

Gifts

A gift given is a double joy for two people: the receiver lights up with being remembered, and you, the giver, are rewarded for a kindness shared.

Simplify with a Gift Theme

Simplify your gift shopping by visiting only certain types of stores for everyone on your list. Choose a giving “theme” for the year, but get a different gift in that theme for each person so it is personalized. For example, all the women get jewelry, spa baskets, gift certificates, or robes. Men get sporting event tickets, restaurant certificates, or tools. Sweaters, CDs, DVDs, or books all make great themes too.

A Dozen Gift Theme Ideas

1. Sweaters for everyone
2. Favorite restaurant or movie gift cards
3. Gloves and mittens
4. DVDs
5. CDs or books
6. Tickets to a play, musical, or retreat
7. Photo book or digital camera
8. A trip or the latest technology
9. Favorite magazine plus a year’s subscription
10. Chocolate, nuts, or gourmet food basket
11. Spa, massage, or bath items
12. Jewelry, purse, or accessories

For Men

(Practical is generally better than sentimental.)

Tool kit
Computer software
Travel clock
TV, radio, cell phone
Favorite hobby gear
Sporting event tickets
Camping equipment
Hunting or fishing gear

For Women

(Personal is generally better than practical.)

Spa basket or gift certificate
Clothes
Candles
Cookbook
Chocolate anything
Jewelry

For Kids

(It’s best to ask for a prioritized list!)

Age-appropriate toys
Clothes
Hobby or sports gear
Book, CD, or DVD
Adventure pass or certificate
Computer games
Movie tickets

General

Calendar
Desk clock
Paperweight
Food basket
Chocolate or other candy
Book or audio book

Important Gift-Giving Strategies

Gift giving can either simplify or complicate your life. Keep it simple as you shop and make your plans. Take notes and you will get better each year. The sooner you get started the less stress you will encounter and the more likely you are to get a gift that is sure to make the receiver smile.

1. The mall or specialty stores. Shop where you get the best results. Keep track of where you buy most of your gifts from year to year and head there first. They will have new merchandise each year that will probably work well for you again.

2. Shopping online. Order your gifts online and use the “Ship Direct” option to send the gift to someone else in their household to wrap and hide for you. Offer to return the favor. Also keep a list of online shopping items, including expected arrival dates, order confirmation numbers, and shipping costs. Going online may allow you to have it bought and shipped in less time and money than physically going out to the store would do.

3. Gifts to mail. Order your gifts online and use the “Ship Direct” option to send them directly to the intended recipients. Be sure to purchase and ship the gifts by the first week of December to ensure their arriving on time.

4. Practical vs. sentimental gifts. Buy practical gifts for practical people and sentimental gifts for sentimental people. This makes your gift more likely to hit the mark. For clues about which is which, note what they give you. For instance, if you usually get kitchen gadgets from your mother, that tells you she likes practical gifts.

5. Children’s gifts. Shop for children first as their gift choices can run out of stock. Keep one gift slot for each child open until it’s nearly Christmas, because they often think of something new they want based on holiday advertisements. They will probably be the most delighted with their gifts, so try to think about what a child would most like to open.

6. Handmade gifts. Make a schedule by mapping out on your calendar how much you can realistically accomplish each week before Christmas—whether it’s a large project or a few small ornaments. Then schedule crafting times as appointments and stick to them. Major projects, such as a full-size quilt, should be started earlier in the year and, hopefully, completed by Halloween so you can avoid the stress of trying to complete them during the holiday rush.

Remember, a gift shows you had the person in your thoughts, and a note on your card tells them why you thought they’d like it. Gift giving is a skill to learn. Keep working to hit the mark of delight and satisfaction with the receiver.