



## Holiday Hints & Helps: Great Gifts for Less

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### Gifts-in-a-Jar

You don't have to spend a lot to make someone's holiday brighter. Gifts-in-a-jar are a perfect way to show that special someone you care without breaking the bank. (*Pssst...they don't have to be edible, either.*) Here are a few examples:

#### Candy Cane Bath Salts

#### Pumpkin Pie Bars

#### Sand Art Brownies

#### Confetti Bean Soup

#### Journal Jars (for Adults & Kids)

For more ideas like these, just search the Internet for "Gifts-in-a-Jar" or call the Extension office at (941) 722-4524.

### Smart Shopping Strategies

Here are a few tips to help keep you in the black this holiday season:

- Plan ahead
- Shop at the right time
- Compare price and quality
- Read labels, tags, and warranties
- Learn stores' return policies
- Shop at discount stores, yard & garage sales
- Purchase ahead of time
- Stick to your budget

### Handmade Treasures

Here are a few great gift ideas that are guaranteed to bring smiles to the faces of your family and friends:

#### IOU Coupon Books



These easy-to-make gifts are personalized to fit the people receiving them. Making a coupon book for someone shows them that you know them well and that you care enough to want to do things for them all year-round. For example, a coupon for Mom might say, "Good for one breakfast in bed." One for Dad could be: "Good for one car wash." One for a child could be: "Good for one gerbil, plus cage and food."

#### Specialized Kits



These are great gifts, especially for younger kids (but they're great for adults, too!). If your child is an aspiring chef, create a kit complete with the basics: mixing bowl, measuring cups & spoons, apron, wooden spoons, simple recipes, etc. If you know an aspiring artist, make a kit containing watercolors, colored pencils, crayons, and a sketch pad. For that aspiring writer in your life, make a kit filled with pens, pencils, a blank journal, and a journal jar (see "Gifts-in-a-Jar") to get their creative juices flowing. You don't have to spend a lot, either. Most or all of these items can be found in discount stores. All you need is a little bit of money and a lot of imagination!

#### Heat-N-Eat Dinners

Save someone from the kitchen! Prepare and freeze a week's worth of meals for someone you love so they won't have to slave in the kitchen to enjoy a home-cooked meal. Be sure to fix their favorite dishes for that extra *oomph!*