

## Tie It With a Bow

### Gift Jars

The website <http://www.razzledazzlerecipes.com/christmas/gifts/index.htm> offers many different gift jar recipes. Click on "Jar Making Tips" for helpful safety and other ideas.

Set up stations for each of the jar recipes. Pre-print the recipes, instructions and have all the food supplies needed at each station. Plastic table coverings, measuring cups, spoons, and paper towels will also be helpful.

### Advent Jars

These jars can be made ahead of time for each of the women attending the program, or have the women make them to give to a family member or friend. They can be used in the family's devotions each day leading up to Christmas.

Supplies needed for one jar:

- ★ 1 quart canning jar with lid
- ★ 25—2" x 2" squares of card stock printed with holiday patterns
- ★ 6 1/2" square of holiday fabric, trim the edges with pinking shears
- ★ Rubber band to attach the fabric to the jar lid
- ★ Piece of coordinating Christmas ribbon to cover the rubber band
- ★ Paint or pens that will write on glass

On some of the squares print scripture verses, prayers, Christmas poems and words of encouragement. Leave others blank so that the women can personalize them for the recipient of the jar. The squares are placed inside the jar and are drawn out each day leading up to Christmas. The outside of the jars can be personalized with the recipient's name. Rubber band the fabric on the jar lid and tie on with a piece of coordinating ribbon. Add a gift tag printed with the words "A Gift of Love—Tied With a Bow For (recipient's name)."

### Bow Making

Teach the women how to make bows to put on their Christmas packages. For step by step instructions check the following websites:

[www.save-on-crafts.com/howtomakebows.html](http://www.save-on-crafts.com/howtomakebows.html)  
[www.crafttown.com/instruction/bows.htm](http://www.crafttown.com/instruction/bows.htm)

After the demonstration, invite the women to try their hand at making a bow. As it is easier to work with wired ribbon, have on hand enough ribbon so that each woman can make a bow.

### Gift Wrapping Demonstration

Ask one of the women to demonstrate the easy way to wrap a gift. You can find step-by-step instructions on the Internet.

### Alternate Gift Wrapping

Have samples of different ways to wrap a gift.

- ★ Fabric Gift Bags—cut two pieces of material that are the same size. Sew three sides together, turn inside out. Use pinking shears to finish the top of the bag. Tie with ribbon.
- ★ Comic Strips—the Sunday funnies make interesting wrapping paper for children's gifts.
- ★ Christmas Cards or Calendars—cut



out the pictures from old Christmas cards or last year's calendars and glue them on newspaper print or brown paper bags that have been opened up so they are flat to create inexpensive gift wrap.

- ★ Lunch Bags—make gift bags from lunch bags. These can be rubber stamped for an interesting effect.
- ★ Wallpaper—discontinued books of wallpaper, which can be obtained from the paint store can make interesting wrapping paper.
- ★ Old Maps—out-of-date road maps also work well to wrap gifts.

## The Blessing of Giving

I will never forget my first Christmas with my husband's family. I remember a tree with the most beautiful packages I had ever seen in my life under it. Each package was carefully wrapped and then adorned with intricate ribbons, bows and other decorative picks. It looked like a scene out of a magazine or Christmas movie.

My father-in-law had a wonderful sense of humor. Each year he worked hard to creatively present my mother-in-law's Christmas gift. He loved to put a pair of earrings on a stuffed animal or hang a beautiful necklace on the Christmas tree. This particular year he did something a little out of the norm. He wrapped my mother-in-law's gift beautifully. It looked like a regular present. She was surprised when she opened it to find a giant, golden, mechanics file. She had asked for a new manicure set and he decided to have some fun and spray paint a gigantic workman's file gold for effect. We all laughed so hard. My mother-in-law's expression was priceless. She had the heartiest laugh of all.

When I reflect on past Christmases, I think about that gift. Was it the package that made it special? No. Was it the crazy golden file? Absolutely not! It was the joy that He gave his wife and it was the delight that she gave him by showing her appreciation for his creativity and humor.

Paul reminds us of Jesus' words. They are a simple yet profound truth that speaks to our hearts during Christmastime. "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Christmas celebrates the greatest gift of all—God's gift of love to us of His Son wrapped up in swaddling clothes. What are we giving those we love? Do we give with our hearts? Are we good recipients of the gifts given to us? Do we allow ourselves to receive the blessings that others try to give? This year fill your Christmas list with gifts that can simply bless the hearts of those you love. You will find you will be the one who receives the greatest blessing.