

## *Gifts as a symbol of peace*



*“Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Don’t let your heart be troubled or fearful.” (John 14:27)*

The average American will spend \$700 on Christmas gifts this year, and almost a quarter of us believe our Christmas spending will leave us in debt. While almost 40 million Americans live in poverty (and well over 700 million worldwide), consumerism intentionally nurtures feelings of dissatisfaction—we can never get enough. Endless shopping and financial stress stand in stark contrast to the simplicity and humility of the first Christmas. God’s gift to us was Immanuel: God’s very presence dwelling among us. This priceless, exuberant show of love was the Prince of Peace who brought the gift of peace.

Take time this week to give back to God the gift of presence. Slow down from the busyness of the season to reflect on the first Christmas. Take a walk in nature, or find a quiet place to be still. You might like to read a passage of Scripture (such as John 1:1-18), and then simply quieten your thoughts and rest in God’s love and peace.

## *Be an agent of peace*

Give the gift of presence to someone else this week. Reconnect with a friend, or reach out to someone from whom you have grown apart.