say, with words and actions, "You matter. I value you."

Not the big flashy moments. Not the expensive trips. But the humble, family times that declare what's really important. What makes us *us*. The everyday moments are the ones that are treasured in the hearts of those we love.

It's the little touches that say, "I remembered." It's celebrating effort. Rejoicing together in success. Supporting each other when discouraged. These are the times that weave our hearts together.

Often those times turn into traditions. And there's an amazing benefit of traditions—they establish family unity. They declare, "This is who we are . . . what we believe in . . . what we stand for." Traditions give us a sense of belonging.

Some women excel at these spontaneous family moments. They can whip together a celebration with a box cake mix, some gummy worms, and a paper bag. Then there are the rest of us, who do better with some planning. Don't be discouraged if that's you. We understand. That's why we wrote this book.

Our home can be a place of nurturing, a place where children grow up confident in their worth, a place where a husband feels respected and a friend feels loved, a place where God is honored.

In a world where our schedules leave us frazzled and comparisons leave us wanting, where children come home belittled and husbands can feel "less than," don't we all need a place to feel safe? To feel accepted? To feel honored?

As you read through this book, we hope you'll be inspired to celebrate more everyday moments. To pause in the midst of a busy holiday and remember what's really important. And to love your family with more intentionality.

Life is filled with moments to treasure and to celebrate. Together, let's sprinkle confetti on these treasured moments, making sure to leave a layer

on those we celebrate with and for, and on those God calls us to love on in His name.

Thank you for joining us on this journey.

In Jesus's love,
Karen and Glynnis

PART 1

Everyday Celebrations



Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

Celebrations are markers in our lives. Birthdays, engagements, baptisms, graduations, a promotion, a part in the Christmas pageant, or the first lost tooth—every milestone, event, and accomplishment should be celebrated and remembered.

But what about the other days? The in-between days? What about an ordinary Wednesday?

Time goes by so quickly. But with a little imagination, creativity, and a sprinkling of confetti, we can make the most of life's little moments and create memories in our hearts that will last a lifetime.

In this chapter we want to share small things that have made a difference in our families. But we're also sharing creative ideas from other people. No one can pull off all these ideas, so pick the ones that seem to be a good fit for *you*. We've also included recipe ideas to help you celebrate. We've intentionally made the recipes simple so you can spend less time preparing and more time with those you love.





Celebrating the Everyday Joys

FAMILY DINNER TIME

Steaming bowls of comfort waiting to be passed. The day's humorous stories ready to be shared. Hands held. Heads bowed. The family supper table. What was once a familiar routine in families now threatens to become a lost art.

We know busy schedules make it hard for family meals to happen consistently. Here are some practical tips for establishing a habit and making it a beneficial experience:

Schedule your dinners in advance. Consider each one an appointment with the most important people in your life.

Create a menu. A little forethought can eliminate stress and overspending and can assure a healthier selection of food.

Get the family involved. Ask your family what they'd like to eat. If they are invested in the menu, they are more likely to help with a good attitude. Plus, if it's something they love, they'll want to come (this is especially important with teenagers).

No screens. Period. Make sure anything with an "on" button is in the "off" position, or at least is not at the table.

Plan the discussion. This might sound contrived, but it's better to have a backup plan than to have silence or complaining. One simple way to start conversation is to have everyone share their high point and low point of the day. Or ask them to tell about one new fact they learned in school or something they saw on the internet they had questions about. Perhaps place some discussion prompts on slips

**Be merry, really merry.
The life of a true Christian
should be a perpetual
jubilee, a prelude to the
festivals of eternity.**

~ *Theophane Venard*

of paper and draw one each night to get the conversation going. Let every member of the family come up with some suggestions. Adults might ask questions about what dreams everyone has for the future. Kids might inquire about what their parents' lives were like growing up. Even random and somewhat silly questions are to-

tally fine, such as, "If you were a color what color would you be and why?" or "If you could meet any cartoon character who would it be and why?" or "What snack food would you most hate to have to give up for life—and if you were paid money to do so, how much would it take for you to give it up?"

