

champs

Center for Healthy Aging Ministries, Programs & Services

**FROM THE CHAMPS PARISH NURSE**



## The Ultimate Christmas Gift

We often think about making New Year's resolutions, but what about starting with a Christmas resolution instead? There is all the bustle of making a list, deciding where to go to get the best sales, actually doing the shopping, and then we take it home to wrap and place under our personal Christmas tree or to mail to relatives and friends. This year as you are wrapping the gifts consider starting something new, making a Christmas resolution. Before closing the package and placing the wrapping and gift tag on the package have each family member, including the children, write a prayer for the individual who will be receiving each gift. Slip a prayer message into each package to surprise the individual when they open it. A lot of thought goes into what to get for each person and it is always thrilling to see the exuberant glee of someone who is truly excited with their gift. This year, it could be even more thrilling to see the expressions of gratitude that prayers could bring the individual whether it is a family member, friend, neighbor or a gift given as a grab bag exchange.

The original Christmas gifts were delivered by the three wise men also known as the magi. The gifts given at the Savior's birth symbolized that Jesus was born a king and God to die. The gold symbolized his

heavenly kingship, frankincense his divine heavenly kingdom and myrrh Jesus' role as the Savior who would make the ultimate sacrifice to die for mankind's sins. Thus the custom of giving gifts to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ was also born.

Starting the tradition of packaging prayers with your gifts would be a nice way to enrich the lives of others and stress to children that Christmas is truly about our Savior's birthday. Further, as children write prayers and take their gifts to gift exchanges it is a way of delivering the message of salvation to other families, friends, acquaintances and teachers. Your families provide an expression to others of the true meaning of Christmas. Children could, among other possibilities, also be encouraged to write a special prayer of 'thanks' to grandma or grandpa for sitting and reading to them from their favorite books—the same stories over and over and over!

Meanwhile when your children open their gifts that include prayers from you it is a chance to express not only your love for them, but God's love as well. Deciding on the words to use in your prayer will depend on the age of your child and the personal attributes that make them special to you. For instance you could tell them I love you when I see your

smile and know that God also is happy when we smile and feel joy to have Him in our lives. "My days are the happiest when I hold you in my arms and we cuddle together and talk before bedtime. This is also when we say our prayers to God which is a really special time each day for you and God, our heavenly Father. After all we do need to remember to tell God we love Him too and to remember that He loved us so very much that He sent His son, Jesus Christ to die for us."

For our aging parents it is a time to affirm the gifts they have given you in your lifetime. To remember the special Christmas' and the sacrifices they made for you throughout the years. To thank them for special memories of times that have been endeared and embedded in your heart—when Mom listened and helped you decide how to resolve a fight with a special friend, taught you to bake homemade cookies or to decide on your dress for the prom. By the way, the prom dress excursions resulted in you dragging her to at least ten stores and then

going back to the first one to buy the first powder blue dress you had tried on. The fishing trip you and Dad took alone where you learned how to thread your first gooey worm on the prickly hook. Details like the laughter your scream caused when the worm first moved as you started the threading process, could also trigger a smile of recollection.

Each day we live is a blessing and knowing that we belong to a family, a church and friendly community of others is in truth a gift in and of itself. In Psalm 91:4-5 we are told that...

*He will cover you with his feathers,  
and under his wings you will find  
refuge;  
his faithfulness will be your  
shield and rampart.  
You will not fear the terror of night,  
nor the arrow that flies by day*

What a wonderful gift life is. He created us, he nurtures us and he sustains us. You God gave the most important gift of all, your son Jesus Christ to die for us.

Merry Christmas and Happy Birthday, Jesus!

Champs  
Center for Healthy Aging, Ministries, Programs & Services  
13271 Millard Avenue  
Omaha, Nebraska 68137  
Tel: (402) 895-2224  
Website: [www.champsonline.info](http://www.champsonline.info)  
Email: [champs@crossandheart.org](mailto:champs@crossandheart.org)

Champs is funded by a grant from the Alegent Health Community Benefit Trust