



# *mini* CHILD

THE REAL GUIDE FOR PARENTS

## Christmas + Giving



### WHAT'S INSIDE:

- CREATING MEMORIES
- GRATITUDE GUIDE
- NOSTALGIC GIFT IDEAS
- + MUCH MORE!

**FREE**

NOVEMBER 2016



**REMEMBER  
TO PICK UP  
YOUR CHILD!**



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+  
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# Ed's Letter

Happy Holidays! (Well almost!). Welcome to our CHILD  
Christmas + Giving mini mag.



As soon as November hits I love to get a head start on all my Christmas planning; whether it's getting through that long shopping list or hand making gifts and decorations for loved ones.

In a world where we are consuming so much, so quickly it's nice to get back to basics and dedicate time to the important things like; spending quality time with the family, volunteering on a community project or making something by hand.

This issue is jammed packed with festive fun and tips on getting through (and staying sane) during the holidays.

Be inspired by your own childhood Christmas's with our Nostalgic Gift Ideas, Learn about 'keeping the peace' among family in Surviving Christmas With The in-Laws and learn how your weekly shop can do amazing things for other communities with Groceries That Give Back.

Happy home!



xoxo Jenna



# MORE THAN ENOUGH:

*The gift of giving*

WORDS **JODIE MCEWEN**

## JODIE MCEWEN REFLECTS ON THE STUFF OF CHRISTMAS AND THINKS ABOUT THE WAY FORWARD FOR HER FAMILY.

It was spring-cleaning that started it – and a broken thong. Who'd have thought such mundane things could change a person's perspective on Christmas?

All winter, I'd managed to avoid looking too closely at the grotty windows and dusty shelves in the boys' bedroom. Throwing piles of folded clothes on the beds and the occasional barked request about removing wet towels from the floor seemed to suffice. Then along came spring: bright, cheerful sunshine and the cleansing fresh breezes that waft away boy smells. I'd avoided it long enough. It was time to spring-clean and remove the detritus my sons collect and inhabit.





Sorting through the cupboard was easy enough. But lurking under the beds was a plethora of junk: school newsletters, muesli-bar wrappers, used tissues and toys. Lots of toys. Kids are good at accumulating stuff. Getting rid of it, not so much. “Oh, Mum! You can’t chuck that out. It’s my favourite!” Really? This nasty airplane teddy with stuffing falling out? “But I still play with it!” A car with three wheels? “Nanna gave it to me!” A broken yo-yo? “I want to keep it.”

Obviously, this was a job best done when the boys were out of the way. But it wasn’t my sons’ insistence that I keep certain things that riled me. Rather it was the fact they have so much stuff. Remote-control cars, train tracks, useless teddy bears and cheap junky toys that come ‘free’ with takeaway food. Why do we have all this stuff? And where will it all end up?

It was the broken thong that clinched it, though. We were going camping, and as all parents know, caravan-park toilet blocks are gross, so thongs were required for the showers. Since one of the kids had busted thongs, I nipped into a local department store to grab a new pair. When I found them, I headed to the checkout. And what I saw made me feel sick.

Ahead of me, there was a long queue of customers, all with trolleys. Big, heavily laden trolleys. I saw large pink boxes of tea sets and dolls. There were pool toys, electronic toys, sports gear and figurines. The overwhelming majority of it was plastic, and I shuddered at the thought of the mountain of packaging. I didn’t even want to think of the cost.

In that moment, I couldn’t help but think of the Operation Christmas Child shoebox my kids and I had just assembled for a child who wouldn’t receive anything else for Christmas.

The coloured pencils, new toothbrush, cap, bright stickers, tennis ball and soft blanky now looked pretty meagre compared with the bounty contained in even one of those trolleys. I knew, however, that the little kid who received our box would be truly thankful for what they received. And I decided I wanted that for my kids.

I want them to appreciate what they have, and I want them to look after it. It's important to me that we teach them to be mindful of others who don't enjoy the excess we bask in on a daily basis. Most of all, I want my children to realise they have more than enough. It may not be everything they want, but they have everything they need.

