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Making the Holidays More About Giving

The holidays are a time when it is hard for kids (and parents) to look beyond materialistic items and remember what this time is really about. Here are some tips on how to help your kids learn the fun of giving and how rewarding it can be to make, buy, or do something special for others.

Focus on Family Traditions

Ask each family member which traditions are their favorite and then put emphasis on traditions that your family loves the most. Have your kids ask their relatives which traditions they like the most. Some traditions used to be strong, but are lost today. Reviving these traditions would be a way to share the holiday spirit with your family!

Build some new traditions – ice skating, cooking, etc can all be fun ways to bring the family together.

Teach Kids to Give of Themselves

Volunteering can begin at a young age. It can teach them that 1 person can make a difference, the benefit of sacrifice (ex: giving one of their toys to a needy child), tolerance, and to appreciate what they have even more. Your family could volunteer by sponsoring another family, working at the local animal shelter,



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visiting at a nursing home or children's hospital.

Give Gifts with Meaning

Presents don't have to be purchased at a store. Teach your kids how to put real meaning into their gifts. You could make homemade gifts together such as, photo albums, customized stationary, artwork, ornaments, or family videos.

You could also teach your kids to give a gift of their time rather than things. You can create special gift certificates like "2 free car washes", "help cook dinner", or "fold all the laundry 10 times".

Most importantly, be a holiday role model. Teach your kids early on that it's not about getting a ton of presents, but giving and receiving heartfelt gifts.