

# Teaching Children to Give

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The holidays are upon us. During this time we place a lot of attention on giving our kids what they want. Children are often focused on making sure the adults in their lives know what they want as gifts. The media is full of ideas of the latest and greatest toy or technological wonder that is a “must have” for the holiday season.



This time is also a time of charitable giving. We are aware of those families and individuals who are in need. Charitable organizations and caring individuals go through great efforts to see to the needs of people who are having difficulty providing for themselves and their families.

During this time of giving, we have an opportunity to teach our children the importance of giving. For

children, learning to give and help others can give them a feeling of empowerment. In an uncertain world, this feeling of empowerment can offset the fearful feelings that may come from the unexpected.

Starting at age three, children can participate with their family in volunteer activities. These experiences can teach children generosity and empathy toward others. They can also teach children that they are part of a larger community.

Parents should create a family environment where giving is natural and encouraged. Let your children see you dropping money into charity boxes, encourage them to help you pick out canned foods during a food drive. Let them tag along when you participate in a walk for your favorite charity. Each time your child sees you giving to charity, it reinforces the good behavior. It also gives you an opportunity to explain why it is important to give and how rewarding giving can be.

Here are some ways children can learn the value of giving:

Set up a giving box at home where family members contribute extra money when they have it. As a family, identify whom you want to serve with these donations.

Encourage your children to go through and identify toys, clothing and school supplies that they want to donate to children in need.

As a family, donate time to serve at a food pantry or soup kitchen.

Making charitable giving part of family life will teach the value of charity to your children, and will impact their lives for the better.

Whatever holiday you honor during this season, may love surround you and your families.

With love and affection,

Rosemarie

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