I love this time of the year and celebrating what it means to our family. There will be quiet words in grandparents' ears about gifts that are useful, needed or longed-for experiences. Together, the kids and I will work on some special home-made gifts that will be unique and made with love. We'll buy chickens and fish and vegetable seeds for people in distant locations who won't have a luxurious Christmas dinner like we will, but might enjoy some food security by this time next year.

There will be more thought at our house around Christmas this year, and less consumerism and plastic. By thinking about what we do, my aim is to stay this side of the line between plenty and extravagance.





WORDS & STYLING **JENNA TEMPLETON**

**WHEN YOU HOLD A WOODEN TOY IN YOUR HAND, YOU JUST KNOW IT'LL LAST A LIFETIME. JENNA TEMPLETON SHARES A SELECTION OF ADORABLE WOODEN WONDERS.**

You can't go wrong with a classic wooden jigsaw set or building blocks that will keep little ones entertained for hours.

Lovingly made my hand, here are the cutest wooden toys for kids and babies from Australian brands, mothers and makers.





A SKEPTIC'S GUIDE TO  
GRATITUDE

WORDS MELISSA COWAN

It's a Wonderful World

A large, illuminated neon sign for the television show "It's a Wonderful World". The sign is mounted on a light-colored wall and features the title in a classic cursive script. The letters are constructed from thick neon tubes, with the main body of each letter being red and a white neon tube tracing the outline. The sign is lit from within, creating a warm, glowing effect. Several black electrical boxes and wires are visible, securing the neon tubes to the wall. The background is a plain, off-white wall, and the overall scene is captured in a slightly low-angle shot.

## **DOES BEING GRATEFUL MAKE A DIFFERENCE? MELISSA COWAN REFLECTS ON THE ART OF SAYING THANKS.**

I had mixed feelings when I received a gratitude journal for Christmas last year (the irony of this has not escaped me). It was super pretty, but with over 76 million 'gratitude' hits on Google and eight million Instagram #gratefuls, the hype had kind of turned me off the whole thing. But then again, maybe there was something behind it all. Just how good is gratitude?

With just a little trepidation, I started writing down three things I was grateful for each day. Some days, they were really small things, like the smell of jasmine on my walk. On other days, I reflected on bigger things like how thankful I was for my supportive family. It only took about 30 seconds and I just wrote whatever came to me.

I started to notice a slight shift in my thinking. Instead of just noticing things that didn't go well or situations I wanted to change, I was making mental notes of the good things that happened each day. I was surprised by just how many there were.

One thing I found was that the majority of 'things' I was thankful for weren't things at all...they were people. And the act of noticing them and all their awesome qualities was inspiring. My next step is to go out of my way to tell people how awesome they are (why is this hard to do!?).

