

Visit With The Utays

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School Psychology and Education Specialists Reprinted from Northern Connections

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Teaching Generosity

I do not want my children to think of the holidays as simply a time of getting. How can I teach my children to want meaningful gifts and also be generous?

Many of us grew up hearing good intentions like, "We should volunteer this year," or values statements like, "Not everything we give or get needs to have a price tag on it." However, talking about and applying are not always connected, even for the best of parents.

Do not expect your children to automatically see the value in giving of yourself. To help you really **activate** this important life lesson, we have compiled some suggestions to get you thinking and welcome hearing other ideas from readers.

Encouraging and Teaching Generosity

The Gift of Time: Volunteer at a local charity, place of worship, or soup kitchen and explain to your child how important it is to share ourselves. Children can think of their own volunteer projects--making something or donating some of their toys for a hospital or religious charity, doing yard work for an elderly neighbor, or even cleaning up a vacant lot near your home. Volunteering teaches children directly that we do not always have to receive a monetary payment for there to be value in service for others.

Pass-It-On: Help pack your child's outgrown clothing and other used items with other family clothes or household goods that are no longer needed, and take a family trip to Goodwill or Salvation Army. If this is already a habit, add this gem: Let the workers there explain what happens to donated materials.

Share Your Children: Take your children to bring comfort to those living at a nursing home. If your children are learning piano or other instruments, they can play for the residents. Not only will they find a willing audience for their hard work in learning their instruments, they will also experience the simple joy of bringing happiness to others through donation of a little time and effort.

Reading and Writing as Caring: While you are visiting the nursing home, let your children read to the residents. The same holds true for very ill children who are in the hospital during the holiday time. This is a good opportunity to also sneak in a reason for your children to work on improving reading skills. If you cannot visit, sending a letter (including something creative like a poem, story, or drawing) or recording a book on tape are much appreciated gifts.

We hope to inspire you to take advantage of the many ways you can teach your children to be generous while at the same time allowing them to do what comes naturally – enjoying getting a meaningful gift. This year, right now, make room in your schedule to join with your children in re-learning once again the value of giving of yourself. Teaching generosity through direct experience with it will be a powerful way to help your children prepare today for success tomorrow.

Please ask! For more information and great websites to help with education challenges, visit the Total Learning Center website: www.TotalLearningCenter.com or call (724) 940-1090 for a free copy of a TLC cd full of useful information for parents.