



## **Christian Education Bulletin Insert**

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### **Giving the Gift of Time**

Instead of a bought gift, consider giving an elderly relative the gift of your time. Give an attractive card and write inside a promise to spend an evening with him or her once a month, doing a favourite activity. If distance makes this impossible, promise a long newsy letter at the beginning of each month. (Letters are often preferred to phone calls as they can be read again and again and shared with friends.) Alternatively offer the gift of a Saturday helping with chores or repairs in the spring and again in fall. Give your children the gift of time by promising to spend an evening hour on an activity of their choice (say) twice a week

### **Giving your Talent**

Give whatever you are good at, especially if the recipient hates doing whatever it is. Have you ever thought of giving an evening of ironing, a fresh homemade pie once a month for a year, three or four evenings of mending during the year, a few evenings of free babysitting or a day of gardening in the spring?

### **Giving Encouragement**

Give your child's teacher a card with a heartfelt note saying how much you appreciate his or her work with your child. Write a note or call the principal if your child's school includes any Christian material in the Christmas programme. Go into a store with a Christian message or display in the window and tell the staff how much you appreciate it. Write to the local newspaper or radio station and express your thanks for a Christian article or programme.

### **Giving the Unexpected**

Ask the person next in line at the coffee shop what they'd like and pay for them too.  
Compliment the cashier in the store or the waitress on their friendliness, hairstyle, helpfulness or whatever.

**The Anglican Family Prayer Book** by Anne E. Kitch, ABC Publishing, 2004, is a superb resource which encourages families to pray together and to begin to use Christian rituals in the home in both traditional and creative ways. Many familiar prayers are included and others which are likely to be unknown. There are prayers for many different categories of people and many different occasions, prayers and suggested readings for faith rituals throughout the year, such as during Advent, Epiphany and Lent, and suggestions for daily prayer formats. The book is expensive at \$29.95, but would be a resource for many years. One reviewer called it 'a major contribution to the spirituality of the household.' ISBN 1-55126-410-2

### **For High School and College Students**

When our children were having examinations just before Christmas, we would provide them with encouragement in the form of 'Examination Blues Baskets' which we would present a week or so before exams began. We used inexpensive cane baskets and filled them with small items E.g. two or three new pens and pencils, favourite candy items and snack foods, toiletries, a small teddy or some such gift if the student is 'into' those things, a bookmark with a prayer on it. The basket was finished with cellophane and a big blue bow. These came to be anticipated and very much enjoyed. They showed our care and concern even if we couldn't be of much help with the studying.

### **A Useful Website**

[www.akidsheart.com](http://www.akidsheart.com) has free on line games, crafts and activities for elementary aged children and includes some Christian activities. It is worth a look.

### **Christmas Letters**

If you usually send out a photocopied letter at Christmas to all your distant family and friends, you might consider making it truly a family production. Type or word process it in several columns to make it look like a newspaper. Have each family member contribute a paragraph or two and leave some spaces. Fill these with art drawn by the younger members of the family and a family photo if you have one, then photocopy and mail, or scan and send.

**Have a loving, joyful and peaceful Christmas!**