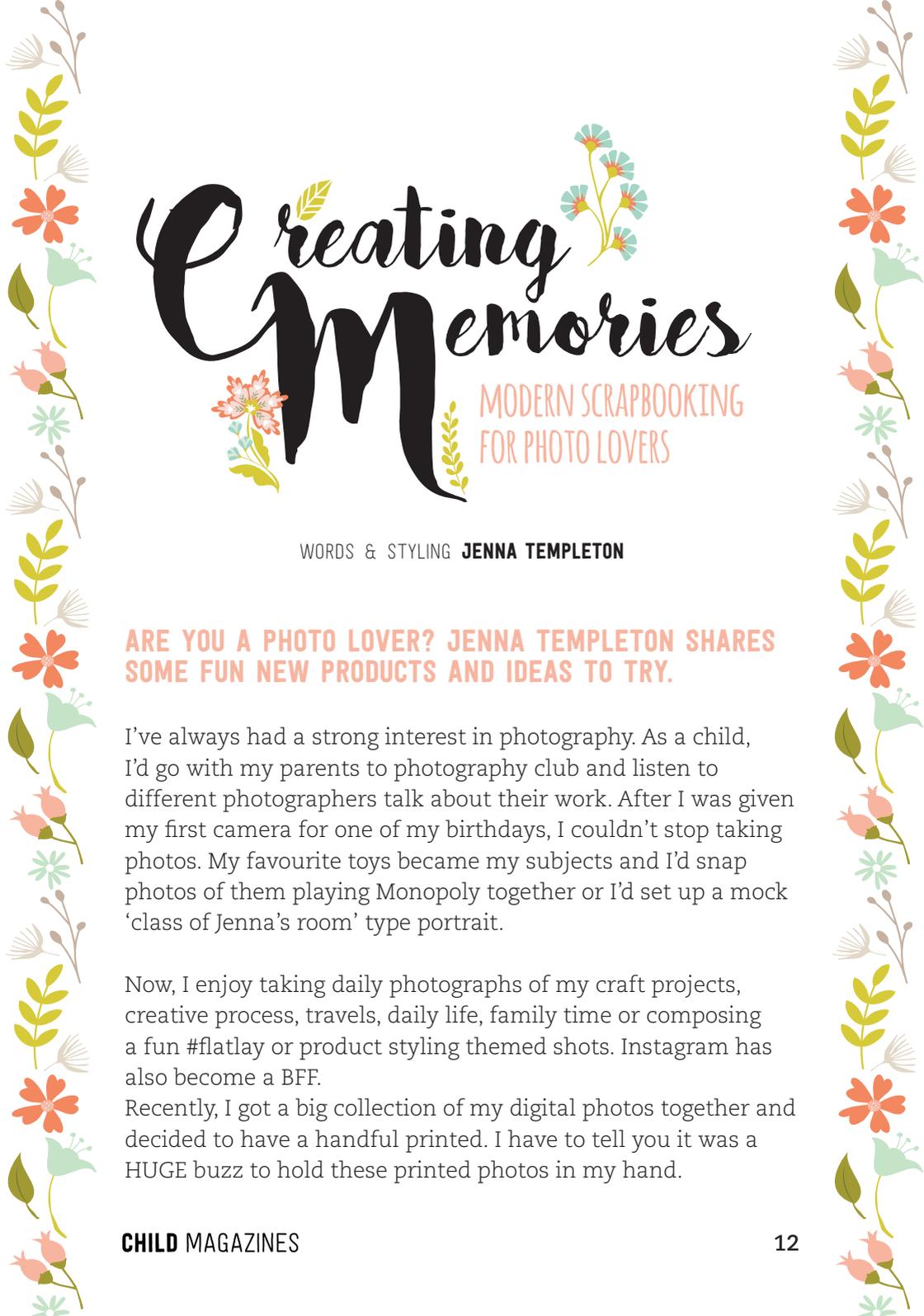


Some of the claimed benefits of practicing gratitude include a greater sense of wellbeing, less loneliness, more generosity and a stronger immune system. I'm not too sure about some of them, but I can say that it does make you feel pretty good. And I've realised it makes other people feel good, too. The best part was that it took hardly any time out of my day, so the benefits outweighed the effort. By this stage, I was on board.

## HERE ARE SOME PRACTICAL WAYS TO CULTIVATE GRATITUDE:

- ◆ **Keep a gratitude journal.**
- ◆ **Use a gratitude app.**
- ◆ **Write your 'happy moments' on a scrap of paper and put them into a Happiness Jar.**
- ◆ **Use a normal journal and just write down anything good that happened that day.**

I'm actually loving the practice and I think I'll keep it up for a while. I may even take photos of the things I am thankful for #grateful.



# Creating Memories

MODERN SCRAPBOOKING  
FOR PHOTO LOVERS

WORDS & STYLING **JENNA TEMPLETON**

## ARE YOU A PHOTO LOVER? JENNA TEMPLETON SHARES SOME FUN NEW PRODUCTS AND IDEAS TO TRY.

I've always had a strong interest in photography. As a child, I'd go with my parents to photography club and listen to different photographers talk about their work. After I was given my first camera for one of my birthdays, I couldn't stop taking photos. My favourite toys became my subjects and I'd snap photos of them playing Monopoly together or I'd set up a mock 'class of Jenna's room' type portrait.

Now, I enjoy taking daily photographs of my craft projects, creative process, travels, daily life, family time or composing a fun #flatlay or product styling themed shots. Instagram has also become a BFF.

Recently, I got a big collection of my digital photos together and decided to have a handful printed. I have to tell you it was a HUGE buzz to hold these printed photos in my hand.



