

Be a Friend to the Creation this Christmas: Ways to have a Green Christmas

We offer you a few options for Christmas cards, gifts, gift wrap and other holiday traditions that are kinder to creation. "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7

NO GLITTER in cards or wrappings! Glitter is a microplastic contributing to our plastic pollution problem. An article can be found from October 22, 2020 at The Guardian.

Eco-friendly Christmas cards

Email or call rather than sending a card. (It may mean more to them than a card likely to soon be discarded.)

E-cards: create your own or use one of several e-card companies. (Personalize your greetings with a family picture and send it as an email attachment.)

If you still want a printed card, select an eco-friendlier option by finding cards and envelopes printed using post-consumer recycled paper. Some companies plant a tree with every order.

- Paper Culture, a certified green business, plants a tree with every order, uses 100% post-consumer recycled paper, and offsets their carbon footprint through carbon credits.
- Look for eco-friendly cards on Etsy, helping an artist while considering the impact on the planet.
- Buy cards from a local source that keeps money local – e.g., from Arizona Highways:
www.shoparizonahighways.com

Earth-friendly gift suggestions

Sustainability is the best gift you can give! It minimizes the use of our precious natural resources (especially water) and helps keep discarded items out of the waste stream.

- *Reusable water bottle.* Most single-use plastics are *not* recyclable (despite the number in the recycling logo ... only a #1 or #2 find a new use but #s 3-7 enter the landfill and frequently end up in our oceans). A reusable thermal bottle can last years and keep beverages at the desired temperature a long time.
- *Solar-powered phone charger.* No need to worry if your current phone charger is a vampire appliance. Solar energy is free!
- *Reusable sandwich bags and stainless steel straws.* Perfect for packing lunches and no plastic waste.
- *Fair Trade products* Fair Trade Certified™ goods support responsible companies, empower farmers, workers, and fishermen, and protect the environment. From chocolate to clothing to coffee (and more), let your consumer \$\$\$ reflect your values. Check the WHEAT store in Phoenix: [Home | WHEAT's Fair Trade Store \(square.site\)](#) or SERRV: [Fair Trade Home Decor, Jewelry, Baskets, Gifts, Food | SERRV](#)
- *Products that give others a chance at a better life.* Feed My Starving Children [Christian organization dedicated to feeding God's starving children] feeds the hungry worldwide: [Artisan-Made Gifts and Merchandise | FMSC MarketPlace – FMSCMarketplace.org](#)
- *Plant trees for each product or sponsorship.* For campers and grillers: Prime 6's 100% sustainable charcoal (made from recycled hardwood-waste sawdust, has no fillers or chemicals, reusable up to seven times until it's burned away completely): [Charcoal | Prime 6 \(prime-six.com\)](#)
- *Adopt (symbolically) an animal.* Help sustain habitat and populations of threatened and endangered species. (Organizations: National Wildlife Federation, World Wildlife Fund, Sierra Club, and others.)

- *Plant a tree in a national forest:* Trees will be planted on protected public lands to restore damage from wildfires, invasive insects, natural disasters, or disease. [Plant a Tree in Honor of Someone - A Living Tribute Tree Gift](#)

Before contributing to any nonprofit organization, it is wise to check with Charity Navigator for information on its actual performance; [www. https://www.charitynavigator.org/](https://www.charitynavigator.org/)

- *Clothing and accessories made from recycled and sustainable materials.* From plastic bottles and coffee grounds remade into a hoodie ([Coalatreeco Eco-Minded Goods | Outdoor Apparel & Accessories](#)), to products with minimal packaging ([United By Blue, Sustainable Apparel and Accessories](#)), look for products that minimize the use of natural resources and add little/nothing to the waste stream.
- *Plants, seeds with a purpose.* Live plants with creative planters help clean the air while bringing nature inside. Consider seed packets for planting seeds that will attract pollinators and hummingbirds. (Terroir Seeds has sustainably grown and harvested seed collections: <https://underwoodgardens.com>)
- *Products that help clean the oceans and provide livable wages to the impoverished:* [Home - Ocean Sole](#)
- *Battery-free toys for children (and adults!):* Batteries are contributing heavily to our waste stream and pollute soil and water with toxic chemicals. (If you do select toys with batteries, please recycle them properly through your municipal haz mat collection – **never** in your regular trash!)

Wrapping: Make it glitter free and unique (glitter paper and cards can't be recycled)!

- *Reusable fabric wrap* (bandana, fun T-shirt, scarf)
- *Potato chip bags* (cut, wash and use silvery side out)
- *Tote bags*
- *Brown grocery bags* (cut open, iron flat, have the kids or grandkids decorate)
- *(Reusable) gift bags*

Other festivities: Advent, Winter Solstice

Experiences are more meaningful and leave longer memories than most “things”.

- Consider an evening scripture reading and lighting a candle around an *Advent wreath*.
- Host a family *winter solstice* party. Provide a votive candle for everyone to use in lieu of electric lighting. Select a word for the next year that reflects your intention (generosity, kindness, tolerance, compassion, etc.) and commit to your word with all your family gathered. Read the nativity story together: Matthew 1:18-25 or Luke 2:1-20.
- Whenever you gather, carefully consider *food/snacks* you may be serving. 40% of all food ends up in the landfill, creating a huge waste of natural resources used to grow and transport that food as well as a huge amount of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change.

A special request:

While fun, ugly Christmas sweaters create a **huge** drain on natural resources used to make them. Please purchase one from a local thrift store and donate it back post-holidays.