

# Ideas for Gifts to Make

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Whether the families of children in your care celebrate Christmas, Kwanza or Hanukkah, you might consider some simple gift making ideas. These would be good for an extra cold or dare we say it, snowy days. Children can make the gifts ahead of time. Plan for a place where they can be stored until the right time for them to be sent home.

One of the best gifts for children to give is time. Children toddler age on up can put together an IOU for something the child's parent or siblings would enjoy. Tots and pre-schoolers can promise hugs and kisses. School age children can offer to do a special task like doing the dishes, folding towels, taking out the garbage or watering plants. Set out paper, pencils and other art supplies.

Want to be more elaborate? Use ready-to-print artwork to create books of coupons that can be exchanged for the hugs, chores or whatever the child would like to give. Help children use a paper punch to put holes in the coupons to string together with yarn, cord or ribbon.

Here are more gift ideas. Use your judgment on what will work for the children in your care. Older children might be able to help the younger ones. These ideas can provide lessons in measuring, cutting, using glue, and numerous other skills.

- Cookie mix. Look for recipes on the Internet. Save jars for this project. Have an assembly line with each child measuring out the ingredients. Have copies of the recipe ready with children adding artwork. Attach to the jar and add a ribbon.

- Card-making. Collect postcards or note cards that you've cut from index stock, envelopes, stickers and markers. For those who can write, add gel pens, rubber stamps, a stamp pad and novelty scissors. Older kids may appreciate a template for their software program, some digital clip art or photos (including snapshots of them) and unusual printer paper.

- Decorations. Evergreen cones sprayed with gold or dipped in diluted white glue and then rolled in fine glitter are fairly easy for everyone with some supervision. Make little wrapped boxes that can be hung on a tree. Use matchboxes and other tiny boxes. Cover with scraps of leftover wrapping paper. Add a string so they can be put on the tree. Precut felt or foam sheets into trees, stars, candles or gingerbread men. Children can decorate these with sequins, buttons, glitter, ribbons or Rick Rack.

*Source: Parenting Press News for Parents, November 2007.*