

Family Living Focus
by
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What To Do About Gifts?

About a month ago our first and second grade boys started talking about the holidays and you guessed it, their thoughts immediately turned to gifts and you know who.

Lucky for Russell and I, this was the first year that the "I wants" really set in. We've all heard them as our children announce to us everything that they want and expect to receive. After a few days of this, we adults decided to bring this to closure!

We took a Sunday afternoon and the boys practiced their spelling and writing skills as they each wrote their list. Well as you can imagine the lists went on and on.

It was very convenient for us

to remind the boys that just a few gifts would be good since we need to share so all children get some gifts. Russell encouraged the boys to prioritize the items on their list and number their top three choices.

The first question out of the oldest one's mouth was "What do you mean prioritize?"

When that lesson was over they very reluctantly made some hard decisions and then discussed between themselves just where they should let their lists so Santa would see them.

These days Russell and I are constantly reminding ourselves that we are role models for how the boys view and understand the world around them and interpret relationships.

At our house, we try to down-play gifts and encourage remembering the true meaning of the holiday season.

Money can't buy happiness. Boy — is that a hard lesson for even us adults!

Do you sometimes feel that the holidays are consuming you as you scurry around? There's still time to step back and look at this season of the year with a new perspective!

Consider simplifying your holiday season and deciding what are the truly important traditions for your family. Talk with the other adults in your family to get some feedback. Usually it's the adults, not the children who have the strongest arguments for lavish holidays.

Our children think the best part of the holidays is when Russell's 10 brothers and sisters and their families gather for the Annual Redding Christmas Party. There are lots of children of every age, and for a child that spells a grand time.

Consider your gift giving practices. It's hard to choose gifts for some family members who seem to have everything. This year consider a gift of time. This gift will show how much you care because you took the time to choose something personalized just for the receiver!

Make up a small certificate

that might read like this: In appreciation for all you do for those around you, I'm proud to give you This gift can be redeemed at any time during the year by calling me and arranging a convenient time. Then sign your name.

Here are some gift of time ideas. What about a pie or cookies, a homemade dinner delivered to the recipient's house, a car washing, leaf raking, snow shoveling, an evening of child care, offer a particular talent such as some gardening help, time to help get a genealogy started or a hair cut.

One year Russell and I gave my parents an old blue canning jar full of "gifts of time" slips. Each slip was lovingly chosen for the jar and we'll admit many related to some family joke.

When the gift was given, Mom and Dad enjoyed many laughs as they read each slip. We included numerous slips for helping to bale and unload hay good for the hottest day of the summer, helping to rope calves for dehorning and castrating, a batch of homemade ice cream, a hot meal at a moments notice with us at our house when mom had to work, help in planting the corn patch, a father-daughter day hunting deer, help picking strawberries... well I think you get the point.

Still looking for some gift idea,

consider a gift of experience. Give someone you care about the chance to try something new. These types of gifts provide memories for a lifetime. Teach someone how to hunt, make jelly, make a stool, sew, knit, play a musical instrument, or a dance.

Bring a smile to your loved one's face. Give the gift of time and thought. Happy holidays.

BEST TURKEY SOUP

After all the meat is removed, break carcass into pieces and place in large stock pot. Add 3 quarts of water and bring to bowl. Skim off the foam and let simmer for about 2 hours.

In another stock pot, place a strainer and pour turkey stock in. Let cool and remove any meat that may still be left on carcass and place in stock.

To this stock add:

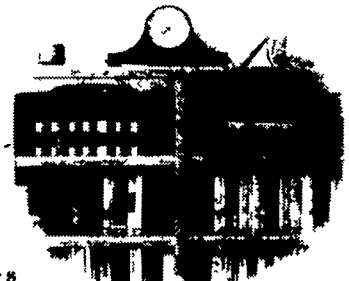
- 1 cup chopped onions
- 1 cup chopped carrots
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 tablespoon parsley
- 1 tablespoon dill weed
- 2 teaspoons salt or to taste
- Pepper to taste

Let simmer for another hour. Serve with rice or fine noodles and hot homemade bread.


I usually reserve turkey meat and chop it and add to soup. Perfect for a cold winter nights.

Lee Laverty
Mount Joy

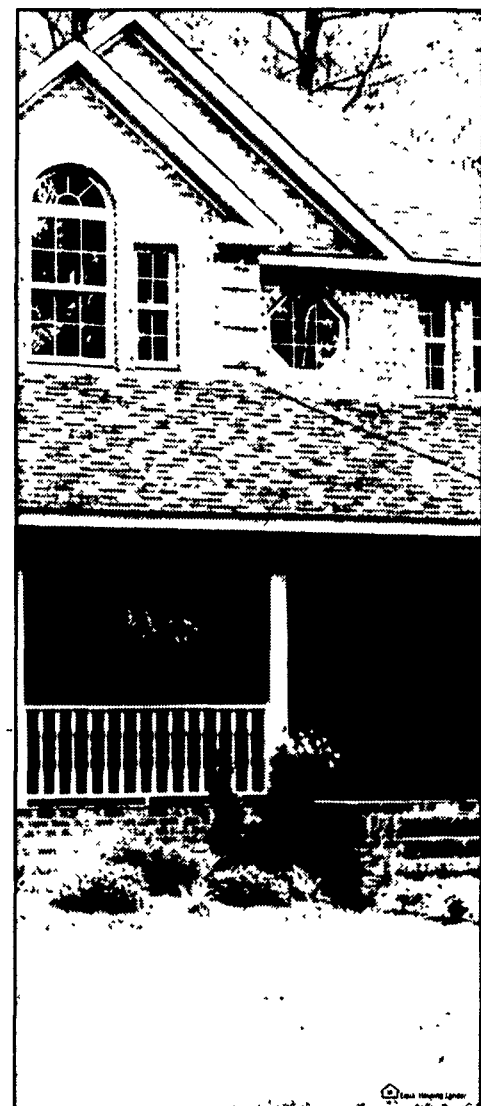
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