

Seven Holiday Stewardship Principles for Christians to live by

During the Christmas season we all think about giving gifts. But as Christians we are called to be stewards, and stewardship goes beyond giving objects. It entails giving gifts of heart, mind and soul, as well as time, talent and treasure. This year help your children—and yourself—understand what it means to be wise stewards.

1. Emphasize the spiritual. Take some time out of the hustle and bustle of holiday preparations to prepare spiritually. Make it a point to do some spiritual reading. Take some time to pray together as a family, perhaps at the end of the day before everyone goes to bed.

2. Make time for family. We think of the holidays as family time, yet practical preparations can sometimes take a toll on quality family time. Consider changing some holiday “chores” (such as decorating or shopping) into family events, in which everyone shares in the task. Schedule some downtime to spend together. Prioritize family meals, making sure to sit around the table together at dinnertime.

3. Count your blessings. At a time of the year when budgets get tighter and wish lists get longer, it’s tempting to focus on what you lack, rather than what you have. At the dinner table or in family prayer time, consider taking turns naming blessings God has given your family.

4. Plan family acts of charity. Take some time out as a family to help those who are less fortunate. This may mean helping in a soup kitchen or collecting and sorting items for a local food or toy drive. Many organizations have “gift trees,” where families can choose a needy child or family and purchase a specific item that has been requested. You may wish to choose a child who is close in age to your child, and involve your child in shopping for the requested item(s). You can also sort through outgrown clothing and toys for items to donate to shelters or local drives.

5. Donate time or talent to your Church. Consider volunteering to help with church activities, such as charitable outreaches or special decorating for Christmas. Caroling in local nursing homes.

6. Include nonmaterial gifts when giving to family members and close friends. Children can give their parents coupons for extra help with household tasks. You may wish to make a donation to charity in honor of the person rather than buying them a gift.

7. Remember the true meaning of Christmas. It may sound like a cliché, but remembering “the reason for the season” can help you put things in perspective. Christmas is about remembering God’s greatest gift, His only Son, and helping to bring Christ’s love into the world. When you’re feeling overwhelmed by holiday tasks consider asking yourself: “Is this a fitting way to remember Jesus’ birth?” or “Will this help to bring God’s love into the world (or to my family, church, or community)?” Keeping this focus will help make Christmas both a giving and joyful experience.