I've also recently taken up scrapbooking... which is now commonly known as life documenting. From photo books to printers that print your snaps straight from your Smartphone. Just think of it like crafting combined with photos and journaling. So where to begin?

### **HERE ARE SOME PRODUCTS I'M LOVING AND USING MYSELF RIGHT NOW:**

#### **Photobook** Blurb

Blurb is great for publishing your photos into your very own book. After downloading Blurbs software, you're able to design the look and style of your photobook and have your completed book printed and sent straight to your door.



Heidi Swapp **Tab Set** Spotlight

These cute tabs are great for spacing out sections in your photo album if you are splitting up photos from each month or event.

We R Memory Keepers **Instagram Album** Sassy Scrapper

I own this album – it's so handy for documenting my Instagram photos as the album pockets are designed for an Instagram-sized photo.

**SELPHY GP910 Printer** Canon

This nifty printer allows you to download photos straight from your Smartphone and instantly prints out your snaps!

**Instax Mini 8 Camera** Harvey Norman

This camera is called 'Instax' for a reason. Snap your photo and it instantly prints a Polaroid style photo on the spot. You can also grab their **Instax decorating sets**.

Project Life **Photo Album** Spotlight

These albums are perfect for modern day scrapbooking or documenting with your photographs. The album pockets are designed to fit various sizes of photos and fit fun scrapbook cards.

Amy Tangerine **Scrapbooking Cards** Sassy Scrapper

Scrapbook cards can come in so many different themes – travel, baby, seasons and relatable quotes. They're designed to compliment your photos in your albums.

Hero Arts Kelly Purkey **Clear Stamps** Sassy Scrapper

I'm a big fan of Kelly's clear stamps. They're so fun and can be used to stamp words onto your photos if you want to get crafty and decorate them.

### Photo Memo Cards Origami

These peeps let you choose your fave snaps from your Smartphone and will print them for you, and send them straight to your home. So many styles to choose from – like a Polaroid, film strip (photobooth style) or into cute memo cards you can send to friends.

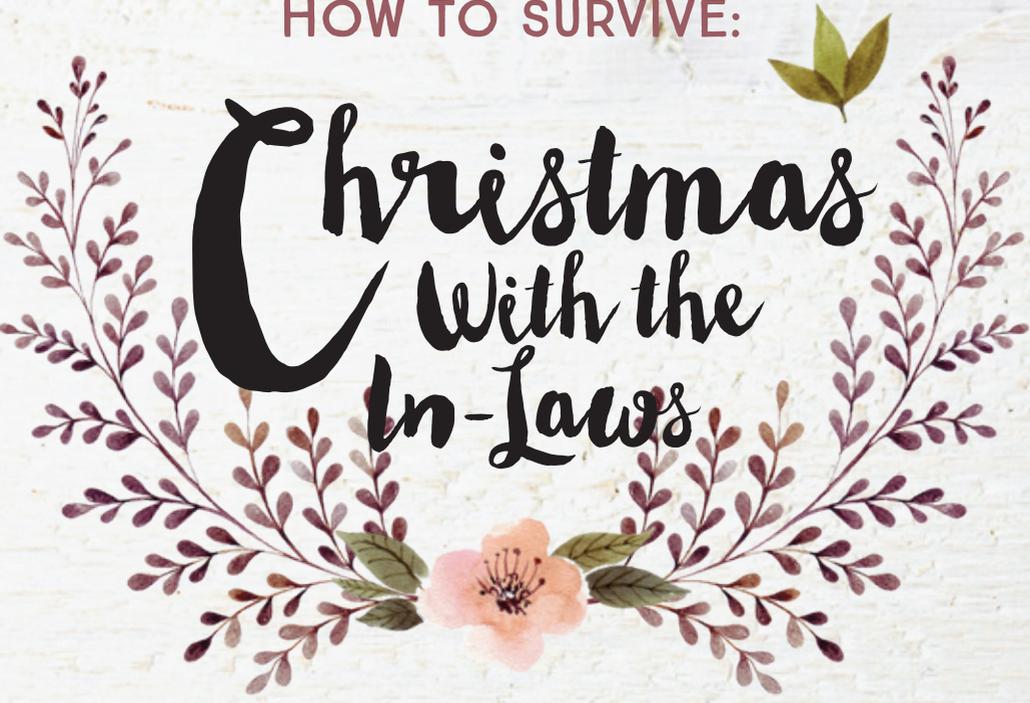
### Instagram Photo Prints Social Print Studio

Social Print Studio A nifty app that also lets you choose, then have your Smartphone photos printed and sent to your doorstep.





