



Holiday Gift-Giving Guide

For Young Adults with Autism & Their Families

1. Who Do I Buy Gifts For?

You **don't** have to buy a gift for everyone you know. Most people choose from this list:

- **Close family:**
Parents, step-parents, siblings, grandparents.
- **Close friends:**
A best friend or a small number of special friends.
- **Support people (optional):**
A favorite staff member, mentor, job coach, or teacher.
- **Gift exchange or Secret Santa:**
If you're part of a group exchange, you usually just buy for the **one person** you're assigned.

It's okay to say:

"I'm doing small gifts this year"

or

"I'm only doing gifts for close family and the gift exchange."

2. How Much Should I Spend?

- Set a **budget** first (for example: "I'll spend \$5–\$15 per person.")
- Handmade gifts are **just as meaningful** as store-bought ones.
- Many people like thoughtful, small gifts better than expensive ones.

You can ask:

"What's our price limit for gifts this year?"

3. How Do I Pick Out a Gift?

Think about **what the person likes**:

- **Hobbies:** reading, art, video games, sports, cooking
- **Favorites:** color, snacks, TV show, sports team, animals
- **Daily life:** something that makes their day easier or more fun

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Easy gift ideas:

- A mug + hot chocolate packets
- A small Lego set or puzzle
- A journal and pen
- Fuzzy socks or cozy blanket
- Gift card for coffee, fast food, or a favorite store
- Their favorite candy in a cute container

You can ask them directly:

“What are three things you’d love to get as a gift this year?”

That’s not rude – lots of people appreciate being asked!

4. How Do I Make a Gift?

If money is tight or you like being creative, homemade is perfect.

Ideas:

- **Baked goods:** cookies, brownies, or fudge in a bag with a ribbon
- **Art:** a drawing, painting, or digital art printed and framed
- **Coupon book:**
 - “Good for one movie night together”
 - “Good for one car wash”
 - “Good for helping with a chore”
- **Photo gift:** a printed photo of a special memory in a frame
- **Playlists:** a list of songs you think they’d love (with a little card)

Homemade gifts = **time + care**, and that matters a lot.

5. Gift-Giving Etiquette (Manners)

When you give a gift:

- Look at the person (or in their direction) and say something like:
“I got this for you. Happy holidays!”
- You don’t have to say a big speech. A small sentence is enough.

When you receive a gift:

- Even if you don’t love it, try to say:
“Thank you for thinking of me.”
“Thank you, I appreciate it.”
- If you like it, you can add:

“I love this!” or “This is really cool!”

It’s okay to practice these phrases ahead of time.

6. Handling Overwhelm

Holidays can be a lot: noise, people, wrapping paper, surprises. Some tips:

- If surprises feel stressful, talk to family about doing **less surprising, more predictable** gifts.
- It's okay to step away for a **break** during gift opening.
- You can tell people:

"I'm happy to do gifts, but I might need a quiet break."

7. Remember: It's the Thought That Counts

The most important part of a gift is the **care behind it**, not the price.

A simple, \$5 gift with a kind note can mean more than something expensive.