

The Gift That Brings a Powerful, Life-Enriching Message to Your Children

My memories of Thanksgiving and Christmas with both my mom's side of the family and my dad's are only positive. I'm very grateful.

Presents are certainly among my memories. I will always remember the year I was 12. At some point, as we were opening gifts, I realized my brother, Dave, had more presents left to open than I did. I said something about this and noticed my mom immediately look at my dad. They nodded, indicating they agreed about something. Then my dad suggested I look under my bed. Even though I was surprised, he didn't need to tell me twice!

I'm sure I ran up the stairs. In contrast, a few minutes later, I walked carefully down those same stairs holding my very own viola. If I remember correctly, I was crying by the time I got back to our family room.

I carefully removed the Christmas ribbon, opened the case and stared at the shiniest viola I had ever seen. I lifted it from the velvet-lined case and caressed it. I gingerly placed it under my chin and imagined playing great symphonies.

The gift wasn't special just because it was expensive. It meant a lot to me because having my own viola, rather than renting one which we had been doing, meant my parents believed in me. They believed in my growing talent. They believed I was mature enough to take good care of my own viola. Their trust inspired me.

What can you give your children this Christmas that communicates, "I believe in you"? {eoa}

Dr. Kathy Koch *is the author of* Screens & Teens: Connecting with Our Kids in A Wireless World.

This article originally appeared at .