

5 Ways to Give Back During the Holiday Season

Written by Christina Tetreault



Like karma, the holiday season has come back around, as it always does. The season provides us with a time and a reason to help others...even those who might not appear as though they need it.

Giving to others could mean volunteering at a shelter or buying toys for at-risk children, but the options are limitless, and you don't even need to leave your neighborhood in order to give back in a big way.

Here are some ideas you can consider for giving to others this season. Helping others bestows you with all those warm and fuzzy feelings you get from doing good deeds. So, it makes sense that ultimately, the giver is also the receiver of the gift. It kind of goes back to that karma thing.

1. [Prepare and Deliver a Meal](#)

Spend some time in [your Mark-Taylor kitchen](#) and pour your heart into a home-cooked meal for someone you know (or don't know all that well) who may be alone this holiday season or unable to cook for him or herself. Use your favorite holiday recipe or experiment with a new one. A homemade casserole or a bread bowl is always a safe bet. [Your kitchen is a space](#) where you can use your hands to showcase your heart. Let it shine by preparing food for someone who doesn't expect it, but will truly appreciate the gesture. After you've made the dish, you'll have the joy of delivering it and, best yet...experiencing their reaction. Don't know someone to help? Contact a neighborhood church. It's one of the last places families turn for help.

2. [Relieve a Relative](#)

Does your Aunt Sue always host the annual holiday meals? Perhaps she needs a break from her commitment. Giving back can start within your own family. Find ways to take charge of certain traditions or tasks this year to alleviate someone else's burden. Perhaps you could offer [your dining room](#) this year for the holiday meal or you can bring two dishes instead of one. Volunteering to prepare the main course this year can take a huge burden off your loved one. And in your [Mark-Taylor kitchen](#), preparing a dinner for 20 is no problem!

How about helping a relative around the house during the holidays? Offer to help your family member organize their [walk-in closet](#) and donate unwanted clothes and accessories to a local charity.

3. [Host a "For a Cause" Cookie Exchange](#)

Simplify your holiday baking and give back to others at the same time by hosting a "for a cause" cookie exchange.

Ask your guests ([or Mark-Taylor neighbors](#)) to bake a dozen cookies for a cause, and a second dozen for exchanging with each other. Invite your guests over for a causal evening in [your living room](#), where you can sample and trade cookies (and drink lots of milk). You could ship the cookies overseas to our servicemen and women or you might decide to deliver the cookies to a senior citizen center, a children's hospital, or soup kitchen. Make (or buy) cards to add to the cookies you give for a personal touch

4. [Bag Meals for the Homeless](#)

Gather with your friends or family members on [your patio](#) to enjoy the weather while assembling non-perishable food bags for distributing to homeless individuals.

Making care bags is an easy and needed way to connect with homeless neighbors. Fill bags with items like granola bars, trail mix, juice boxes, and applesauce. Keep the bags in your car and hand them out to homeless people as you encounter them.

5. [Give and Receive](#)

You might be surprised by what or who you attract as you give. In little ways and in big ways, your kindness will be returned to you, and that is a given. May the joys of giving touch your heart this holiday season!

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