

## The Gift of Giving

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Many people with disabilities are remembered especially during the season of Advent as needy recipients of charity. Families, parishioners, and coworkers look for opportunities to buy gifts for those less fortunate, less healthy, and less wealthy. The able-bodied become the designated "givers" and the disabled become the designated "receivers".



However, we know that the act of giving benefits the one giving as well as the one receiving. The ability to help others increases self-worth and a feeling of belonging. People with disabilities who are not able to independently shop for a present, volunteer at a soup kitchen, or shovel a sidewalk for a neighbor may not have equal opportunities to be helpers. They may not experience the good feelings derived from giving as often as their non-disabled peers.

**This season try *giving* the gift of *giving* to someone with a disability. Your gift of kindness will enable them a chance to experience the same satisfaction that comes with heartfelt giving. Here are some possibilities:**

- Take someone who doesn't drive Christmas shopping.
- Address Christmas cards for someone who has difficulty writing.
- Help a friend bake and deliver Christmas cookies to their neighbors.
- Stand beside someone who may have difficulty ringing the bell for the Salvation Army kettle drive.
- Accept an offer for assistance, even though you prefer to work alone.
- Ask someone who cannot attend Sunday Mass to pray for specific parishioners in need.
- Invite someone with a disability to volunteer for a parish ministry.

*"You don't know what gifts you have until someone receives them."*

Henri Nouwen

*For more information on including persons with disabilities in parish life, contact Marsha Rivas, Equal Access Ministry, Diocese of Toledo, 419-244-6711.*

