

Tis the season...

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three kids at K-Mart.

"My kids still do the midnight thing," she said about opening gifts underneath the tree. "But I don't really put anything out until about 2 a.m."

Pierce said she believes the holiday is more about giving than the spirituality of the season, and she even plays into it. "My baby girl still believes in the Santa thing, so we do that."

But for Regina Blackmon and her family, Christmas is about Christ.

"She knows there isn't a Santa," Blackmon said as she and her daughter Rhasha entered Wal-Mart. "She knows that Santa Claus is God and her daddy."

For adults who are single and don't have children, Christmas has another meaning all together.

Eric Johnson, a recent Charlotte transplant, said he hasn't celebrated Christmas since he was a child because he thinks the holiday is overcommercialized.

"I look at it as just another day," he said. "Maybe if I had somebody in my life (who celebrated Christmas) then maybe I would do that. But I wouldn't go broke doing it."

Rainbow ice diamonds

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Yellow diamonds, which mostly come from Africa, have been popularized by rap music stars. Jennifer Lopez is amassing a collection of colored diamonds, and Oprah Winfrey and Barbra Streisand also have many colored diamonds.

"Colored diamonds always have been treasured and valued because they're special," says Morrison. "They're exclusive and elitist, but there's been a recent interest in them by the general public because of Hollywood and the music industry."

Jennifer Phelps-Montgomery, designer for

jeweler Michael Werdiger, says she has varying approaches to diamonds. "If I have a really special stone, I start from the stone, especially if it's an unusual color. I ask, 'What does this stone deserve?' When I'm making jewelry with white diamonds, I design first and then fill it with stones."

Bold colors are easier to work with because they'll shine in the simplest of settings, Phelps-Montgomery says. Still, there are some designs that are better suited to subtle or muted colors, such as amber or pale yellow, and those typically are less expensive.

School nixes some types of dancing, music

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HARRISONBURG, Va. — Harrisonburg High School has banned a sexually suggestive form of dancing known as "grinding" at school-sanctioned events, prompting complaints from some students.

The new policy, drafted by a committee of teachers, administrators and students, also prohibits music that includes cursing or references to drugs, violence or sex — songs that previously were

allowed, but with the objectionable lyrics cut out.

"It feels like they're punishing everyone for what just a few people are doing," said 15-year-old sophomore Kaitlyn Moffett, who called the bans "a little extreme."

But Principal Irene Reynolds said last week that the policy is needed "before things get totally inappropriate." The restrictions are intended to curb a freeform style of dance in which cou-

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