



2026 MICHAELS STATE OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON REPORT

CONSUMERS WANT LESS SCREEN TIME AND MORE MEANING

New research from Michaels and Morning Consult finds 80% of parents are seeking screen-free, hands-on holiday activities, and nearly 8 in 10 consumers who celebrate the holidays value a \$25 handmade gift as much as or more than a \$100 store-bought one.

Research conducted by Morning Consult · October 8–11, 2026 · 2,502 U.S. adults

FOUR TRENDS SHAPING THE SEASON

Many consumers want fewer screens and more creativity, connection, and personal traditions this season



65% wish the holidays felt less commercial, and **66%** say hands-on activities make the season more meaningful.

SCREEN-FREE CONNECTION

Parents are leading the charge to unplug, and Gen Z is close behind

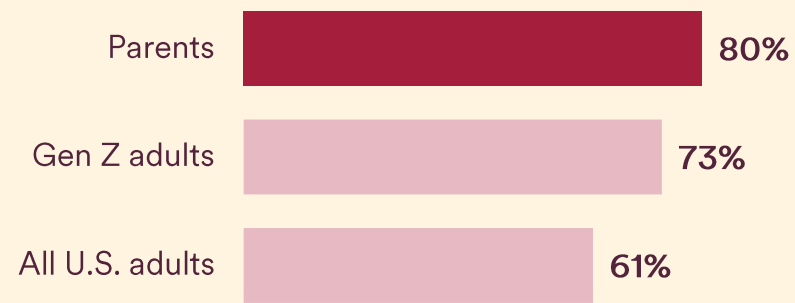
80%

of parents are actively looking for screen-free, hands-on holiday activities this season

56% of parents feel worn out by the time they spend on screens

50% of parents, and 46% of Gen Z, plan more screen-free activities than last year

ACTIVELY SEEKING SCREEN-FREE ACTIVITIES



UNPLUGGING ON PURPOSE

72% of Millennials and 69% of Gen Z plan to set screen-free rules or try to unplug informally this holiday season.

61% of adults are looking for screen-free holiday activities.

Source: Morning Consult for Michaels, Oct. 8–11, 2026. Parents of children under 18 at home, n=717; Gen Z adults, n=406; all adults, n=2,502. Seeking combines very and somewhat actively.



A HOLIDAY HEAD START

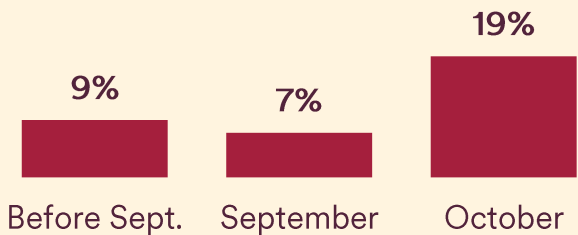
For many households, the holiday season begins well before Thanksgiving

36%

of those who celebrate begin gift shopping before November

Plus 29% start crafting and 24% start decorating before November.

GIFT SHOPPING STARTS IN...



THE PRESSURE IS REAL

60% of those who celebrate expect a stressful December (71% of parents). Among them, 49% cite overspending and 47% finding the right gifts.

WHY THEY START EARLY

53%	to reduce December stress
49%	to spread spending across multiple paychecks
49%	of Gen Z early starters, to make or personalize gifts and décor

The reasons are both emotional and financial.

Source: Morning Consult for Michaels, Oct. 8–11, 2026. Timing and December stress: those who celebrate a holiday, n=2,322; parents, n=695. Sources of December stress: those who expect December to be stressful, n=1,351. Reasons for starting early: those who start any shopping, decorating or crafting before November, n=1,128. Multiple selections allowed. Figures rounded.



MEANING OVER MATERIALISM

Time together ranked as the #1 source of holiday joy

TOP HOLIDAY JOYS, AMONG THOSE WHO CELEBRATE



65%

wish the holidays
felt less commercial

66%

say hands-on
activities make the
season more
meaningful

54%

say their household
has more “stuff”
than it needs

31%

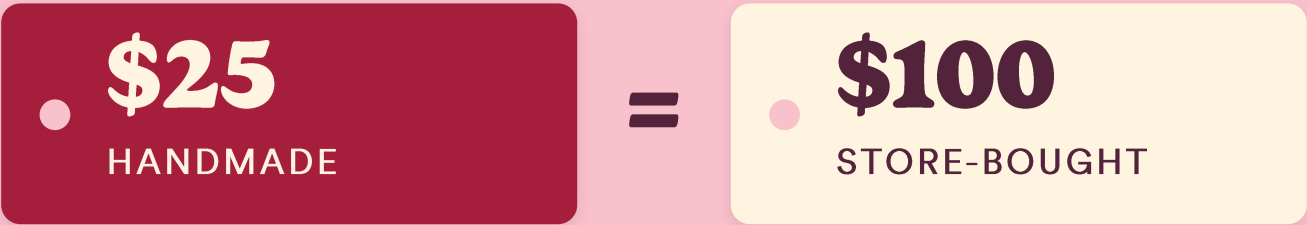
of those who
celebrate put
traditions ahead of
gifts (vs. 21%)

Joy isn't under the tree. It's around the table.

Source: Morning Consult for Michaels, Oct. 8–11, 2026. Joy and traditions: those who celebrate a holiday, n=2,322; up to 3 joy selections. Attitudes: all adults, n=2,502; agreement combines strongly and somewhat agree.

