

## *A Season for Dreams, Wishes, and Gift Giving*

A few short years ago, Team Kids (<http://www.teamkids.org>) produced a video they called *Dream Peace* in which they asked children:

*If you could make any wish, what would it be?*

The first answers might be what we'd expect, things like a robot that would do everything for me, superpowers, that unicorns were real, endless pizza, and candy, but then they changed. One little boy said, "I wish I could have a lot of toys, but homeless people having food is even more important." Other answers ranged from "change pollution," "make a cure for cancer," "travel around and give people hope," to "world peace."

The children were then asked

*If you were to give a message to adults, what would your message be?*

Two of their answers contain the wisdom of the ages: "I think it's really important that we love each other," and "If we all work together we can change the world; we can make a difference."

*Dream Peace* ends with this message:

*Imagine our world if the dreams of our children were realized.*

*It's time to invest in our youngest leaders  
and inspire a better future for all.*

Soon it will be the season of gift-giving, whether you are celebrating Christmas, Chanukah, or Kwanzaa. Yes, our children may still enjoy toys and games, and even candy, but they also know what really matters. Let's be sure our gifts to them support their dreams of food for the hungry, a clean environment, health, hope, love and peace. How do we do that? How do Christians commemorate the birth of the one we call Prince of Peace? How do Jews commemorate the divine miracle of lasting, light-giving oil? How do African Americans celebrate family, community, and culture? Here are some helpful suggestions.

When you choose gifts for the children in your life, please keep these questions in mind and **consider toys that:**

- ❖ Promote respectful, non-stereotyped, nonviolent interactions among children
- ❖ Can be used in many ways
- ❖ Allow children to be in charge of the play

- ❖ Appeal to children at more than one age or level of development
- ❖ Are not linked to video games, computers, TV, or movies,
- ❖ Can be used with other toys for new and more complex play
- ❖ Will stand the test of time as children develop new interests and skills
- ❖ Help children develop skills important for further learning and a sense of mastery
- ❖ Can be used alone or with others
- ❖ Can be enjoyed by boys and girls

### **Choose:**

- ❖ Toys that foster cooperation and teamwork, like dolls and puzzles and some board games
  - ❖ Toys for constructing, like building blocks and molding clay
  - ❖ Toys that inspire creative arts, like craft supplies and musical instruments
  - ❖ Toys that promote movement, like bikes, wagons, and sports equipment
  - ❖ Toys that promote dramatic play, like costumes and props, puppets and magic sets
  - ❖ Toys that enhance the imagination, new ideas, and problem solving, like science and nature kits
  - ❖ Toys that respect the environment, that can be reused and recycled
- And don't forget books, magazine subscriptions, Teddy Bears, and you. There's nothing better than YOUR time!

*Happy, Peaceful Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanzaa!*

*Happy, Peaceful Holidays to All!*

Thanks to [www.truceteachers.org](http://www.truceteachers.org) for the information presented in this flier. Visit their website, as well as [www.greenamerica.org](http://www.greenamerica.org) (search "Gifts for Children") 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 Metro New York, a region of Pax Christi USA, a member of Pax Christi International, the Catholic peace movement.

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