

## #272 - The Complete Guide to Seasonal Ceremonies

Hi there! You're listening to The Lazy Genius Podcast! I'm Kendra Adachi, and I'm here to help you be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. Today is episode 272 - The Complete Guide to Seasonal Ceremonies! I haven't talked about opening and closing ceremonies or what I now have shortened and broadened to seasonal ceremonies in awhile, and even though a lot of you are familiar with them, we haven't done a full-on episode about them before if you can believe it! Plus, I love this idea of a new name that will broaden our definition a little.

So let's jump into the complete guide to seasonal ceremonies. We're going to talk about what they are, why we love them, when to use them, and how to come up with what you'll do.

Let's start with what they are. A seasonal ceremony is something that marks a significant moment of transition, likely a beginning or an end. Think about the Olympics; there is an opening ceremony to mark the beginning of the games. It's on purpose, it's meaningful, and it's something we all look forward to. The closing ceremony for the Olympics looks back, marks the end, and it give us a sense of joy in this thing we spent time loving. You can do the same thing in your own life.

So a seasonal ceremony is simply an intentional marker at the start or end of a season, and chances are, it's something you'll want to repeat. That's a significant difference in seasonal ceremonies and celebrations. You can mark the moment of getting that job or making it through that season of a hard medical diagnosis or of selling your house, but those things aren't likely to be repeated any time soon. You mark them, but you mark them a little differently. Seasonal ceremonies are likely to be repeated. It's something you do again and again each year that kind of tells you - we are beginning or we have come to the end.

So that's what they are. Here's why we love them. Gustav Mahler, a 19th century composer, said "Tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of fire." Tradition is not the worship of ashes but the preservation of fire. Seasonal ceremonies could easily become a tradition for you, and traditions are beautiful things. We want to remember and preserve moments and seasons year after year. It's preserving something that matters. It's why we watch movies like Dan In Real Life which is a great movie holy moly. That family gets together in the same house. They do the crossword puzzle race. They make certain foods. They have a family talent show. We're drawn to that kind of thing. When we see other people experiencing a tradition, something cracks open in us. We are so hungry for that feeling, for those grooves that grow deeper and deeper in our lives, that are repeated and that we can go back to. Seasonal ceremonies can be a potential groove. They can be a tradition for you and your people, so that's for sure a reason to love them.

Not only that, aside from the bigger picture, seasonal ceremonies are where we pay attention to exactly where we are. When we sit in that groove and look around, we're able to be present and grateful and connected. We usher in the holiday season. We say goodbye to another summer.

We mark the start of a new sports season. We open or close any season we are in because Lazy Geniuses live in the season, and we can slowly build those muscles of paying attention on purpose in a traditional, seasonal way.

Now, when should you use one? When should you try a seasonal ceremony? My first question would actually be “what do you already do?” The chances are pretty good that you already have some kind of seasonal ceremony in your life. You might eat the same dinner on the last day of school. Maybe you have a birthday tradition you do for yourself every year. Maybe it’s not really Christmas time until the weekend when you get together with your siblings or friends and bake your family’s cookie recipe. What do you already do? That’s an excellent place to start, with what you’re already doing because so often we think we’re starting from scratch, right? We hear an idea we resonate with, and we don’t look around enough to see that we’re already doing that thing! We just haven’t named it or identified it as something that fits within this category of an idea we want to do. And if we don’t identify what we’re already doing, we think we’re behind when we’re actually not. So be sure you name what seasonal ceremonies you already do. That’s a fun, encouraging exercise.

Now if you’re starting from a new place, from seasonal scratch if you will, what’s the next season you’d like to mark when it opens or when it closes? We’re coming up on the end of a calendar season now, summer for folks in the Western Hemisphere, which most of you are in. Would you like to have a seasonal ceremony to mark the end of summer? Does that matter to you? Because it doesn’t have to. That’s a huge, dare I say, singularly important part of deciding. Does it matter? Does marking this season matter? You don’t have to mark everything. Only mark what matters.

So when you’re trying to decide where you should have a seasonal ceremony, look at what you’re already doing and then on what you’d like to do based on what matters to you, especially as you see whatever your next seasonal transition is, for example the end of summer. So you could decide if you want to close summer, begin school, begin the fall, end summer book club season or summer reading season, whatever you want to do.

### **We’ll be right back...**

Next and possibly the most fun but potentially the most overwhelming: how do you decide what happens during your seasonal ceremony? What do you actually do?

The temptation is to do everything, right? Make it big! Make it special! Figure out every possible idea and then do them all! Our imaginations have a lot more stamina and resources than our actual lives do, so we’re going to start small instead.

You’ve named the season you want to mark. How do you want to feel when you mark it? What word would you use to describe the feeling or result of that ceremony? Reflective? Fun? Active? Thoughtful? What’s the adjective you’d choose? Then you can ask yourself what one activity or choice best embodies that feeling? If five of you listening wanted to experience fun in your

seasonal ceremony, all five of you would probably have different definitions of what fun is for you, right? So rather than start with what you would do in your seasonal ceremony, it's better to start with what you want to experience.

Another way you could put some words to your seasonal ceremony is to look at one that already exists and see if you can extrapolate what makes that ceremony matter? And for the record, when I say ceremony, I'm not talking about formality or medals or a presentation. It's really a word that encompasses any intentional choice. That's it. So look at another intentional choice in a different season. Why does that work?