CREATE A FAMILY HONOR PLATE

The dinner table is a perfect place to celebrate a milestone or special occasion. It can also serve as a way to praise a child for a job well done or to honor a family member for displaying a Christlike character quality. Some families even use a special plate to add to the festivities of such honoring times.

If you would like to begin this tradition in your own home, purchase a dinner plate in a bright color that will only be used by a family member on the night of an accomplishment. Or purchase a retro or antique plate if your family would enjoy such a piece. You could even create one at a local ceramics shop just for your clan to use.

So—how to use it? Did a child make the tennis team? Land a great grade on a difficult paper or project? They get to eat their meal on the special family plate.

But don't just use the plate for academic, athletic, or extracurricular achievements. Go beyond. Also honor family members—both kids and parents—for displaying acts of kindness or character. Did they rake the neighbors' yard without being asked? Give up their place in line to a frenzied mom with a crying baby? Did they display perseverance by studying diligently for a big exam even though the grade was not as high as they'd hoped? Honor them with dinner on the family plate.

You may also want to check out our friend Michelle Weber's website. She has created a unique way to encourage and honor family members at dinner for godly character qualities. The Family Enrichment Tool Kit incorporates the fruit of the Spirit, the very virtues of Christ.

The tool kit includes a simple but effective program presented on an audio CD, a Family Honor Plate (personalized with your family's name), a Table Thyme set that includes 250 discussion starters and questions, and a free membership to a curriculum-based character education site so parents can pull up character-specific historical stories of those who have shown great character to prepare for enlightening conversation at dinner. Imagine having specific information to share about Albert Einstein or Abraham Lincoln the evening one of your children (hey, Mom and Dad can earn it too) receives the honor plate for showing perseverance.

To summarize the program, parents are taught to:

Catch their children doing good things and making smart choices based on their character; they'll find these things because now they are looking for them.

Celebrate those good choices and behaviors (based on character and actions, not "successes") by presenting their child's meal on the Family Honor Plate. Let the child be the "star" as they listen to why they are being honored and the effect it had on others. The audience is their family and the stage is the dinner table. Siblings learn and are inspired as they see their brother or sister being celebrated for their good choices or behavior.

Connect with their family as they bring everyone together at the dinner table not just to eat but to learn the joy of gathering, building each other up, sharing, and growing as a family. Pick a Table Thyme card and enjoy an evening where each person has the opportunity to share their opinions, thoughts, and desires. Learn how to create

engaging dialogue among family members. Parents will begin to see inside their children's hearts, and their children will see inside their parents'. When people get to know each other better they feel more connected and relationships grow stronger. The result? The family genuinely enjoys coming together at the dinner table, and family mealtime becomes a priority to everyone. The benefits are endless.

If you would like more information, you may obtain it at www.FamilyEnrichmentToolkit.com.

ESTABLISH A WEEKLY FAMILY NIGHT (OR MORNING OR AFTERNOON)

As moms of busy children, we know how hard it is to carve out time with family. But in most homes, it is possible to set aside time every week to strengthen your family unity, to turn your hearts toward God, and to have fun in the process. The key is commitment, consistency, and a small amount of creativity.

Don't worry about it being exactly right, and don't compare your family's plans with anyone else's. There's no perfect day, perfect amount of time, or perfect agenda. Maybe your family only has Saturday mornings, or after church on Sundays, or Tuesday nights. Grab that time and try to make it nonnegotiable.

We think it's always easier to start simply when trying to establish a habit. So don't set expectations you can't continue to meet. A little food, a little conversation, some laughter, and you've got a memory in the making.

A few years ago, I (Glynnis) met a pastor's wife at a small church in Louisiana. This grandma of many was discussing her dinner menu for later that day. The guest list numbered around twenty and included children, grandchildren, and a few friends invited into the fold. Was it someone's birthday? Or anniversary? I was curious.

"No," she answered. "It's just Sunday dinner. We do this every week. It's how we keep our family connected."

