

Giving perfect gifts to your children: Advice for Fathers

Dad, are you stumped about what to buy your children? Are you looking for a gift that will last past 10:00 A.M. Christmas—one they'll appreciate even in February? Something that won't swell your already suffering credit card accounts?

Give the gift of yourself. Write it in the form of a certificate, duly signed by you:

Dear _____,

This entitles you, my son /daughter whom I love very much, to fifteen minutes a day of my time. It will not be interrupted by phone calls, by professional football or basketball games, golf matches, market or grain reports, or any other distractions. I will also take the leadership in showing gratitude to God, and in saying "Thank You" to your mother for all that she does.

Dad

Honor that gift of yourself as if your life depends on it. You might discover that next year you'll want to increase your daily time with your child. **"Fathers . . . bring your children up in the training and instruction of the Lord," Ephesians 6:4.**

Giving perfect gift to your children: Advice for mothers

by Norma Blair

Christmas time often makes silent martyrs of mothers. All the members of the family ask for things. Tots want toys. Older kids expect computer games. Teens think they need pickups and sport vehicles. Even husbands fancy pricey toys. For mothers, the holiday season differs little from the rest of the year; it's just more intense. Mothers regularly must advise, provide taxi service, and supply energy at levels that would wilt Superwoman.

**How can you give perfect gifts to your family and retain your serenity—
at least your sanity?**

Four simple suggestions.

- **First**, work with your husband to form plans that make all family members responsible. Once infants toddle, they can help with tasks. As they grow older, increase their accountability. If they are capable of taking toys out to play with them, they should be able to return them where they belong. They should never get out new toys, until they have put the others away.
- **Second**, take time out to renew yourself. Occasionally, get away for a day.
- **Third**, honor your husband in the presence of your children. It will turn your children into pussycats and your husband into a tiger.
- **Forget being a martyr**. Go ahead; ask them for something that you want.

"Be beautiful inside, in your hearts, with the lasting charm of a gentle and quiet spirit which is so precious to God," I Peter 3:4 (Living Bible).

