

Make a Wish Box

During the holidays, most third graders have an endless wish list filled with the latest toys, video games and other gadgets. However, there may be things they wish for that cannot be touched, broken or downloaded. As we all know, these "non-tangibles" are often the most enduring and important gifts we can share, whether it's bringing cheer to a sad neighbor or spending time with a baby cousin. It's just that these aren't always so easy to name, especial in the material rush of the holiday season! As the holiday season begins this year, try this: ask your child, and the rest of the family, to share some thoughts by writing one-sentence "Holiday Wishes" for a special family box. Your child will practice sentence development, and maybe you'll all get a whole new appreciation of the holiday season!

What You Need:

- Construction paper in holiday colors
- Markers
- Shoebox

What You Do:

1. Around the dinner table one evening, discuss the difference between tangible and non-tangible items. Explain that tangible items are physical objects that you can touch. Non-tangibles items are abstract and cannot be touched, such as love, friendship, sympathy, and hope.
2. Explain to your family that this holiday season, instead of making a wish list full of tangible items like toys, everyone will help to fill the "Wish Box" with non-tangible wishes. As a family, brainstorm possible wishes or ideas that could go in the wish box.
3. Ask your child to be in charge of decorating the box with holiday colors, glitter, and pictures, and display the box in a prominent spot in your house.
4. Cut several sheets of construction paper in half to make wish slips. On a few of the wish slips, make sentence frames to help your child write longer sentences. Here are 2 examples of sentence frames: *This holiday season, I wish for _____ because _____.* Or: *This holiday season, I wish for _____ and _____ because _____ and _____.*
5. Help your child write a couple of wishes on the sentence frames, then have them fill in the sentence frames on their own. Finally, encourage them to write their own personal, well-developed, one-sentence wishes.
6. Throughout the holiday season, remind your child and other family members to enter their non-tangible, personal wishes in the box.
7. Choose a night during the holiday season and gather everyone involved in the "Holiday Wishes" project. Ask your child to pull slips from the box, and take turns reading the wishes out loud. Okay, your child may still clamour for the latest video game...but you can feel good about reminding them that it's the spirit of the season that matters most in the end, and you all understand what that means.

