

## Top tips

# Giving through the nose

12 practical pointers to help your 'red nosed' activity this Advent and Christmas. Spend less, give more and relax...

1. Make a **budget** before you begin your Christmas shopping, working out how much you spent on gifts, food, travel etc last year, and resolve to set a percentage aside at the outset to donate to charity (or to help pay bills or save for a family holiday).
2. **Give time or skills** instead of buying gifts - e.g. days out with the (grand)children *after* Christmas, a 'date' with your partner, inviting friends and neighbours for coffee etc or a voucher for a particular service you might be able to give.
3. **Create simple presents** instead of buying expensive gifts – these might be food contributions to the festivities, hand-crafted items or personalised poems or short stories... but be careful not to replace one form of stress with another by getting too ambitious in what you take on.
4. Suggest that family members/friends **bring a dish** for Christmas dinner instead of a gift.
5. Suggest that children might **help cook/wash up** the dinner as their present to parents, and encourage them to donate money they might otherwise have spent on family Christmas presents to a favourite charity or cause.
6. **Gift-wrap IOUs** to place under the tree for shopping trips in post-Christmas sales, and donate the amount saved to your favourite charity.
7. **Don't feel guilty** about ignoring some charity appeals! Choose one or two favourite causes, perhaps those concerned with the relief of homelessness, hunger and poverty wherever they occur.
8. **Don't be pressured** into reciprocating cards or gifts. Again, invite friends/neighbours in *after* Christmas. But *do* remember elderly, housebound, lonely people in your card/shopping list.
9. Instead of everyone giving gifts to everyone else in a family group, organisation etc, **draw lots for one name** and buy a gift for that person. Agree within the group the maximum amount to be spent per gift. Donate the amount saved as a family or group to charity.
10. Buy gifts in **charity shops or from charity catalogues** where possible. You might also like to consider whether a charity might gain more from your giving it a single donation than from buying a number of individual gifts. 'Alternative' gift cards can then be handmade so that the recipients know what you're 'giving' in their name.
11. **Remember the environment** too! Only send paper Christmas cards to those whom you won't be able to greet in person or by other means; or to those who may be lonely or housebound. e-Cards are available on many websites (including [www.casc-aid.org.uk](http://www.casc-aid.org.uk)).
12. **Discuss** what you're doing with family and friends, and you may be surprised how many people want to do the same!



Find more resources like this as part of Omega – a two session small group resource to help you and your church take a second look at Christmas