

It's Holiday Time— A Time to Give from the Heart



Over several years, a teacher asked her students what they most wanted from their parents. Here are their top ten answers:

1. Come into my bedroom at night, tuck me in and sing me a song. Also tell me stories about when you were little.
2. Give me hugs and kisses and sit and talk with me privately.
3. Spend quality time just with me, not with my brothers and sisters around.
4. Give me nutritious food so I can grow up healthy.
5. At dinner talk about what we could do together on the weekend.
6. At night talk to me about anything; love, school, family etc.
7. Let me play outside a lot.
8. Cuddle under a blanket and watch our favorite TV show together.
9. Discipline me. It makes me feel like you care.
10. Leave special messages in my desk or lunch bag.

<http://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/the-top-10-things-children-really-want-their-parents-to-do-with-them.html>

The holidays are once again upon us. They are a time to celebrate Love, whether it is Love born in a manger on Christmas day; or the Love of God providing for an oppressed people at Chanukkah; or the Love of family, community, and culture acclaimed during Kwanzaa. Love is at the heart of all faiths and traditions. And it is love that prompts us to give gifts, especially to the children in our lives.

So let us be very thoughtful about the gifts we choose. Deep down, children do not want “stuff” as much as they want *you*. Even when they ask for “stuff,” you remain most important to them. Let the things you give reflect that loving bond. Avoid toys that do just the opposite, toys that promote violence.

Research assures us that children who play with violent toys are more likely than children who don't to:

- ◆ accept violence as a way to resolve conflicts
- ◆ behave aggressively toward other children and animals
- ◆ negatively stereotype *all* people who come from a nationality, race, or religion that has been labeled enemy
- ◆ romanticize military life, combat, and war.

Instead of buying such toys, let's choose toys that:

- ◆ encourage children to use their imaginations to create and build and solve problems
- ◆ help them discover and develop their talents
- ◆ enable them to learn new skills
- ◆ involve cooperation and team-work.

There are lots from which to choose, and many are inexpensive and don't require batteries or electricity. Most have withstood the test of time. They're safe, simple, and fun! Here's a sample:

Art Supplies	Board Games	Building Blocks
Puzzles	Magic Sets	Science/Nature Kits
Dolls	Puppets	Molding Clay
Books	Music	Magazine Subscriptions
Bikes	Wagons	Sports Equipment
Lessons in Music, Art, Sports, or the like		
Tickets to a Show or Movie. And let's not forget—Teddy Bears!		
BUT BEST of ALL ... <i>Your Time.</i>		

Visit www.truceteachers.org, www.responsibleshopper.org, www.greenamerica.org, and www.globalexchange.org for more ideas about gifts that promote the positive values we want for our children and have the extra benefit of being sweatshop-free and non-toxic.

This leaflet is produced by Pax Christi Queens,
a local chapter of the international Catholic peace movement.

For more information, contact 212-420-0250,
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