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Don't Forget the Most Important Guests at the Easter Table

BY LAURIE EDWARDS-TATE, M.S.

Spring has a way of stirring something hopeful in all of us. The days grow longer, the flowers begin to bloom, and families start thinking about gathering together again. Easter, in particular, tends to bring out the best traditions—colorful eggs, baskets for the kids, and tables filled with family recipes that somehow only appear once a year.

But in the middle of all that excitement, it's easy to overlook something important: making sure the older members of our family feel included, comfortable, and valued in the celebration.

For many seniors, holidays are a mixed experience. They can be joyful, but they can also bring reminders of changing abilities, lost loved ones, or the simple reality that life moves a little slower than it used to. With a little intentionality, however, Easter can become a meaningful and uplifting experience for older family members.

And often, the smallest gestures make the biggest difference.

Make it easy for them to participate

Large family gatherings can be overwhelming, especially for seniors who may have mobility challenges, vision issues, or fatigue. If Easter celebrations involve outdoor egg hunts, crowded kitchens, or lots of activity, consider how an older family member might comfortably participate.

A simple adjustment—like setting up a comfortable chair where they can watch the kids hunt for eggs, or bringing a few activities to the table where they are sitting—can help them feel part of the fun rather than on the sidelines.

If mobility is a concern, ensure walkways are clear, seating is available, and the environment is safe and easy to navigate.

Invite them into the traditions

Many of the traditions we celebrate at Easter actually started with the older generations in our families. Grandma may have been the one who first taught everyone how to dye eggs or bake the holiday ham. Grandpa might have been the one who hid the eggs in the backyard.

Bringing them into those traditions again—even in small ways—can be incredibly meaningful.

Ask them to help the grandchildren color eggs. Invite them to tell stories about Easter celebrations from years past. Let them share family recipes or memories that younger generations have never heard before.

Those moments do more than include them—they connect the entire family to its history.

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Be mindful of energy levels

Holidays can be long days. What feels like a joyful marathon of activities for younger family members can be exhausting for seniors.

It helps to plan the day with natural breaks. Quiet moments, a comfortable place to rest, or even the option to step away from the noise can make a huge difference.

If your loved one receives care at home, it can also be helpful to coordinate with their caregiver so that medications, meals, and routines stay consistent during the celebration.

Remember that presence matters most

For older adults, the greatest gift during holidays isn't the food or the decorations—it's time.

A short conversation. Sitting together on the porch. Looking through old photos. Listening to stories they've told before (and will likely tell again). These moments may seem ordinary, but to seniors they often mean the world.

In fact, many older adults quietly say that what they miss most about holidays is not feeling needed or included in the way they once were.

Easter offers us a chance to change that.

A season of renewal

At its heart, Easter is about renewal, hope, and new life. It's about remembering that every season carries meaning—even the ones that come later in life.

Our older family members carry the stories, lessons, and traditions that shape who we are. When we include them fully in our celebrations, we're not just honoring them—we're strengthening the fabric of our families.

So as you plan your Easter gathering this year, take a moment to think about the most important guests at the table. Make space for them. Invite them in. Listen to their stories.

You may find that their presence becomes the most meaningful part of the day.

And that's a tradition worth keeping.

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