HOW TO SURVIVE:



# Christmas With the In-Laws

WORDS JESSICA WEBSTER



**IT MAY BE THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY, BUT FOR MANY PEOPLE CHRISTMAS IS A TIME OF TENSION AND STRESS.**

It's a fact that many of us just don't get along well with our in-laws or other family members, making Christmas that much more awkward. Disputes over issues such as hosting or personal disagreements can really affect the dynamic of celebrations. For people who go away for Christmas and stay in the same house as their relatives, being in such close quarters can also lead to conflict.





## *To survive Christmas, I've got a few simple suggestions:*

1. Plan as much in advance as possible. Have an open discussion with your family about everyone's expectations and ensure each is met. For example, could you rotate where you spend Christmas? Have these conversations early on because they become more emotional the closer we get to Christmas.
2. If you're anticipating a stressful Christmas, acknowledge this and remind yourself that you're not alone, and many people struggle this time of year. Try to focus on an element of Christmas you do enjoy. Remember you have managed in previous years, and it'll be over and done with soon enough.
3. Make a plan on how to manage your stress. Brainstorm strategies you can use to relax yourself when your stress level becomes problematic. Consider using a rating scale out of 10. For example, if your stress gets to six, you can try some deep breathing (inhale counting to three, exhale counting to three, making sure your stomach is inflating and deflating



and not your chest). If your stress rises to eight, you can go for a walk or to another room for a few minutes. Consider at what point your stress is unmanageable and when it would be sensible to go home.

4. If you have joined a family, or there are divisions in your family, you could suggest getting everybody involved in developing new meaningful traditions. Trying to blend the old with the new is never easy, but I'm often thrilled by the creative solutions people come up with when resolving conflict within families.
5. Facing Christmas after a recent argument with a family member can stimulate brilliant avoidance tactics. Contact the person you have argued with, and suggest to 'agree to disagree' for the Christmas period. If this is too tricky, a session with a relationship mediator might be useful.
6. If alcohol becomes a problem at Christmas, ensure there are non-alcoholic drinks available for everyone. Google mocktail recipes for some great ideas, or try adding some mineral water to your usual drink for some festive fizz without the alcohol.



I STILL BELIEVE IN  
**SANTA  
CLAUS**





## ONE MUM DECIDES IT BEST TO KEEP A CHRISTMAS MYTH ALIVE.

I still believe in Santa Claus. At the age of 41, with three children of my own, I still believe in his wonder and magic. As a child, I remember the splendour of Christmas morning, with piles of presents under the tree that bore testament to the visit from the man himself the night before.

When my seven-year-old daughter recently announced, “There’s no Santa anyway, it’s just Mum and Dad,” I was stunned. I’d read children are starting to not believe in Santa at a younger age, but I was still unprepared. Only months before she was writing letters to the Tooth Fairy, asking her where she lived and the names of her best friends. However, she had been



asking a lot of questions lately about why the Easter Bunny, Tooth Fairy and Santa all insisted on delivering their gifts at night, instead of during the day when we could see them. Questions I never would have thought to ask my mother when I was a child.

When my daughter professed her disbelief in front of her five-year-old brother, I had to think fast. In a split second I decided I wasn't ready for her to let go of Santa. I laughed and said, "Well, I wish that were true."

"Why Mum?" she asked.

"Because if I really was Santa Claus, that would mean I could give myself anything I wanted. I could also travel all over the world delivering presents to children, and you know how I love to travel." My daughter was silent as she took all of this in.

I kept going. "Another thing, if you don't believe in Santa then he probably won't be bringing you anything for Christmas this year." "I still believe, Mum," my son assured me. My daughter's expression began to soften as she processed my words. "I guess I do still believe," she said. The topic of conversation changed, as I discreetly breathed a sigh of relief.



