Decorating the Christmas Tree!   
An experience book tradition

Materials:  
Pencil Zipper pouches.  
Tree with decorations  
Items to represent the decorations you put on the tree.   
A binder to put pencil pouches in  
Braille to label the pouches.  
  
We have made it a tradition that my son Liam (who is deafblind) and his little brother Finn, each get to decorate their own small Christmas tree. Every year, I introduce new items they get to add to their tree. We decorate our tree in this order: First we add the tree skirts, then the Christmas lights, Christmas string and ornaments. We save their favorite part for last; adding the star to the top of the tree!

Decorating the tree is one of the boys’ favorite things to do for Christmas. Immediately after we decorate the tree, Liam and I (with little brother watching and ‘helping’) put together his ***Christmas Tree Experience Book***. I created, ahead of time, a binder that has 5 zipper pouches. Each pouch had Braille words with the steps that we completed together to decorate the tree:   
1.Tree   
2. Christmas lights   
3. Christmas String   
4. Christmas ornaments   
5 Star on top of the tree.

I gathered materials to put in the book beforehand (for example: I had a few bulbs for the Christmas lights, and a small Christmas trees that felt the same as his tree). We would discuss each step together and I would have Liam add the objects to the pouches. He loves to read his Christmas Tree book often. I let him bring it to school the day after we put the tree up to share with his teachers and friends at school.   
  
Why our family loves experience books:  
-Experience books are tools that give Liam opportunities to share his experiences with others .  
-Encourages conversations in a way that is meaningful to Liam.  
-Gives Liam a sense of ownership.  
-Motivating  
-More opportunities for exposure to Braille.  
-Sequencing events/steps  
  
Other Christmas Experience book possibilities:  
-Frosting Christmas cookies  
-Visiting Santa   
-Christmas parties/events  
  
<pictures on the following pages>

