The Adventure of Creative Giving

Giving can be a blast. Paul told people in Corinth that “God loves a cheerful giver!” (2 Cor 9:7). Regular, planned, and generous giving is the backbone of a responsible giving program, but throwing in some creativity multiplies the joy! Here are a few ideas to whet your creative appetite.

**Anonymous Giving.** Listen for specific needs people have and then figure out a way to meet them undetected. Several years ago, I needed $150 to attend a conference. Every day the entire week before the conference, I found money tucked everywhere: in my Bible, my purse, in unmarked envelopes in my mailbox. It all added up to $150.

**Planning for Annual Gifts.** Every spring I anticipate several one-time gift appeals for summer missions opportunities. I set aside money so that I can respond to as many as possible. I also like to stick in a roll of film or tuck in some stamps or batteries just for fun.

**Taking Someone Shopping.** Rather than just handing someone money, take them shopping. I love to take furloughing missionaries to a mall and give them a budget. They get to choose what they want, and it’s a great time to build a relationship.

**Hiring for Services.** I know a talented single mom on a meager income. I “commission” her to make floral arrangements for me. She earns extra money with dignity, and I get hand-crafted decorations.

**Footing the Bill.** Pay some of the tuition, or cover for the textbooks, or supply the paper and pens for someone going back to school. If you can afford it, pay the rent for a student’s apartment for a quarter. My first giving experience was to pay the way for a teen from my church to attend summer camp—where he became a Christian!

**Recycling Things You Don’t Need.** A friend of mine recently upgraded to a new computer system. Rather than selling her old system, she put more memory in it, added a couple of programs, and gave it to a high-school student with the promise of tutoring her in word processing skills. In return, this student will be equipped to get a summer job.

**Giving as a Family.** Many families have rediscovered the joy of the holidays by giving each other token gifts, pooling the rest of the money they’d normally spend on each other, and getting gifts for people less fortunate. Why not try this at non-holiday times of the year?

**Just ‘Cuz Gifts.** Giving gifts for no apparent reason is a creative way to express care and love, especially when you give them in unusual ways. Send gifts to your kids or spouse in the mail. Create a scavenger hunt to find the gifts. Give someone bulbs to plant or a gallon of paint if he or she is redecorating.

Spontaneous generosity is contagious. Creative ideas generate more ideas. If you look for ways to give hilariously, you will find them. Have fun!

-Becky Brodin