

# Get Christmas gifts for \$25 or less

If you have a long list of Christmas gifts to buy, it may help to remember that there's a wide variety of gifts in the stores for \$25 or under.

For instance, treat a personal computer user to one of the six new IBM compatible software products by Shortcut Software.

Disk-Director lets users manage their files and directories, and it reduces the time it takes to do time-consuming computer chores. The other five products do everything from quickly locating lost files (File/Find) to protecting files (Lock/File). Each product retails for \$24.95.

Here are other gift suggestions for \$25 or under:

- What's on the wish list for most people who cook? An electronic cooking timer keeps track of food in the oven and on the burners — all at the same time. Just program the cooking times for each food being prepared. The alarm sounds when it's time to turn on/off the oven and each burner. Prices vary according to the model.

- Singles, couples and families who own a LaserDisc player will appreciate receiving one of the new Pioneer LaserDiscs scheduled to be released in time for the holiday season. Select from hit movies, operas, stage productions and popular music, in either 8- or 12-inch formats. Prices start at \$24.95.

### DID YOU KNOW?

#### Coffee Drinkers

People 20-29 drink an average of 1.3 cups of coffee a day. People in their early 60s drink 3.4 cups a day.

#### Long Life

A refrigerator should last 15 years.

- Playskool offers parents a variety of toys for boys and girls this holiday season:

Busy Beads, colorful abacus-style beads which slide on smooth, sturdy wires that twist and curve, stimulate a child's imagination and help develop hand-eye coordination.

Dressing Pretty, a new line of kid-size outfits, lets girls dress up as ballerinas, princesses or brides. They come with special accessories to add the finishing touches to fantasy play.

The small size Busy Beads retail for about \$19.99; and each Dressing Pretty outfit for \$14.99.

- Whether it's tending a window box or planting in the backyard, people are turning to gardening as a way to relax and enjoy life. For these green-fingered friends and relatives, there's a myriad of terra-cotta planters and baskets — no gardener ever has enough. Prices vary according to size and decoration.

- Books always make a special Christmas gift for any member of the family.

At \$8.95 each are Barbara Milo Ohrbach's "Token of Friendship," a collection of sentiments, thoughts, gift ideas and recipes for special friends, and "Memories of Childhood," containing old-fashioned rhymes, poems, recipes and songs.

- Finally, those who drive in cold weather will appreciate receiving one of this winter's handiest accessories — Sno-Off by Auto-Shade. It's a polyolefin sheet that fits across windshields and secures inside the car to protect against snow, ice and frost. No more scraping windshields on frosty mornings or in snowstorms. Sno-Off features a fashionable ski-goggle design on the sheet. Easy to install and remove, it fits on the front of most cars and trucks. This item sells for about \$4.99.

# Face to face with the Christmas spirit

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you don't believe in Santa Claus, then you don't get any extra presents. And to get gifts from Santa Claus all you have to be is good - or at least try to be good - and not hurt anyone on purpose. You also have to listen to your parents and do what they say - at least in December."

"Besides," Mike added, "Santa Claus makes Christmas fun and different from birthdays and everyone has to have fun sometime."

"I'm too old to believe in Santa Claus," said Jennifer. "But I agree with Mike. Santa Claus is fun and happiness and people being nice to each other. I believe in those things so I guess, in a way, I believe a bit in Santa Claus too."

"I like the story of Jesus being born on Christmas day better though," she added. "But maybe that's because I'm a girl and I'm supposed to like babies."

The young man had to chuckle at this, but then he asked softly and in a serious tone, "What is it about the story that you like?"

"Well," Jennifer began, a bit hesitantly. "We don't go to church that often, but my mom and dad believe in God and have told us that Jesus was a good man who tried to help solve some of the world's problems."

"He was born in a stable and all kinds of people came to see him and brought him gifts and went away happy just from seeing him. Almost like he was the best gift they had ever received."

"I like being happy and according to my mom and dad, Jesus made a lot of people happy just by being born and giving them hope for better things to come."

"Maybe that's why I like the story," she offered. "It sort of shows you that no matter how bad things get, you should never give up hope. And that also whenever you give something, no matter how small, you will get some sort of gift in return. I suppose, people are happy on Christmas day because, in a way, it means a new beginning."

After a long silence, the young man addressed himself to the two children.

"I think," he said, "you have just explained what Christmas is all about. It's about giving and receiving, happiness and the promise of better things to come."

"You still haven't explained about the presents," chipped in Michael.

"In a way I have," replied the young man. "They're gifts from your mom and dad for the two of

you. Your dad earned them and you two children are deserving of them. Your parents are concerned with your well-being and happiness and that in itself is a gift."

"They view the two of you as the greatest gifts they have received and all those presents under the tree really only represent one thing. Love. And Christmas should be a time of love for everyone."

Jennifer and Michael weren't too sure they understood all that the young man had just said but they understood love and all it meant, so they readily accepted his explanation.

With that, the young man got up to leave. As he reached the door, he turned and said, "Wish your parents the best of the holiday season for me and don't you worry, things will get better."

**'I really don't think we can properly explain what just happened tonight'**

As he paused to open the door, the children rushed up to him, kissed his cheeks and wished him a Merry Christmas.

Then another thought occurred to Michael and he blurted out, "But what about you, Jonathan, where are your Christmas presents?"

"Don't worry about me," the young man replied. "I got more than my share tonight and I'll cherish them for a long time."

With that, he slipped out the front door and disappeared into the night. Jennifer and Mike were so excited about the evening's events that they were still awake and chattering away when their parents arrived home. They rushed from their bedrooms to greet them and their flabbergasted parents could only sit silently and listen as the children told them all about the mysterious stranger

named Jonathan and all that had gone on that night.

When the children were finally hustled off to bed in the wee hours, Mr. and Mrs. Walker were left to ponder the bewildering story their children had told them.

Finally Mr. Walker broke the long silence and exclaimed softly, "I don't know anyone named Jonathan and I certainly didn't send anyone over here tonight to look in on the kids or bring them presents."

"I don't know anyone by that name either," said Mrs. Walker. "Perhaps it was just someone from one of the local service clubs delivering gifts to the neighborhood kids."

This explanation seemed sensible enough, but the Walkers knew when they looked into each other's eyes that somehow it just didn't ring true.

After another long silence, Mr. Walker said, "I don't really think we can properly explain what happened tonight but I suppose it just goes to show that we do have a lot to be thankful for even if things aren't going too good for us right now."

"Maybe Jonathan was the spirit of Christmas, 1989," offered Mrs. Walker, with laughter in her voice. Laughter that had been too long removed and had been sorely missed.

"Who knows?" said Mr. Walker, rising from the couch. "But I know one thing. The kids are happy, you seem happy and I know I feel a lot better about things and that's all that matters."

With that, he turned off the living room lights and wrapping his arm tenderly around his wife's shoulders, prepared to bid good-night to another day.

Somehow, his tread seemed lighter than it had been for some time and his shoulders ever so slightly more squared. As befits a man with reborn confidence in himself and in the world.



**Season's Greetings**

**SEASON'S GREETINGS**


And Best Wishes To All Our Customers & Friends

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\*\*\*\*\*  
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