One of our family seasonal ceremonies and my personal favorite of the year is our welcoming of the Christmas season. The first weekend in December in my city is when all the fun Christmas things happen. There's a downtown festival on Friday, a holiday parade Saturday morning, Christmas tree decorating at our house that afternoon, and a park filled with luminaries that Saturday night. We just go to those things, and it's the best. It's the beginning of our Christmas season, and we love it.

Part of the reason we love it is because of how long it is. It's a whole weekend. It feels like one giant party. But one of the reasons I personally love it is because of how much it's rooted in my city. I was born in Greensboro, and other than three semesters at a college one town over, I've never left. I adore this city. It is in my blood, and I can't imagine we would ever move. I have roots here and memories, and I value the identity of my city, what it wants to be. So there's something really special to me personally about having a seasonal ceremony that is rooted in this city. There are other seasonal ceremonies we do that are not, but because the holidays to me are about my faith for sure but also connection and family and roots, having my holiday seasonal ceremony connected to my home on a larger scale matters to me. That has a lot of meaning.

So look at what you're already doing. Why does it matter? Why do you love it? What component makes you or your people so happy and cared for or whatever the adjective might be? Seeing what's already working somewhere else is probably going to be a helpful exercise.

But if you're starting from zero and really don't know what to do, I have three thoughts for you, and all three of them are Lazy Genius principles. One, start small. Please do not build this ceremony to be like the opening ceremonies at those summer Olympics in China. It does not need to be detailed and massive. Start with one thing, and you can do that thing plus another one next year if you do it again. So please start small. Two, be kind to yourself in how you speak about creating this seasonal ceremony. I hear a lot of you say things like "I never have any good ideas" or "I'm just not creative" or "anything I think of sounds ridiculous." I disagree. Big time. You are likely bumping against an expectation of how you think something should look, and it's making who you are and what you are in fact good at pale in comparison. So please be kind to yourself. Tell yourself the truth. You can think for a few minutes about what you could do to mark the end of the summer. If you want to experience something summery and special to close it out, just go to a favorite ice cream shop and everybody gets double cones. Sit outside, eat your

ice cream, and everybody can share their favorite thing from this past summer. Done. What's crazy is isn't that a lovely picture? You're sitting outside with ice cream and your family or friends, just talking. But somehow we think we have to have seven certifications in entertaining and creativity to come up with it. You don't. Just think about it for a few minutes, and you'll come up with something that sounds fun or reflective or whatever else you might want. And three, live in the season. Remember that as you think about a seasonal ceremony, not every component will work as you go through different seasons of life, and that's okay. So hold the details loosely because a lot of them might not make as much sense or feel as necessary down the road. So live in the season of living within the framework but changing the details and expectations depending on where you are in life. So start small, be kind to yourself, and live in the season as you exist in the thinking/building/creative space.

So many of your own details will be specific to you because of who you are and what you're choosing to mark, but we are also often inspired by other people's ideas! So this week on Instagram @thelazygenius, I'll share a post where all of you can share your favorite seasonal ceremony to get some ideas flowing.

So to recap, a seasonal ceremony is simply an intentional marker of something that you're opening and welcoming or closing and saying goodbye to, and they're usually easily repeated the next season. They're a lovely thing to pursue, slowly and kindly, because of how much we long for tradition and connective grooves in our lives and in our relationships. They likely matter to you in some way. Use one when you'd like to mark a season, and pay attention to places this is already happening. It's very simple and personal but incredibly powerful. Check out Instagram this week where we'll share what we all love. Don't overthink it or over-complicate it or over-manufacture it. Just look at the next season you'd like to mark, choose what you want to feel, and name some kind of activity or choice that can lead you to that feeling. And then do it again next year. Make those grooves. And that is your guide to seasonal ceremonies.

Before we go, let's celebrate The Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Lisa Newton who shared this in the Facebook group! "Well, we got our first visit of 2022 from the Ice Cream Truck this afternoon. (My apologies to those of you who are in freezing weather right now!). - This message was shared in March for reference, everyone. - Normally, my kids, ages 3 and 6, go nuts at the first sound of the music coming down the street, but today they happened to be away at Grandma's. I had a moment of clarity without them and realized I need to LG the ice cream truck. So, I have set aside an envelope and I'm going to drop any spare change / \$1 bills I get into it and that will be our ice cream fund. If we run out-- sorry, no ice cream today. I will let my kids contribute from their piggy banks / chore earnings, too. No more freaking out because I don't have any cash." Lisa, this is such a great idea! And I wanted to share this as the Lazy Genius of the week, not just because having a summer ice cream truck fund is fun and appropriate for July but because it's an example of Lazy Genius-ing a problem in the moment. Sometimes we have those little moments where we go, "huh... I should really Lazy Genius this." It's not about analyzing every part of your life all at once. It's simply paying attention and making choices based on what matters. For Lisa, what matters isn't big rules or systems around the ice cream truck. She just doesn't want to be caught without cash. So she's keeping cash and coins

and will let that be the guide for how many ice cream truck visits she and her kids get. She's taking out the stress and panic of trying to decide if you'll go plus then having to get the money. It's such a great example of paying attention in the moment and making a simple choice that supports what matters. Love it. Congratulations, Lisa, on being the Lazy Genius of the Week!

Okay, that's it for today! Thank you so much for being here, and until next time, be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. I'm Kendra, and I'll see you next week!