



Gifts Come Down at Christmas

Luanne Barrow Toronto, Ontario

Preparation

Decorate the room with Christmas gifts of all sorts ... gift bags, boxes, gifts wrapped in different ways. A small, inexpensive gift could be given to each lady in attendance.

Welcome

Ice Breaker

Ask each lady to tell about a special gift they have received, i.e. something someone did especially for them, a special gift received as a child etc.

Song: SASB 76/TB 306, *As With Gladness Men Of Old*

Chorus: SASB 85/TB 52, *O Come Let Us Adore Him, Christ The Lord*

Heart Gifts

*It's not the things that can be bought
That are life's richest treasure,
It's just the little 'heart gifts'
That money cannot measure ...
A cheerful smile, a friendly word,
A sympathetic nod
Are priceless little treasures
From the storehouse of our God..
They are the things that can't be
bought
With silver or with gold
For thoughtfulness and kindness
And love are never sold ...
They are the priceless things in life
For which no one can pay,
And the giver finds rich recompense
in giving them away.*

Helen Steiner Rice

Prayer: Thanking God for the special gifts He gives us.

History of Gift Wrap

Gifts have been wrapped since the invention of paper in 105 A.D. in China. The paper-making process was kept a secret by the Chinese for centuries, but by 800 A.D. the process was known in Egypt. The secret spread to Europe, where the first paper mill was started in 1085.

Wallpaper, first made in England in 1509, was the forerunner of gift wrap and was used briefly, but it cracked and tore when folded. By the early 20th century, gifts were wrapped in plain brown paper or tissue.

America's gift wrap industry had humble beginnings in Hallmark founder Joyce C. Hall's downtown Kansas City, Mo., store in the early 20th century. Hall is known for being the founder of the greeting card industry, but he can also be credited with the "invention" of present-day gift wrap. Hallmark's launch of printed gift wrap came about almost by accident.



to wrap holiday packages. Some decorative envelope lining papers from France were brought from the manufacturing plant and put on top of a showcase, for 10 cents a sheet, and they sold quickly. The next year, the sheets were offered three for 25 cents and they again sold out. Soon gift wrap became the first product Hallmark made that was a departure from greeting cards.



In the 1930s, Hallmark introduced Hall Sheen ribbon, the shiny kind that sticks to itself when licked like a stamp. It's still the company's most popular ribbon, even after all those years.

Hallmark introduced jumbo plastic gift bags for large items in the 1970s, paper gift bags with handles in 1987, and curl cascade ribbons in 1994.

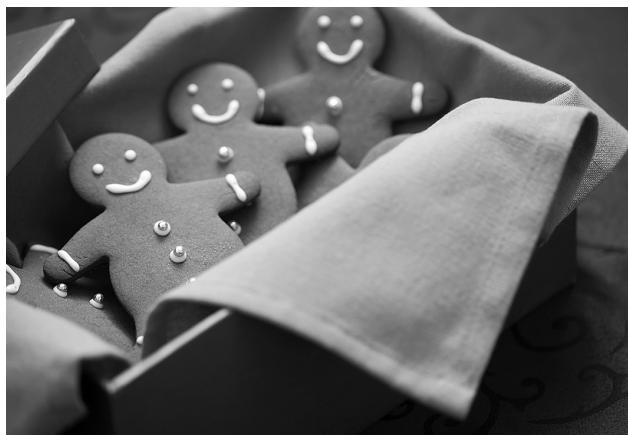
Before Christmas in 1917, the Hall Brothers' store had sold out of the white, red and green tissue and the one holly pattern being used

Today, Hallmark is the leader of the gift wrap industry.

Gift Wrapping Ideas: These can be printed on a sheet and given to the ladies and perhaps the group may have other suggestions

- For an elegant package start with gold foil wrapping paper. Set off the gold with a fabulous topper made of small evergreen twigs and holly berries, or a 2" grapevine wreath with miniature pinecones. Place the arrangement in a large box and lightly spray with artificial snow or glitter, then tie it onto your package with elegant burgundy ribbon. Heavy kitchen foil can be used in place of the gold foil.

- Giving a cookbook to someone for Christmas? Wrap it in a tea towel. Tie the package up with colorful ribbon and add some measuring spoons to the bow. Practically any kitchen gift can be wrapped in tea towels, dish cloths, table cloths or put into decorative tins.



- If using heavy kitchen foil, either wrap the gift straight in the foil, or you can scrunch the foil up to create an interesting effect and then wrap the gift. Add some green, red, or gold ribbon. Why not tie a personalized Christmas Ornament to the bow?

- Use ordinary brown wrapping paper (or clean, paper grocery bags), With a festive rubber stamp, stamp all over the non-shiny side with black ink. Then using a metallic pen (red, green, gold, silver, purple or blue), add little squiggles. Tie with metallic ribbon.

- Tie tinsel around a package instead of ribbon, or you can use raffia and string if you want a natural look to your gift.

- Pack Christmas baking into decorative tins, purchased at the dollar store. Line the tins with waxed paper, add your baking, put on the lid and tie it up with pretty ribbon. How about adding a recipe card and measuring spoons to the bow?

