

10 Ways to Share Your Faith During the Holidays

Christmas is one of the best times of the year to put your faith into action. Throughout Scripture, we are exhorted not only to be “salt and light” in a dark world, but also to help those in need: the poor, orphans and widows. James, the brother of the One we celebrate at Christmas, told us plainly that “faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless” (James 2:17, NLT).

Because of our hectic schedules, it’s often hard to think of ways we can bless those outside our family or circle of friends. This Christmas, why not reach out to someone you normally might not consider? Here are some ideas to help get you started. The Web site can help guide you to trusted charities.

1. Purchase Christmas cards from Joni and Friends (or 800-736-4177), and help minister to families affected by disabilities. The cards are designed by the organization’s founder, Joni Eareckson Tada, who became a quadriplegic at age 17 after a diving accident. (She paints with a brush between her teeth.) While you’re at it, ask a ministry staff member how you can organize a wheelchair drive in your community. To date, Joni and Friends has distributed more than 50,000 wheelchairs to 102 countries.

a pair of shoes for a child through LIFE Outreach International’s “Christmas Shoes Project.” The cost of manufacturing and delivering each pair of shoes is \$, and LIFE’s goal is to provide 200,000 pairs for kids in more than 40 countries. To contribute, call 800-947-5433 or visit .

3. Bless a single parent. Give the gift of time by offering to babysit while a single mom or dad goes Christmas shopping or

to a work party. If it's in your budget, treat a single mother to a facial or pedicure while you watch her children.

4. Make an orphan's Christmas special. Open Door Bulgaria, founded by Christ for the Nations alumni Niki and Michelle Stefanov, plans to provide toys to some 300 Bulgarian orphans this Christmas. To help, call 813-527-4149 or visit and click "English" for ministry information.

Orphan Voice founder Tony Brewer, who now lives in Vietnam with his family, reports that the winters there get chilly. To help provide orphaned children with coats this Christmas (approximately \$10 per coat), e-mail Brewer at tony@orphanvoice.org or call 800-525-0871.

5. If you are capable of covering a larger-ticket item, transform an orphan's life with surgery. A \$600 cleft lip or palette surgery, or a \$3,000 heart surgery, can be arranged through Show Hope, the foundation established by Steven Curtis Chapman and his wife, Mary Beth. For information, visit www.showhope.org or call 615-550-5600.

6. Adopt a family in need. Fill a laundry basket with basic foods, toiletries, a few favorite "luxury" items and perhaps a gift card to a local grocery store, and deliver it to someone who has lost a job or fallen on hard times. Enclose a Christmas card with a note of encouragement. If you need a referral, talk to your pastor or a school administrator.

7. Purchase gifts that make a difference. An impressive selection of handmade baskets, trivets, ornaments and serving trays is available at www.rwanda.org. Proceeds go to Rwanda Partners, a Christian nonprofit organization dedicated to working for Rwanda's healing and reconciliation. If you're shopping for people who have everything—or would prefer blessing others—consider providing a goat or chickens for an impoverished Rwandan family on their behalf (www.rwanda.org).

8. Invite someone to your home for Christmas dinner. Think of

a college student who has no family in town, someone in your church who is new to the area or a family that is struggling to make ends meet. Do you know of someone nearby who is from another country? Get together and share Christmas traditions.

9. Spread the good news—the true meaning of Christmas. Through The Voice of the Martyrs (, 877-337-0302), you can distribute New Testaments to some of the most closed areas in the world. The cost per Bible is \$6, and you can decide at what level you want to participate.

10. Look at your budget for 2014 and determine if you are able to make a monthly donation to bless someone in need. You can sponsor a child's education for \$35 a month through the African Children's Choir, a powerful ministry that is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. Correspondence opportunities will enable you to connect with your sponsored child in a life-changing way. For information, go to or call 877-532-8651.

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