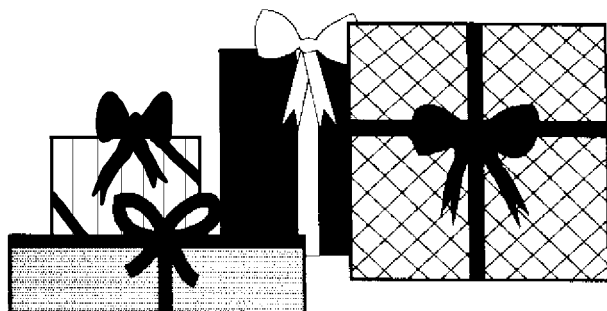


A Season for Giving the Gift of Peace



*In a world full of iron, peace is gold.
Peace is the warmth in a land full of cold.*
from Children's Peace Quotes, September 04, 2004

Back in 2004, during the UN "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World," students at a school in Tennessee invited two-line contributions about peace from school children from around the world for an ongoing poem about peace called Peace Talk. The lines above are part of that Peace Talk poem. For far too many children, the land is "full of cold." They want and deserve the warmth of peace, instead. They know its golden glow. Why then do adults all too often offer children "a world full of iron"?

Soon it will be the season of gift-giving, whether you are celebrating Christmas, Chanukah, or Kwanzaa. While the weather may be cold in our part of the world, it can be one of the warmest times of year in terms of love and light. It is one of the best times to assure children of our love and care for them. But how do we do that if we perpetuate violence not only in our words and deeds, but also in our gifts? How do Christians commemorate the birth of the one we call Prince of Peace if the gifts we give encourage conflict and competition? How do Jews commemorate the divine miracle of lasting, light-giving oil if the gifts we give promote the dark side of human behavior? How do African Americans celebrate family, community, and culture if the gifts we give divide people into enemies instead of friends?

When you choose gifts for the children in your life, please keep these questions in mind and **consider toys that:**

- ❖ Promote respectful, non-stereotyped, nonviolent interactions among children
- ❖ Can be used in many ways
- ❖ Allow children to be in charge of the play

- ❖ Appeal to children at more than one age or level of development
- ❖ Are not linked to video games, computers, TV, or movies,
- ❖ Can be used with other toys for new and more complex play
- ❖ Will stand the test of time as children develop new interests and skills
- ❖ Help children develop skills important for further learning and a sense of mastery
- ❖ Can be used alone or with others
- ❖ Can be enjoyed by boys and girls

Choose:

- ❖ Toys that foster cooperation and teamwork, like dolls and puzzles and some board games
 - ❖ Toys for constructing, like building blocks and molding clay
 - ❖ Toys that inspire creative arts, like craft supplies and musical instruments
 - ❖ Toys that promote movement, like bikes, wagons, and sports equipment
 - ❖ Toys that promote dramatic play, like costumes and props, puppets and magic sets
 - ❖ Toys that enhance the imagination, new ideas, and problem solving, like science and nature kits
 - ❖ Toys that respect the environment, that can be reused and recycled
- And don't forget books, magazine subscriptions, tickets to a show or movie, Teddy Bears, and you. There's nothing better than YOUR time!

***Happy, Peaceful Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanzaa!
Happy, Peaceful Holidays to All!***

Thanks to www.truceteachers.org for the information presented in this flier. Visit their website, as well as www.greenamerica.org (search "Gifts for Children") for more ideas about gifts that promote the positive values we want for our children and have the extra benefit of being sweatshop-free and non-toxic.

This leaflet is produced by Pax Christi Metro New York,
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