



Inexpensive Gift-Giving Ideas

*Items with an * include instructions at the end.*

Home-Made Gifts

- Potpourri*
- Frame a list of the recipient's most positive traits (e.g. "responsible, sensitive, handsome, funny—ask friends, family and coworkers for input)
- Handwritten recipes
- Foods (can include the recipe): e.g. bread, dipping herbs and oil, cookies, cocoa mix in a pretty jar, "Puppy Chow"
- Photo refrigerator magnet*
- Prayer Journal: Write a prayer a day for the recipient for a certain period of time like two weeks or 40 days
- Play Dough*
- Mix music CD
- Child's artwork, framed
- Framed photo (e.g. that you took or of you and gift recipient together)
- Filled photo Album (old-fashioned or printed from an on-line site (e.g. Kodak Gallery or Shutterfly)
- Also available at print-your-own photo sites: mouse pad, puzzle, coffee mug, blanket, t-shirt
- Flower pens in a vase*
- Tie-dyed shirt (WalMart has a good tie-dye kit with instructions; be sure to use cotton shirts)
- Yard sign - paint the recipient's last name or street number on a sign or rock for the front yard
- Homemade meal(s), pre-portioned and frozen (see www.30daygourmet.com for ideas)
- Put together a collage of special photos
- Crossword puzzles, word-Searches, mazes, and other printable games (e.g. <http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com> or <http://blackdog4kids.com/games/maze> or www.printactivities.com)

Home-Made Coupons

Write these coupons by hand or create them on the computer and print them out. The possibilities are endless. Since you choose the coupon's content, you determine how much the gift will cost. Here are some ideas:

Coupons For Kids Under 10

- a great big hug
- 30 extra minutes of TV or video games
- playing a game together—just you and me
- a bubble bath prepared for you, complete with bath supplies
- bedtime extended for 30 minutes
- making cookies together
- 1 double scoop ice cream at your favorite ice cream shop
- a sleepover at our house
- trip to the zoo

Coupons For Adults, Friends and Families

- 1 meal kit gift basket each month for 12 months (e.g. salad kit, pasta, sauce and bread)
- a nice visit over a cup of coffee—on me
- 1 evening of babysitting
- an afternoon of crafting fun
- Girls' Night Out

Coupons For Teens & Tweens

- 1 full tank of gas
- a manicure
- "Mom's Taxi Service" 1 ride to and from the destination of your choice
- movie rental of your choice, with snacks)
- "Get out of Chores Free" card
- car wash
- 1 thorough room-cleaning—I clean it for you

Romantic Coupons:

- a romantic dinner out
- 1 take-out dinner brought home for you
- weekend getaway
- passionate kiss
- a nice picnic—just you and me
- lunchtime rendezvous
- breakfast in bed
- foot massage

Food & Drink

- Pretty glass jar filled with candy
- Pistachios or other nuts
- Muffin mixes with a muffin pan
- Variety of bread mixes
- Bottle of sparkling cider
- Locally made barbeque or steak sauce with a basting brush
- Pancake or waffle mix and a bottle of real maple syrup
- Survival Kit*

Food & Drink Puns (include note card with a "punny" wish)

- Chex Party Mix - Remember Santa "Chex" his list twice to see who's been naughty or nice...so be good for goodness sake!! Merry Christmas!!
- Hersheys Hugs and Hershey's Kisses – Christmas Hugs and Kisses for you
- Fruit Basket - May your New Year be Festive and Fruitful!!
- Eggnog - Have an "Udderly Moovalous" Christmas!!
- Mug with Hot Chocolate Mix, Coffee and/or Tea - Wishing you a warm and wonderful Christmas!
- Variety of Packs of Gum - By Gum, you're great! Have a Merry Christmas!
- Jar of Jam - Hoping you have a Holiday "Jam" packed with fun!!
- Pasta and a Jar of Sauce- Have a Pasta-tively Happy Holiday!
- Chocolate Mousse Mix - Merry Christmousse" to our "Deer" Friends!
- Wire whisk filled with Chocolate kisses) - "We WHISK you a Merry KISSmas!!"
- Jolly Ranchers - Have a Holly "Jolly" Christmas!!

