

A Season for Dreams, Wishes, and Gift-Giving

For World Children's Day, 2024, UNICEF asked children from around the world to write letters describing the world they would like to see by 2050. Among the many letters they received, Andréa from the Democratic Republic of the Congo wrote what is simply poetic. Here is just a part of it:

In the world of tomorrow, the world you are leaving us, I would like to see a place where every child is loved, every child is happy.

A clear sky, with no clouds of smoke. I'd like to see trees and flowers in abundance. A world of brilliant colours.

In the world I want, school is a gentle refuge; a kind of cocoon where children learn and grow; a place where every little dream becomes a big one.

A world of peace, where conflict is extinguished, where we know how to love. A world where peace shines, sweet and comforting. I'd like to see anger transformed into dialogue.

Imagine a tomorrow without cries or tears, where every child plays without weapons. A united future where every child has his or her place, a circle of happiness, a gentle embrace."

You can read Andréa's full letter and others at the UNICEF website, <https://www.unicef.org/stories/dear-adults>. Suffice it to say, the children who wrote have similar dreams and hopes no matter their homelands.

So how do we adults respond to the world's children's desires, especially at this time of year when gift-giving is so prominent, a time when Christians celebrate the birth of the one called the Prince of Peace; Jews commemorate the divine miracle of lasting, light-giving oil; and African-Americans who observe Kwanzaa celebrate family, community, and culture? Will we listen to Andréa and create a world "where every child plays without weapons," "a world where peace shines, sweet and comforting"? May our answer be an enthusiastic, "Yes!" And this is how to give gifts that help make that a reality:

Look for toys that:

- ❖ Promote respectful, non-stereotyped, nonviolent interactions among children
- ❖ Foster cooperation and teamwork, like dolls and puzzles and some board games
- ❖ Involve constructing, like building blocks and molding clay
- ❖ Inspire creative arts, like craft supplies and musical instruments
- ❖ Promote movement, like bikes, wagons, and sports equipment
- ❖ Promote dramatic play, like costumes and props, puppets and magic sets
- ❖ Enhance the imagination, new ideas, and problem solving, like science and nature kits
- ❖ Respect the environment, that can be reused and recycled

And don't forget books, magazine subscriptions, Teddy Bears, and, YOU. There's nothing better than YOUR time!

Want more information? Visit these websites: www.truceteachers.org and www.greenamerica.org (search "Gifts for Children") for more ideas about gifts that promote the positive values we want for our children and have the extra benefit of being sweatshop-free and non-toxic.

***May your holidays be blessed with Joy and Peace!
Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and Happy Kwanzaa!***



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For more information about Pax Christi, visit www.paxchristinys.org or www.paxchristiusa.org.

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