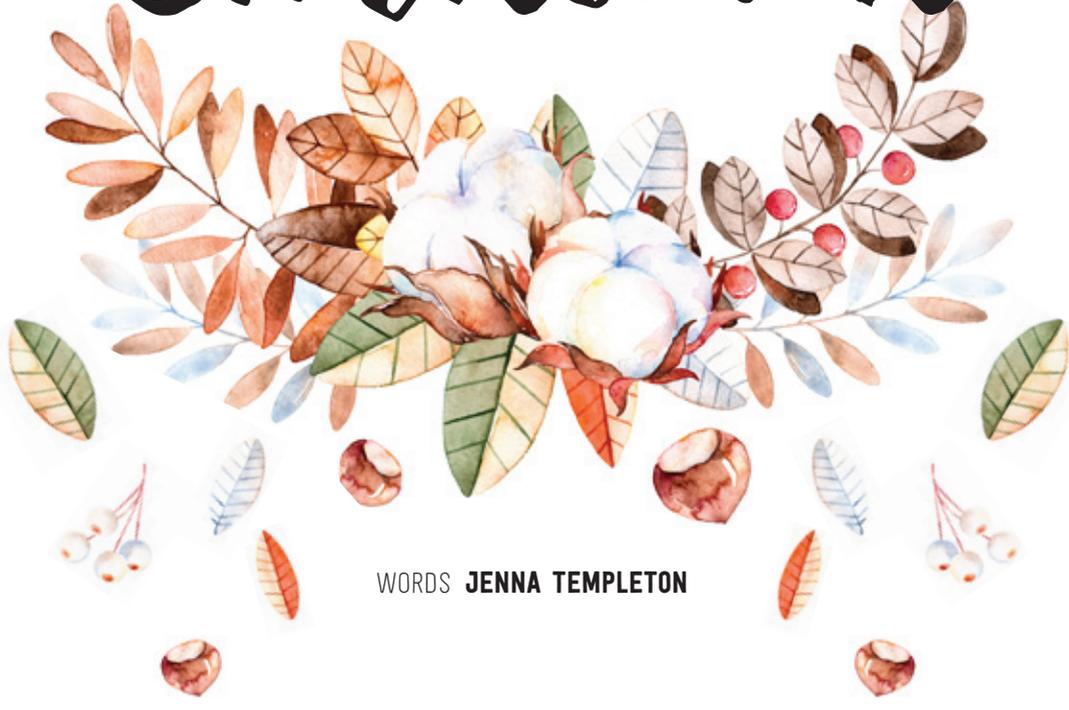
Later I questioned my response. Had I done the right thing? I know there are those who would say I was perpetuating a myth and insulting her intelligence. But with two other children who still believe, there would have been a lot of carnage if I had been upfront with my middle daughter. I'd also like to continue a family tradition filled with the magic and innocence of Santa for a bit longer. It's something you are never too old or too young for.





A HOME FOR

# Christmas



WORDS **JENNA TEMPLETON**



**THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IN THE WORLD TO ME ARE FAMILY AND LOVE. WHEN I PUT THESE THINGS TOGETHER, THEY EQUAL A HOME.**

A home is a place filled with love, laughter and memories. Your childhood is shaped by the place you grow up in. I often think about the true meaning of home at Christmas time, when most of the family come together.

Having lived in the same house my whole childhood, I always dreamed about owning my own family home and wondered what my house would look like when I became an adult. Most of these dreams included having a house just like in the movie *Father of the Bride*. I thought it was the quintessential family home. Obviously, I can't afford a mansion at this point in time, but while house hunting for my first home, I hoped it had the essence of a well-loved family home. A place to feel safe in, a place to create memories and a place to make our own.



My husband, Ryan, and I have been house hunting for a year now. I would say it's been an emotionally challenging time. As most home buyers would know and agree, not only do you have to find the right home for you (with a few compromises), you need to have the offer accepted and make sure it's not termite infested. I guess you could compare house hunting to dating. You can get so emotionally invested in the relationship (house), only to have your heart broken when your love/bid is not accepted.