What a wonderful practice. A simple dinner. A standing invitation. A reason to reconnect with friends and family after a busy week.

What might this look like in your home? The type of food doesn't matter as much as making enough to feed a few extra friends who might be invited.

Maybe your special family time is you and your husband . . . or maybe it's a passel of children and grandkids. No matter the size of the gathering, the fanciness of your table, or the spot on the calendar, establishing time together with people you love is worth the investment.

Here are some ideas you can try as you gather your people:

Devotional time. Pick a short passage of the Bible to read together.

Depending on the ages of your children, take turns coming up with a few discussion questions. Keep this simple to help make the Bible accessible to every member of your family. Close with a short prayer thanking God for His Word and message to you tonight. Pray also for others.

Make-your-own _____ night. Get the family involved in making dinner.

One idea is make-your-own pizza. Using French bread or hoagie rolls as your base, set out an assortment of toppings, pizza sauce, and cheese and let everyone assemble their own creation. You might also try a salad bar, sub sandwiches, or Cincinnati chili (with optional five toppings).

Board games. Board games can be expensive, but compare their cost with taking your family out to the movies and you might have a new perspective. Some of our favorites include Ticket to Ride, Apples to Apples, and Imaginiff.

Arts and crafts. A craft project stimulates creativity and camaraderie.

Paint flower pots, color eggs at Easter, decorate cookies at Christmas, or make pinecone bird feeders using peanut butter.

Read out loud. Pick a book to read through as a family. This is a family tradition your children will appreciate (coming from a woman—Glynnis—whose mother read faithfully to her). Some family-friendly selections include *The Trumpet of the Swan*, *The Secret Garden*, *Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle*, and any of the Chronicles of Narnia series.

Family sleepover. When our (Glynnis) children were small, we'd spread blankets, sleeping bags, and pillows on the floor of the master bedroom for a sleepover. There was something special about ending the night together . . . sort of like a camping experience without the dirt.

• • • • • **Lysa TerKeurst** • • • • •

Proverbs 31 Ministries

Have you ever felt guilty for not having sit-down family devotions? I have. It's not that I haven't tried, but somewhere between the less-than-enthusiastic response I would sometimes get and my own inconsistency, the guilt comes. If you've ever struggled with this, like I do, I might have a solution—everyday conversations about God.

I've done a lot wrong as a mom, but one thing I've done right is to celebrate God in everyday life. By weaving God and His truth throughout the fabric of the simple things every day, it makes Him more real, applicable, and touchable. Here are three ways I do this:

When something goes right—we stop and praise God for His provision.

When something goes wrong—we look for how this might be evidence of God's protection.

When we need wisdom for how to handle situations, we look for it in God's Word and discuss ways to apply it.

If we talk about God in our everyday lives, it creates a sense of celebration of His presence. And that's the best kind of family devotion there is!

SIBLINGS' NIGHT

Karen

For the first decade of parenting, we lived in a very tiny home. All three of our kids, ages two through nine, shared the same bedroom. A triple bunk bed and one shared dresser meant big sister had little brothers' Hot Wheels and Batman PJs right alongside her sparkly lip gloss and jewelry box. When we were finally able to move into a bigger home with two bedrooms for the kids, we thought they'd be thrilled. But while they loved the look of their individual rooms, when nighttime came they wanted to be together. In fact, for the first month or so the boys dragged their pillows and blankets into their sister's room and slept on her floor!

We noticed that the kids had a little routine to their nighttime activities. They'd get drinks of water, Kenna would read the boys a story, and then

she would sing them a song from our church camp called “Goodnight Boys, Sleep Tight Boys.” That tradition was something they didn’t want to give up!

Our living situation eventually morphed into everyone in their own rooms. However, a few nights every month, until our daughter moved out at age eighteen, they would hold Siblings’ Night. They’d fix a snack and retreat to Kenna’s bedroom to watch a movie with NO PARENTS ALLOWED. Then the boys would sleep on her floor and she would lull them into dreamland by singing her goodnight song.

