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How to Celebrate HumanLight

By Shane Hall, eHow Contributor

Dec. 23 marks a holiday known as HumanLight, billed as a secular alternative to religious winter holidays such as Christmas and Hanukkah. The first HumanLight celebration took place in 2001 in New Jersey, where the New Jersey Humanist Network coined the celebration as a secular winter holiday. According to the American Humanist Association, a national organization of humanists and secularists, HumanLight represents the humanist vision of an enlightened and ethical society.

Difficulty: Moderately Easy

Instructions

- 1 Involve your humanist friends and other guests in planning your HumanLight celebration. Involving other people in the planning will help make HumanLight an annual celebration, in which people can take turns planning it. It also will generate a range of ideas to keep the celebration fun for everybody. A celebration can incorporate as much or as little ritual as you want. In some cities, HumanLight celebrations have included candle-lighting ceremonies and group singalongs (John Lennon's "Imagine" is a favorite choice for a sing-along because its lyrics are consistent with the humanist vision of a world in which people live in peace and tolerance without religion).
- 2 Ensure that your celebration is family-friendly so that guests with children will feel comfortable attending. HumanLight celebrations in some cities have featured magicians, science demonstrations, or other educational entertainment. HumanLight celebrations do not prescribe a specific ritual, so the types of activities are limited only by your imagination, enthusiasm and creativity.
- 3 Host a potluck dinner. Invite your guests to bring a dish of their own to contribute to the meal. Shared meals are appropriate for many types of celebrations--religious or secular--and a potluck dinner provides an excellent way to get everybody

involved in planning a fun celebration of HumanLight.

- 4 Express the humanist values of promoting the well-being of others and helping those in need by asking guests to your HumanLight celebration to bring non-perishable food items for donation to a local food bank. Collecting food or clothing to donate to a food bank or other charity will help spread the word about HumanLight and provide a positive image for the humanists and humanism.

Tips & Warnings

- Keep your HumanLight celebration festive. Some celebrations of HumanLight can emphasize discussions on topics of interest to humanists and atheists at the expense of merry-making.
- Avoid letting your celebration become an occasion to criticize religion. HumanLight is about celebration humanist values, not attacking religion or the religious. Keeping your celebration free anti-religious themes might make your religious friends more comfortable attending, which helps give a positive image of humanists and secularists.

Resources

- HumanLight.org