- Give your gift an antique look by using old books of poetry, sheet music or beautiful illustrations from resources that are no longer needed. Carefully separate pages from their binding, to wrap your tiny treasures in.

- Use tulle when you can. Buy tulle either by the yard or as ribbons in various colors (tulle is much cheaper than regular wrapping paper). To wrap, simply place item or items in the center of a piece cut large enough to cover all items with approx. 5"-6" as selvage. Gather all the fabric to the top and tie with a scrap piece of tulle or ribbon. Remember that you will be able to see through the tulle, but that's OK!
- Bag it. Purchase decorative bags at the dollar store. Tie various lengths of colorful ribbon to the handle to close the bag.
- Put it in a basket or box. The dollar stores have a great selection of pretty holiday baskets and decorative trinket boxes. All you need is a little see-through wrapping and a colorful bow with wisps of ribbons hanging down.

www.my-gifts-for-men.com/; www.youthonline.ca/giftwrappingideas.shtml



Meditation: The Gift Goes On

That time is here again! The time for choosing and searching for *the* perfect gift. Gift giving can be fun but sometimes the process leading up to it can be very frustrating and confusing. Many of us can recall spending many hours in search of the perfect present and then



panicking as the day drew nearer. At times like these we need to bear in mind that it's not so much the gift that's important but the thoughtfulness that goes into the selection. Think about gifts you have received, perhaps from your children, that they selected with such great care, they were things that you could have easily done without but you loved them and treasured them because of the thoughtfulness (give personal examples). Gifts don't always have to cost money or be purchased in a store (give an example of someone doing something for you that didn't cost money).

Unfortunately, for many people, the entire concept of Christmas is bound up in the gifts

they may or may not receive. Louisa May Alcott in her well known book, *Little Women* writes “Christmas won’t be Christmas without any presents.”

When we give a gift and it is received with delight and appreciation it gives us great joy.

When we think of gifts at Christmas time we are reminded of the Wise Men with their gifts.

Story: 3 Wise Women

Do you know what would have happened if it had been *Three Wise Women* instead of Three Wise Men? They would have asked directions, arrived on time, helped deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, made a casserole and brought practical gifts.

The Wise Men who visited the infant Christ child understood the idea of gift giving. Their gifts were chosen carefully because of their symbolism.

What they tell us in their gifts.

They brought GOLD — Sign of Royalty

They offered FRANKINCENSE — A specific tree sap, dried, ground, and burned as part of their worship service.

They presented MYRRH — A different tree sap, used for relieving pain and embalming at the time of death.

What might these three gifts symbolize for us?

The Wise Men brought gold, and confessed

their acceptance of His kingship.

They brought frankincense and admitted their recognition of Jesus as being worthy of their worship.

They brought spices (myrrh) of suffering and death, predicting that this royal king, worthy of worship, would be rejected, would die.

These gifts represented Jesus in three ways, as King, as Lord, as Saviour. They knew that this baby was unlike any other and it was this knowledge that encouraged them to give the very best that the world had to offer. What



gift have you given to Jesus? Have you given yourself, your time, your talents? He deserves our best!!!

The Gift that goes on forever is the gift that God gave at that first Christmas. God’s gift, Jesus Christ, didn’t end at Bethlehem nor did it end at Calvary. John 3:16 reminds us that God gave the most wonderful present of all time, a gift that was truly given out of a heart

of love. He gave His very best, His only Son.

Many people today celebrate the coming of this gift but they do not know the reality of God's presence in their lives. They get caught up in the celebration but they have not unwrapped the message of salvation and all that it encompasses. Only those who have accepted and experienced the gift can truly know the joy and excitement that comes from a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. A joy that continues, even when the Christmas season is over. It's a gift that keeps on giving!

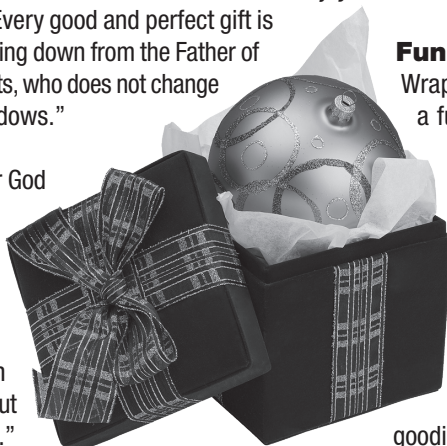
Scripture About God's Gift

Romans 3:23. "For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Ephesians 2:8. "For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves it is the gift of God."

James 1:17. "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

John 3:16. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."



Thanks be to God for His indefinable gift



2 Corinthians 9:15. "Thanks be to God for his indefinable gift."

Song: SASB 82/TB 322, *Hark The Herald Angels Sing*

Closing Prayer (in unison)

"Dear Lord, we enjoy gifts. You understand that, don't You? You give to us when we don't deserve it or earn it. You give freely because You love us and we want to say thank You. We accept Your gifts of grace and love with joy in our hearts." Amen

Fun Time: Pass The Parcel

Wrap the gifts in many layers with a fun thing to do written on each layer. When the music stops the person must do what is written on the gift wrap.

Conclusion and Refreshments

Conclude with festive refreshments, ask ladies (who are willing) to bring baked goodies. Enjoy with hot apple cider.