‘Tis the Season to Give

Christmas is the season of giving. But let’s be honest, it’s also the season of getting. After all, the question everyone asks kids this time of year is “What do you want for Christmas?” So why wouldn’t children think getting is the most important thing?

Acts 20:35 says “it is more blessed to give than to receive.”

But in our culture of “gimme, gimme, gimme,” we have to work even harder as parents to help our children believe that it’s more blessed to give than to receive.

Encourage your children to consider the great gift that God has given us in the birth of our Savior. Remind them that God could’ve selfishly held onto his son. But instead, God gave lavishly to us.

Share with your children the great joy you get in giving to others. Tell them about times you were more blessed to give than to receive. Your personal example is a powerful teaching tool for your children.

Edit your own “wants” list at this time of year. If your children perceive that you really value getting more than giving, no words will make up for your role model. Instead, search for ways you can lead your family to give to others and truly enjoy the blessing of giving.

POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:
1. To help your family grow in giving.
2. To transform your hearts to be selfless instead of selfish.
3. To guide you into ways to lead your family to serve others.
**Serving Changes Kids**

Children today want to serve others. Christian children have an added motivation to serve. They serve the same God and have the same spiritual gifts as the rest of us. And they’ve been given the same challenge and promise from God. For children, Acts 1:8 might sound something like this: “You’ll be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere -- at home and school, throughout your town, across the country, and to the ends of the earth.” As children serve others, they’re a light for Jesus.

Kids benefit from serving others, according to Gordon and Becki West, founders of KidZ Kan!—a ministry of KidZ At Heart International ([www.kidZatheart.org](http://www.kidZatheart.org)). The Wests cite Children for Children ([www.children4children.org](http://www.children4children.org)), a non-profit organization promoting hands-on volunteerism and giving for kids, that identifies several benefits children reap when they serve. They learn traits such as responsibility, leadership, critical thinking, problem-solving, self-respect, self-discipline, self-motivation, and tolerance.

When you teach your child to serve, you’re also teaching that child to become a servant for life because children who serve become adults who serve. Consider these statistics from Engaging Youth in Lifelong Service ([Independent Sector](http://www.independentsector.org)).

Adults who volunteered as children give more money and volunteer more time than adults who began serving later in life.

Two-thirds of adult volunteers began serving as children.

Across incomes and age groups, those who volunteered as children give and volunteer more than those who didn’t.

Use these ideas to cultivate a heart for service in your children.

**Love Language** Discuss with your kids how service is doing what someone else needs, not simply doing what we like to do for others. Then ask kids to identify meaningful ways they can show love to your family. Have kids create a service plan for the following week. Share reports at the end of the week.

**Birthday Party for Jesus** Have an “after Christmas” party where your children give their gently used toys to your church’s children’s ministry or a shelter in honor of Jesus.

**Toy Wash** Your family can help your church’s nursery staff by washing toys. Preschoolers and preteens can work together to scrub plastic toys according to your church’s nursery policies.

**Prayer Aware** When kids pray for other children, they make a deeper connection to those in need. Have kids choose a world region to learn about and pray for the children there regularly.

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**“I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!”**  
—Luke 2:10-11
**MOVIES**

**Title:** Free Birds (Released 11/1/2013)
**Genre:** Animated
**Rating:** PG
**Cast:** Woody Harrelson, Amy Poehler, Owen Wilson
**Synopsis:** Two turkeys from opposite sides of the tracks must work together to travel back in time to get turkey off the Thanksgiving menu.
**Our Take:** This movie debuted to less than stellar reviews. The most unappealing elements are the lame wordplay, confusing plotline, forced emotional elements, and weak attempt at social commentary in the end. The movie attempts to compare turkey slayings to the cruelties Native Americans have suffered. This is a movie to say “pass” on.

**BOOKS**

**Title:** A Girl’s Guide to Best Friends and Mean Girls (Released 8/2013)
**Publisher:** Harvest House Publishers
**Summary:** Bestselling author Dannah Gresh and youth educator Suzy Weibel have developed this resource that targets the hearts of preteen girls as they grow in and pursue friendships.
**Our Take:** Healthy relationships don’t come naturally—but with God’s Word we learn to love others and create healthy boundaries. Use this book from the Secret Keeper Girl Series to direct your daughters to Jesus’ example, using interactive activities and practical applications on how to be a good friend.

**CULTURE & TRENDS**

Volunteering Is Good for Your Family (and Heart)
A study of 1,100 adults ages 51 to 91 found that those who volunteered at least 200 hours per year were 40 percent less likely to have high blood pressure than those who didn’t volunteer. (Relaxnews)

**QUICK STATS**

Kids who tend to be more generous begin the trend at age 2, suggesting a genetic preference for giving. But you can help preschoolers without a generous inclination—talking with kids about giving raises the probability of giving 18.5%. (Science Daily)

Seventy-three percent of kids believe they can make a difference in their communities. We only need to provide opportunities for children to act on this belief. (Children’s Ministry Magazine)

Those who volunteered as youth and whose parents volunteered became the most generous adults when it comes to giving their time. (Engaging Youth in Lifelong Service—Independent Sector)

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**Games, Sites & Apps**

- **Super Mario 3D World**
  This multiplayer Wii game brings Mario fun into a whole new dimension. As with many Nintendo games, the difficulty is scalable so preteens can play alongside adults. Rating Pending—RP.

- **Plants vs. Zombies**
  This free app is rated for ages 9 and up in iTunes for infrequent mild cartoon violence and mild fear themes. This app is available for almost every system and Smartphone. Caution: In-app purchases can add up quickly.

