

Alternative Gifts

- A hand made **recipe book** would be a good idea. A compilation of old family recipes from your family and friends. Start collecting them early and take your time and edit and make them nice and sturdy (to withstand the heavy use!)
- **Books on tape** - this is great if you have two or three people on your that will enjoy the same book, it only costs time! Make a **puppet theatre** - paint a white sheet, cut a hole out for the stage, and hang in hall/door).
- One year I made **mini loaves of quick bread**. I think it was pumpkin bread. One could make cranberry or whatever you like. I wrapped the loaves and placed them in small baskets that I picked up at jumble sales over the summer months. I then tied it up with a raffia bow along with a recipe card for the bread. Another year I made key chains out of beads that matched the colour of each persons car.
- Some gifts we've had: - We made **writing paper** with hand-drawn silly little doodles and hand-folded envelopes for some friends. - For most of those who weren't ready to move to a buy-nothing Christmas, we bought organic herbal teas and fair-trade coffees... they don't add to the clutter & they support sustainable businesses!
- As an another idea, try www.oxfamunwrapped.com. It allows you to send a gift to the 3rd World and depending on your budget you can buy chickens, blankets, radios, right up to a travelling theatre!
- At our house, we try to make all Christmas gifts. That means that December is a flurry of activity as our children make salt dough ornaments and then paint them to give as presents. Last year, one boy made play dough, and one made a crayon ball.



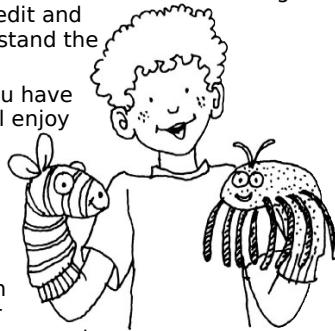
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with Christian symbols; these have become tradition. For our extended families, we made books with old pictures and

memories. Our children especially love hand-made gifts; in this age where everything is plastic, they relish the idea of love in a sweater. -

- A couple of years ago I did a **calendar** for the family with everyone's photos and birthdays. - *Karin*

- Last year we had a **baking exchange** instead of a big party for work. Everyone brought cakes or treats - whatever their speciality was (one person made tree ornaments instead). We invited people and asked for a reply so we knew how many cakes to make, one for each person because we had so many people. We all went home with piles of cookies and treats. It was great, and so much fun. - *Annika Sangster*

- If you are tech-savy give **Linux** for Christmas! It's free and it works like a charm! And give a hand installing it. - *Gilles Pelletier*

- Just try make a spiritual gift, not material, not an object. I prefer **doing something** - singing a song, writing a poem - for a person. Plus a little beautiful card, because most people want to "have something in the hands," it's just a habit. —*Matania, Russia*

- **Babysitting coupons** for the new parents. Grow your own veggies, can or freeze them and give them away at Christmas/Solstice. Spend more time with your family and friends...when you're dead you won't be able to. Decide as a family to work less hours, spend less and have more time together. Sweep the pavement for your neighbour. Plant trees. — Lee

- Look through your (and your kids') old clothes, cut out squares of fabrics they will remember, and make a little wall hanging or pillow or stuffed toy or whatever. Pick a nice quote or scripture verse and write it up in calligraphy or a nice handwriting. — Gwentyth

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