



# Christmas Giving Ideas

Pam McCune & Kim Wier

*Kim and Pam are two moms who were searching to bring more meaning to their own family celebrations. As a result, they wrote the book Redeeming the Season: Simple Ideas for a Memorable and Meaningful Christmas. Here's a great idea Kim came up, after searching for a popular toy for her son one Christmas.*

Finally, I understood all the fearful and anxious faces I'd been seeing behind the counters. Day after day, clerks had been confronted by joyless, frustrated shoppers angered by inconveniences. On that day, I was thankful I had not been one of them. But what about the day before? I could vividly recall my frustration at having to wait in long lines, my curtness because I was running late and my less-than-pleasant demeanor after a long day of shopping. I had missed many opportunities to be a light in someone else's dark day.

That episode prompted our family's Gift-with-Purchase program. At the beginning of the holiday we fill a basket with ornaments that we have made on a family night. Everything in the basket is representative of some part of the Christmas story. We make angels, stars of Bethlehem, and crowns. On each one we attach a Bible verse that conveys the true meaning of Christmas. From Thanksgiving until Christmas Eve, we keep this basket of ornaments in the car. Whenever we go into a store, a restaurant, or even the dry cleaners, we take one of these ornaments to give to the person who assists us.

We have found that giving a gift with our purchase does two things. First, it helps keep us accountable for our attitudes around others. We can't very well gripe someone out for giving us the wrong change and then offer him or her a spiritually significant gift. Even greater, though, is what happens in the attitude of the people who receive it. In a small way it says that they are valuable, what they do is important, and they are appreciated. We will never know what effect the Word of God has in the life of each stranger as he or she reads the verse attached to the ornament, but we are happy to leave that responsibility with God. For our part, the blessing comes back when a smile crosses the face of someone who received our Gift with Purchase.

## Tips for preparing your Gift with Purchase

- Filling the basket full of give-away ornaments that you will keep in your car makes a great family night activity.
- Choose an ornament design that is simple to make and durable enough to keep in the car.
- As your children work, talk to them about the command Jesus gave us to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14)
- Don't forget to attach an appropriate Bible verse to each ornament. Remind your children that Scripture has an eternal power of its own, and God says it will not go out without accomplishing His purposes.
- When all the ornaments are completed, lead a family prayer time. Ask God to help the people who receive the ornaments understand more about Jesus' purpose on this earth and what makes Christmas such a holy holiday.

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