

BRINGING CHRISTMAS CHEER

The holiday season is a great time to give the gift of your presence to lonely nursing home residents, many of whom have no family or friends to celebrate with. We are seeking volunteers to “adopt a resident” for the Christmas holiday. This is a simple commitment to visit a resident three times. Your three visits would last about 20 minutes each and include the following:

First Visit – Get acquainted. About a week before Christmas, visit your assigned resident. Plan to introduce yourself and engage in friendly conversation. Before you leave, be sure to let your new friend know that you will be coming back around Christmas. Try to observe the need for an appropriate Christmas gift, such as socks, slippers, large print books or a lap blanket. (You will find a detailed list of gift ideas for residents at the end of this article.)

Second Visit – A Christmas Blessing. We recommend that you go on Christmas Day or Christmas Eve, if possible. Bring a gift, a card, and a cheerful Christmas greeting. If appropriate, share brief points of the Christmas story or a devotional and a prayer. Let them know you will be coming back within the next week or so. Remember that your presence is the greatest gift!

Third Visit – Post-Christmas cheer. After the lights are taken down and the decorations are put away, the joy can also get tucked away. Things often become rather quiet, and a pleasant visit could be like a refreshing drink. Perhaps now could be an appropriate time to share a Scripture verse and prayer to help your friend trust Jesus for a specific need.

These special visits will not only be a gift for the residents, but for our King who said,
“Whatever you did to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did to me.”

~ Matthew 25:31-46

Important notes:

- In preparation for this blessing, you will need to work with the Activity Director, seeking names of those who might not receive a holiday visit and for some possible Christmas gift ideas.
- Remember that your primary goal is to “*be a friend.*” Helping residents to trust in Jesus is what you can do as a trusted friend.
- After the initial three visits, and if you sense you would like to continue, you may want to share the “[God Cares For You](#)” book with your new friend, if the resident is open to spiritual conversations.

If you can't do a Christmas visit, any holiday can be a great time to begin a friendship with a resident. Here are some other ideas for upcoming holidays:

Valentine's Day – tell your friend that they are always in God's heart. A beautiful card about love would be a good gift.

Easter – remind them that the life and death of Jesus shows us how much God loves us. Your gift might be a small cross for them to hold or to hang on their wall.

Independence Day – celebrate freedom and all the things they did in their lives because they lived in a free country. Bring a small flag for them to wave or some red, white and blue balloons.

Thanksgiving – tell your friend that you are grateful for what they have done in their lives – and for your new friendship with them. A very small colorful autumn decoration makes a good gift. Of course, a lonely care home resident will welcome a kind visitor anytime of the year! You don't need to wait for a holiday! May God bless you for your love and concern for your neighbors in care homes.

Suggested Gifts:

- Small bouquet of flowers in an unbreakable vase
- Small plant*
- Cards by a young child are wonderful
- Small stuffed animals
- Socks / slippers / handkerchiefs
- Personal hygiene items such as lip balm, lotion, brush/comb, tissues (travel size), emery boards
- Eyeglass holder or case
- Magnifying glass (plastic)
- Stationery / greeting cards / note pads / pens
- Large print books - consider [God Cares For You](#) or our [Giant Print New Testament/Psalms Bible](#)
- Large print crossword or search puzzles
- CD of music if they have player
- Sugar free HARD candy or baked goods **if permitted** (check first with staff)
- Lap blanket (afghans work well here)
- Jewelry / scarves
- Suncatchers
- Calendars
- Walker / wheelchair caddy

Gifts not recommended are: *poinsettias (they are poisonous), breakable knickknacks / glass items, flammable liquids like nail polish remover, expensive items.

Interested in starting your own nursing home ministry? [Here's how to get started!](#)