Stationary

- Calendar
- Pencil and Notepad
- Journal with a pen
- Post-It Notes pads—colorful, different shapes
- Address book
- Note cards and a book of stamps
- Gel pens and pretty stationary

Gift Certificates/Gift Cards

- Video rental
- Fast food restaurant
- MP3 (e.g. iTunes)
- Coffee shop
- Nail salon
- it seems that almost every business offers them these days

Plants

- Fresh flowers
- Potted herbs, plant or flowers (with growing tips)
- A pack of seeds with a pot, gardening gloves or bag of soil

Other Ideas

- Christmas ornament
- Holiday serving bowl or platter
- Magazine with a coffee shop gift card
- Pedometer
- Picture frame
- Specialty cookbook
- Makeup tote
- Collectible sports cards
- A few Magazines tied together with a ribbon
- Game tokens from a local arcade
- Deck of cards and a book of card game rules
- Board game
- Puzzles
- Craft supplies
- Blank CD's or DVD's
- Mending or sewing kit
- Flashlight with batteries
- A pair of really nice socks
- Slippers
- Special soaps and a bath puff
- Set of dish towels
- Nail polish kit
- Make a charity donation in the recipient's name

Selected Home-Made Gift Directions

Potpourri

4-oz. cinnamon sticks, broken in small pieces
3-oz. whole allspice
1-oz. whole cloves
1/2-oz. crushed nutmeg
1/2-oz. ginger
2-oz. orange peel, minced
12 drops each of cinnamon, allspice, and orange oil

Combine the spices and oils.
Place them in a covered container.
Allow the mixture to set for about 3 weeks.
Cut calico, tulle or lace into 4- or 5-inch squares or circles.
Put 1/4 to 1/3 cup of the potpourri in the center of the cut-out fabric.
Gather the sides of the fabric.
Tie the top with a ribbon.

Play Dough

1 cup flour
1 tablespoon oil
1 cup water
1/2 cup salt
2 teaspoons cream of tartar
food coloring

Combine all ingredients in a saucepan.
Cook the mixture over medium heat.
Stir constantly until the mixture forms a ball.
Knead it until smooth.
Store play dough in a covered container.

Refrigerator Magnets

Use laminating sheets (available in the office supply department) to cover a special photo.
Trim excess laminating sheet.
Apply a peel-and-stick magnet (available in the crafts department) to the back of the laminated photo.
Or, put the photo in an inexpensive plastic frame (without glass) and apply the magnet to the back of that frame.

Another variation

Print a list of words that people can use to form phrases and sentences on the fridge. It's fun to include silly things in the mix. Include nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs and words like "the," "and," "but," "if," "or," "why," and "where" as well as punctuation.

Survival Kit

Put one of each of the following candy bars or packs of candy in a cellophane bag.
Print a card with the following explanation.
Punch a hole in the top corner of the card.
Run a ribbon through the hole and tie it to close the bag.

Personal Survival Kit

Snickers to remind you to laugh
Red Vines to encourage you to remain flexible
Blow Pop so you can blow off frustration
Starbursts for a burst of energy when you need it most
100 Grand to let you know you're worth a fortune

Flower Pens in a Vase or Pot

Select a variety of silk flowers and greenery to make a bouquet.
Use green floral tape to attach a simple ballpoint pen (you can discard the pen cap) to the stem of each silk flower or piece of greenery.
If using a clear vase, fill it with decorative glass pebbles or stones.
If using an opaque vase or pot, you can fill it with the decorative pebbles, uncooked rice or uncooked beans.
Arrange the flower pens into a bouquet in the pot or vase.

Sugar Body Scrub

1 clear glass jar
1 cup sugar
1/2 cup olive oil or grape seed oil
scented essential oil
label
food coloring

Mix the sugar and oil in a bowl.
Add scent(s), if desired: e.g. peppermint or orange are refreshing; lavender is relaxing.
Add food coloring, if desired.
Put on a label with "Made by..." and "Shake before using."