

Smart Gifts from the HeartMart

We plan on giving our children passes to encourage them to enjoy the outdoors or to be more creative. These passes are National Park pass, Provincial Park pass, Forestry farm, or the Nutrien Wonder Hub. We also often give a family gift through MCC gift giving ideas like a farm animals.

And we also give them a food basket of canning goods from our garden. This is always a highlight for them, especially the spicy pickles.

- **hand made Xmas cards - delivered by hand, if applicable**
- **gifting consumables to friends**
- **handmade gifts - calendars, mitts, etc.**
- **minimizing gift giving - we all have toooooo much stuff. Time is the biggest gift.**

For several years now we have not exchanged gifts with the adults in my husband's family; we each send what we would have spent to a charity of our own choosing. Our adult children and we agree on either a specific charity or kind of charity and contribute towards that. This year I am going to suggest we pick a charity that has alternate gifts and have the grandchildren pick the gift e.g. goats, rabbits, vaccinations, school supplies, etc. That helps them become aware of how others live and they know the adults in the family are giving money for these types of gifts.

- **Asking for money for sponsoring refugees, instead of gifts for ourselves**
- **Gift catalogues for organizations like MCC or World Vision**
- **Gift cards for local and independent stores, e.g. bookstores, outdoor gear stores, grocery stores**
- **The "experience" gifts, e.g. restaurant gift cards, membership to local attractions or organizations, IOUs for outings when we visit family next :)**
- **In our church small group, we practise regifting at Christmas, in anonymous draw format. Each person goes home with one gift which may make its way to Village Green inventory or remain in its new home, to be appreciated there.**

We have dispensed with buying gifts for extended family. Our nuclear family now is made up of 6 adults. Even in our small family group we draw names so we each give one gift. If we don't feel we have time or creative power to make a gift, we may choose to buy at a thrift store or choose a gift created locally or one that supports a local charity. With only one gift to find, we are freed up to really consider the one person whose name we have drawn. I have heard of another family of 5 that draws names similarly. Their gift is specific to book giving, which, according to their rules, may be a regifted book or a purchased book, new or thrifted.

And speaking of thrift, why not make your local thrift store be the first stop on your gift and decor hunt? As stated on their website, when you support MCC Thrift, you're part of something powerful: A place where everyone wins. We're talking about winning in the truest sense of the word.

And here's a link to ideas for thrifty decorations: <https://mcsask.ca/MCC12daysofChritmascrafting>

Tradition Renditions

Traditions are structures built by individuals, not by expectations, real or perceived, of others.

Here are a few traditional ideas:

- family cooking or making event – we join in the fun and the spoils!
- traditions of certain meals – our Christmas Eve meal is always cheese fondue, accompanying gift giving and reading the Christmas Story
- on Christmas Eve, we *always* watch the Wildwood Christmas Movie of 2002
- spending time together – with family and friends
- no matter what the weather, our family always takes part in a Christmas Day walk

These are only some ideas that come from a small number of people. What are your plans to make Christmas celebrations joyfully scant on consumerism?