



## Give presents without a price tag

This holiday season may look different for a variety of reasons. Maybe COVID-19 concerns cause your family to distance or gather virtually. Perhaps your gift list is smaller because of the economic impact.

Many gifts of time and talent can bring true meaning to the season without putting a strain on your budget. And while experiences may need to look a little different this year, they can make meaningful gifts. Consider the following free or inexpensive gift ideas this holiday season.

- Gift an experience.
  - Pick up brochures or print out a webpage of a place you can visit. Wrap those with a “voucher” to go. It doesn’t have to be a sporting event or concert. It could be just as meaningful to go to a free or low-cost museum or park. Plus, it would be something to look forward to when weather warms up!
  - Or make your voucher for something more immediate, like a movie or sports viewing night. Package it with snacks or a blanket for snuggling, and you’ve got a fun night in your future!
- Gift your talents.
  - Have a knack for smartphones or computers? Share your skills by offering to clean someone’s machine or back up important files and photos.
  - If you’re handy in the kitchen, promise a meal, complete with wait service and cleanup. Make it extra special with a menu and décor of a particular theme that the recipient would enjoy.
  - Use your crafting skills to make something special. Write, draw, or paint something to frame. Put together a scrapbook or create a memory journal. Whatever your hobby – woodworking, jewelry making, sewing, knitting – gift something unique!
  - While this may not be the year for food gifts, you can follow online recipes to make items for a spa day instead. Look for homemade items such as bath bombs, hand scrub, or fancy soaps.
- Gift a memory.
  - Read a little love between the lines. Honor the family cook by collecting favorite recipes into a pretty book. Share fiction by passing on a favorite book with a special inscription. Or pay forward a nonfiction book with a few sticky notes highlighting the “must-read” sections.
  - Share memories through photos. Create a photo collage to email, print, or post on social media. Create a phone background or computer wallpaper. Preserve memories by digitizing old prints.
  - Create a playlist of songs that remind you of a special time or trip. Shoot a home video documenting a favorite family activity or custom.

Some of the best gifts this holiday season just might be free! Making memories with your loved ones can be the most cherished gift of all.

**Source:** Kelly May, Senior Extension Associate for Family Finance and Resource Management

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