THAT MINDSET CARRIES INTO GIFTING

When it comes to gifts, there is a handmade premium



78%

of those who celebrate say a \$25 handmade gift would mean as much as, or more than, a \$100 store-bought gift

WHAT IS A HANDMADE PREMIUM?
The extra meaning people find in something made by hand, enough to match a gift that costs four times as much.



60%

say sentiment matters more than price when choosing a gift

61%

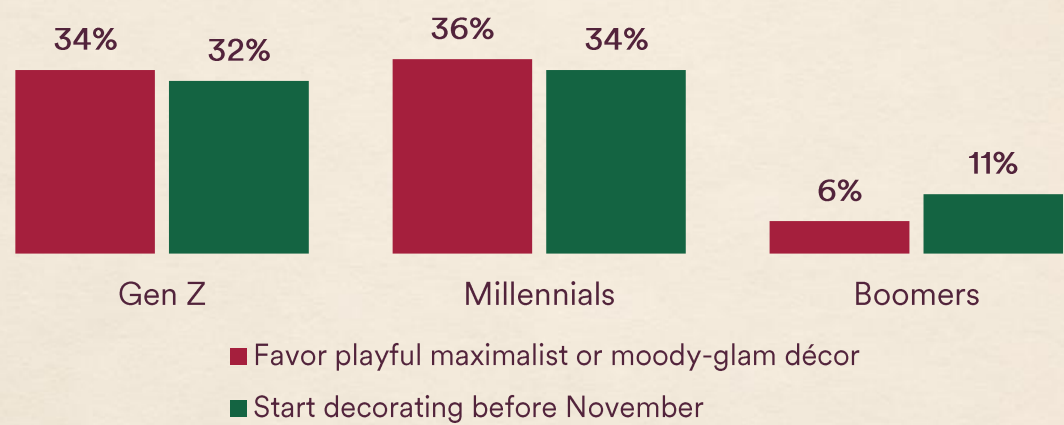
are likely to give a handmade or DIY gift this season

Source: Morning Consult for Michaels, Oct. 8–11, 2026. Those who celebrate a holiday, n=2,322. 78% combines “handmade means more” (33%) and “equal meaning” (46%), rounded. 60% combines somewhat and much more.

THE NEXT GEN DÉCOR DIVIDE

Younger generations are turning décor into self-expression

DÉCOR BY GENERATION, AMONG THOSE WHO CELEBRATE



Classic and natural looks stay popular across generations, with about half of Gen Z, Millennials and Gen X leaning that way.

Source: Morning Consult for Michaels, Oct. 8–11, 2026. Those who celebrate a holiday: n=2,322; Gen Z n=386, Millennials n=730, Boomers n=587. Style combines playful/maximalist and moody/glamorous.

~6x

Younger adults are nearly six times as likely as Boomers to embrace expressive holiday décor

FUELING CREATIVITY AND CELEBRATION

All season long, Michaels is making hands-on traditions and a personalized holiday easier

01

Unplug and create together

Thousands of holiday DIYs starting at \$2.99 give shoppers easy ways to step away from screens, from DIY ornaments to holiday-themed amigurumi crochet kits and seasonal mini framed paint-by-numbers.

In-store events offer more chances to gather and make something by hand, from personalized ornaments to holiday junk journals.

02

Give something personal

DIY gifting supplies, personalized same-day ornaments starting at \$15, and custom-framed photos like 10-Minute Custom Framing starting at \$29 help shoppers give something meaningful without overspending.

03

Get a head start

Holiday décor and supplies like artificial trees, party supplies, and decorative accents are available now in-stores and online to help shoppers get ahead of the December rush.

04

Bring your holiday style to life

Four exclusive décor collections:

Merry Kitschmas
playful maximalism

Twilight Tidings
rich tones and glamour

Bough & Berry
classic styling

Wrapped in Joy
natural textures and neutrals



ABOUT THE RESEARCH

How the 2026 Michaels State of the Holiday Season Report was conducted

CONDUCTED BY	Morning Consult, on behalf of Michaels
FIELD DATES	October 8–11, 2026
SAMPLE	2,502 U.S. adults, nationally representative
METHOD	Online interviews, weighted by age, race/ethnicity, gender, educational attainment and region
MARGIN OF ERROR	±2 percentage points for the full sample; higher for subgroups
REPORTING	Percentages are rounded. Agreement and interest figures combine the top two responses.

Group	Base (n)
All U.S. adults	2,502
Celebrate a holiday this season	2,322
Expect a stressful December	1,351
Early starters (any activity before Nov.)	1,128
Millennials who celebrate	730
Parents of children under 18 at home	717
Parents who celebrate	695
Boomers who celebrate	587
Gen X who celebrate	570
Gen Z adults	406
Gen Z adults who celebrate	386
Gen Z early starters	202



"Families are heading into December feeling stretched, both on time and on budget. This report shows that many are responding by starting earlier and choosing what feels personal over what's pricey. At Michaels, we're making that easier, with inspiration to get started, affordable gifts and projects they can make or personalize, and in-store events where families and friends can unplug, get together, and create."

HEATHER BENNETT, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF CUSTOMER OFFICER,
MICHAELS

Explore holiday project ideas and in-store events at [michaels.com](https://www.michaels.com)