- **Sonic: Lost World**
  In this Nintendo Wii U and 3DS game, Sonic rescues small animals trapped in machines, all while saving the world from “The Deadly Six” villains. The art style is cute and kid friendly, featuring levels such as Candy Stage. Expect E-rated, fast-moving fun.

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This page is designed to help educate parents and isn’t meant to endorse any movie, music, or product. Our goal is to help you make informed decisions about what your children watch, read, listen to, and play.
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<th>SUNDAY</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>10 am</td>
<td>Hanging of the Greens</td>
<td>4 pm Advent Fair</td>
<td>Giving Tuesday</td>
<td>5:30 Potluck</td>
<td>6:00 Rehearsal</td>
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<td>7 pm Charge Conference</td>
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<td>10 am</td>
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<td>2 pm Dress rehearsal</td>
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<td>No 8:08 service 10 am Cantata</td>
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<td>Aiden Owens’ birthday</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 am Jesus’ Birthday party</td>
<td>Christmas Eve</td>
<td>Christmas Day</td>
<td>Cameron Kiasatpour and Natalie Porter’s birthday</td>
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<td>7 pm Worship</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9 am Pancakes and PJ’s</td>
<td>New Year’s Eve</td>
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State Street United Methodist Church Children and Family Ministries
DECEMBER AT A GLANCE

1st 8:08 am Worship
9:00 am Sunday school
10:00 am Worship/
   Hanging of the Greens
4:00—5:30 pm Advent Fair
3rd Giving Tuesday
7:00 pm Charge Conference
4th 5:30 - 6:00 pm Dinner
6:00 - 7:00 pm Rehearsal
7:15 Confirmation Class
7th 7:30—11 am Pancake Breakfast
9:30 am Christmas Parade
8th 8:08 am Worship
9:00 am Sunday school
10:00 am Worship/all kids sing
   Baby’s 1st Christmas
2 –4 pm Dress Rehearsal
11th 5:30 - 6:00 pm Dinner
5:45 pm Meet in choir room
6:15 pm Shepherds, Sheep and a Star
15th 9:00 am Sunday school
10:00 am Worship/ Cantata
18th No Wednesday activities
22nd 8:08 am Worship
9:00 am Sunday school
10:00 am Worship/ Jesus’ Birthday party
24th 7:00 pm Christmas Eve service
25th CHRISTMAS DAY
29th 8:08 am Worship
9:00 am Pancakes and PJs
10:00 am Worship

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Dec. 1st— All children are invited to participate in the Hanging of the Greens. Pre-k—3rd graders will come to the back of the sanctuary to help carry in the manger scene. 4th—6th graders will need to select a Chrismon from the tree and carry it to the back of the sanctuary. They will carry those in at the appropriate time. Parents are invited to help with crowd control in the back of the sanctuary! That afternoon, from 4—5:30 pm, all children and their parents and grandparents are invited to the Advent Fair. We will play games as a family, enjoy making and eating snacks together and have the option of making some beautiful and meaningful crafts as well. Please note that this is a family event. We especially encourage Dads to come. We have something special planned just for you!

Dec. 3rd— Go online to www.umcmission.org/give to donate to a missionary, mission location or UMCOR ministry. The General Board of Global Ministry will match anything you donate on the 3rd. Also that day, join us for Charge Conference at 7 pm in the sanctuary.

Dec. 7th— Support our Boy Scouts at the Pancake Breakfast and stick around for the parade. It will come right past the church on 11th Street!

Dec. 11th— Shepherds, Sheep and a Star! All kids need to be in the choir room by 5:45 to prepare for the performance.

Dec. 15th— Only one worship service that day for the Cantata. No Children’s Church that day.

Dec. 22nd— All children present at the 10:00 worship service will be invited to the Fellowship Hall to participate in a birthday party for Jesus. Encourage them to bring one of their toys (still in good condition) as a gift for Jesus and we will donate it to an area shelter so other children might enjoy it. Bonus: You can make a little extra room for all the presents they will be receiving!

Dec. 24th— Join your church family for the Christmas Eve service at 7 pm.

Dec. 29th— We expect a lot of people to still be traveling on this day, but we plan to relax and enjoy the morning with a pancake breakfast for the kids. Feel free to let them come to Sunday school in their PJ’s!

PRIZES AND PRIVILEGES

At 9:00 each Sunday we kick-off Sunday school with a special celebration of scripture, music and prayer before going to our separate classes. Kids have an opportunity to earn stickers which they can trade in for prizes or privileges. One way to get a sticker is to memorize the verse for the month. December’s verse is …

“ ‘I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!’”

—Luke 2:10-11

One of the privileges they can use their stickers on is to donate them to charity. We will convert the stickers into dollar amounts and choose a gift of livestock, food or supplies through Samaritan’s Purse for those in need around the world. I hope you will encourage your children to use their stickers in this way.

Acolyte Schedule

Dec. 1— Lydia Speer/ Aubin Jefferson
Dec. 8— Megan Simmons/ Hannah Jukes
Dec. 15— Annee Lasley/ Ashley Parks
Dec. 22— Cole Renfrow/ Tristan Martin
Dec. 29— Holiday/ using volunteers

Remember, if you can’t serve on your assigned day, please find a substitute and let Pastor Cindy know who will be taking your place. In addition to those listed above, Elizabeth Ring and Hayden Lasley are also options as subs.

SAVE THESE DATES:
Jan. 12—Safe Sanctuaries training and Children’s Council meeting
Jan. 26th—Family Olympics

E-mail: cbright@statestreetumc.org Office: 842-8171, ext. 3 Cell: 270-847-0590