Even now, when she returns for a holiday from her home five states away, you will find the tradition of Siblings’ Night taking place in our guestroom—with her on the twin bed and the big, strapping, teenage boys on her floor!

RECIPES FOR FAMILY GATHERINGS

Need something easy to feed a crowd? These two recipes can be prepared ahead. Add a fresh green salad and hot French bread, and you have a family feast.

Creamy Italian Chicken over Rice

- 8 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
- 1 pkg. dry Italian salad dressing mix
- ¼ c. water
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 1 (10¾ oz.) can cream of chicken soup
- 1 (4 oz.) can mushrooms, drained

Lightly grease slow cooker and place chicken breasts inside. Combine Italian dressing and water and pour over chicken. Cover slow cooker and cook on low for 4–5 hours. Then combine cream cheese and condensed soup in a saucepan and heat on medium until melted. Whisk together to remove lumps (there may still be some). Stir in mushrooms and pour over chicken. Cover and cook another 30 minutes or so. Serve over rice. Serves 6–8.

Oreo Ice Cream Dessert

- ¾-1 lb. Oreo cookies, crushed and divided
- ½ gal. coffee ice cream
- 1 can chocolate frosting (fudge preferred)
- 8 oz. whipped topping

Spread half of crushed Oreos on the bottom of a 9 x 13 pan. Slice ice cream and cover Oreos evenly. Warm frosting in microwave by removing the foil cover and heating the container for 15 seconds on high. Stir. Continue heating in 15-second intervals until pourable. Pour frosting over ice cream. Spread whipped topping over frosting, and top with remaining crushed Oreos. Freeze at least 2 hours before serving. Serves 10-12.

NAME DAY

In Bible days, names had great significance. Parents named their children with great intentionality, but not always for the same reasons. Sara and Abraham named their son Isaac, which means “laughter,” because they laughed when God said they’d have a child. Isaac named his son Jacob, from a root word that means “to follow,” because he was the second-born twin, but the name also had connotations of a conniver, because during birth he grasped his brother’s heel.

God also renamed people when their purpose or identity changed. Jacob is an example of that when God changed his name to Israel (Gen. 32:28) after he wrestled with a man who represented God. Jesus renamed one of his disciples from Simon (meaning “he has heard”) to Peter (meaning “stone” or “rock”).

Because names have traditionally held such significance, there’s an old European tradition that assigns a name to each day of the year, making it “Name Day.” So not only are you celebrated on your birthday, but there’s another day to celebrate with every other Karen (April 29 in Italy) or Glynnis (October 14 in the United States). To find your Name Day, there is a fun website that offers an American calendar: americannamedaycalendar.com.

Whether or not you were named with as much intentionality as Isaac, Jacob, or Jesus (meaning “He who saves”), you can still celebrate your name on Name Day. Here are some suggestions on how to do so:

Name acronym. On each family member’s Name Day, write their name vertically on the left side of a sheet of paper and leave it out in the open. Then have the rest of the family write descriptive words starting with each letter. Here’s what Glynnis wrote about Karen, for example:

K–Kind

A–Astute

R–Reliable

E–Effervescent

N–Nice

Make a name necklace or bracelet. Go to a craft store and pick out letter beads, plus extra beads or charms, to make a necklace or bracelet for the Name Day celebrant. This would’ve been the only way Glynnis would’ve had anything personalized growing up.

Photo collage using initials. On Glynnis’s son Robbie’s birthday, a friend surprised him with a photo collage using his Facebook photos. She found the letter R made from stretched canvas, glued on the photos so they overlapped, and painted clear varnish on top to protect them. This idea can be expanded to include the entire name and feature photos of interests as well as people.

Celebrate your loved one’s name heritage. Where did their name originate? On their Name Day, prepare a special treat from the country from which their name originated. For example, Glynnis is Welsh and means “from the valley.” Karen could make her Welsh tea cakes. To search for a name’s heritage, invest in a baby name book or visit the internet and search for a specific name.