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## **Inexpensive Christmas Stocking Stuffer Ideas For Kids**

**By Jeffrey Strain**

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After all the gifts have been purchased and placed under the tree, that is the time that many remember in a panic that the stockings over the fireplace still need to be stuffed. Holiday budgets have most likely been spent and there isn't a whole lot of extra money available. Even with a limited budget, there are a number of quality stocking stuffer ideas that are both practical and will bring a smile to the faces of the little ones.

If you are at a complete loss of what to get, take a trip to your local dollar store and walk the aisles. There should be a large selection of goods at a price that is right for you to choose from which should quickly fill up the stockings. In addition, consider the following Christmas stocking stuffer ideas that can have a dual benefit:

**Batteries:** Instead of wrapping up the batteries with the gift, separate them into stocking stuffers. Since you'd need to purchase them anyway for the toys, they aren't an extra expense. By separating them out, you make a start on your stocking stuffing and the kids will love them because they can start playing any electronic devices they received.

**School Supplies:** Here is another practical stocking stuffer that you'd have to purchase in the future for your kids anyway. You kill two birds with one stone by getting them the school supplies they need and filling up the stocking a little more.

**Disposable Camera:** With all the activity going on during Christmas day, you probably don't have the time to take pictures and document the day. Let your children do it for you. They'll have great fun taking photos from their own unique perspective that will add to any photo album.

**Art and Craft Supplies:** Again, these are supplies that you are likely to need for other activities in the future. Kids love to create and any arts and craft materials make great stocking stuffers. Coloring books, crayons, colored pencils, markers and paints all fit the bill and can be used for other activities

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long after Christmas is over.

**Mini Games or Card Games:** Travel size editions of their favorite games or card games that can be played in the car are another good stocking stuffer. The kids can play these on their own, but they have the multiple benefit that they can be used in the car to keep the children occupied during any holiday trips you make.

**Christmas Letter:** You might want to consider writing a Christmas letter to your child telling him or her all the fun things you remember from the past year. This doesn't cost any money, can become a lovely Christmas tradition and will be a gift that the child will treasure long after Christmas is over.

By taking a little time to consider stocking stuffers, you won't need to spend a lot of money to fill those socks over the fireplace mantle while still bringing smiles to the faces of your children when they peak inside.

Jeffrey Strain is owner of

— a website dedicated to providing practical  
money saving tips and articles.

### **Cheap Christmas Gift Ideas**

**By Shannon Jarvies**

Now that the biggest shopping season of the year is in full swing it might be a good time to create a holiday budget. I'm sure there are lots of names on your list, but hopefully you can find gifts that won't put a big dent in your pocketbook. I've come up with a few good ideas that might help.

**Make your Own.** Everybody loves a homemade gift. It means that you really put some time and thought into it. You can make your own bath salts, bubble bath, brownie mixes and more! Choose an inexpensive jar, add a ribbon and you've got a really cool gift that didn't cost a fortune. You can find the recipes to these homemade gifts here: [Pioneerthinking.com](http://Pioneerthinking.com) And I've got some homemade stocking stuffer ideas here: [money-saving-tips.blogspot.com](http://money-saving-tips.blogspot.com)

It's probably too late to start this idea for this holiday season but you can plan ahead for the next. After Christmas is one of the best times to buy gifts. Almost everything is marked down—sometimes as much as 50%. So create a list for next year and hit the shops after Christmas!

If you have a talent share it with others. You could give "gift certificates to those on your list. Do you play the piano? Offer free piano lessons. Are you good with kids? Offer free babysitting for a day. Are you well organized? Offer to clean someones house. Do you work on cars? Offer a free oil change. These gifts cost no money to give but could be some of the most well received gifts!

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You could take the above option a step further by using your services to barter for a gift. If your neighbor sells candles and you would love to get two or three for your sister-in-law maybe you could barter your services. Offer her a free night of babysitting. Or maybe there's a gift in your closet that you received last year that you got one too many of. Offer that to her in exchange for a candle.

Remember the holidays aren't about buying the most expensive gifts. They are about sharing traditions and making memories with those you love.

Shannon Jarvies is a WAHM with five beautiful children and a wonderful husband. Visit her Debt Management Website for debt consolidation, budgeting and money saving tips and ideas. You can also join her Money Management Discussion Group.

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