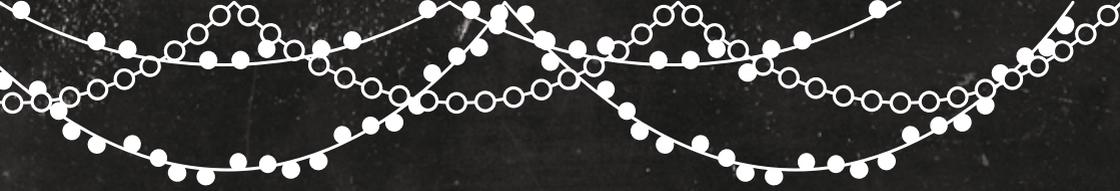




So this year, the goal for us was to find a home for Christmas (wouldn't that make a good movie title?). When we began house hunting, we were both very open minded when it came to house viewings and have spent almost every weekend this year at open homes. We learnt how to gauge the market and discovered what we really wanted most.

Everyone is trying to find their dream home, but it was important to keep in mind that we could also make a place into our dream home. I did have a few things I wasn't willing to compromise on, though. While some might wish to have an amazing bathroom or kitchen, the things on the top of my list were: is there room to put a Christmas tree? Can we easily fit a big family dining table somewhere? I would even check to see if there was enough room to store the Christmas tree. Clearly I had my priorities in order!

A Christmas miracle has recently occurred – last month we found the perfect home for us and will soon be home owners for the first time. We did make a few offers during the year on some houses (that we were out-bided on), but looking back, we know they weren't meant for us.



*The gift*  
THAT KEEPS ON  
*Giving*

WORDS **SARAH HAMILTON**



**WE ALL HAVE OUR OWN CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS, NO MATTER HOW UNCONVENTIONAL THEY MAY BE. SARAH HAMILTON REFLECTS.**

I am the youngest of three and I honestly struggle to remember a time when I truly believed in Santa. I didn't grow up in a particularly religious family, yet Christmas has always been something I treasure. I remember the anticipation of going to sleep on Christmas Eve, the excitement on Christmas morning and the exhaustion after running around all day with my brother, sister and cousins.

Each family has their own unique traditions, which grow organically over time. Building on Hungarian tradition, my friend Nicolette spends 6 December listening to vintage carols and decorating the Christmas tree with her family. Tired of unwanted gifts, my partner's family forgo numerous presents and surprise each other on Christmas Day with a single treat they've purchased for themselves. Everyone gets exactly what they wished for.

Each year, my mother, sister and I spend an afternoon icing and decorating Christmas cakes for the rest of the family, chatting in a sugar-induced haze. Aside from this, we don't have any traditions, with each Christmas being completely different to the last. This difference has almost become a tradition in itself. There's no reoccurrence of roasts or puddings, and we don't celebrate on any particular day; sometimes we're weeks behind (perfect for post-Christmas bargains).

It became an unspoken challenge to see how unique each Christmas could be and our decorations have always reflected that. One year we decorated the house using only recycled trash, another year it was a 2m tower of baubles. We had a

year where everything was black and gold, a pop-art Christmas with a Warholesque can stack, and then there was the solitary eucalypt branch secretly sourced at night from our neighbour's backyard. I love that my family is a bit odd and that we come up with crazy ideas together. It reminds me there is one place I will always belong, no matter how strange I may be. We're all adults now, and for us, Christmas is about one thing: family.

Whatever your traditions, celebrating at this time of year has become ingrained in our culture. Christmas provides a reason to catch up with loved ones, and that time together is a gift. It doesn't really matter what you celebrate, which house you go to, how old you are or what gifts you give, only that you are together. T S Elliot wrote, "There is no vocabulary for love within a family, love that's lived in, but not looked at... This love is silent". I must admit, after all the stress of the silly season, at the end of Christmas day when I sit quietly exhausted with my family, then truly, all is calm.

(And if you are curious, this year's theme is wool. I've wrapped more pom-poms than you can count.)



~L  
Portugus  
26 040

~L  
Portugus  
26 040





## HOW DO YOU PUT YOUR GROCERY MONEY TO A GOOD CAUSE?

Ok, so have you got kids? Do they eat like 20 times a day? Do you haemorrhage money on groceries at least a few times a week?

It's ridiculous right! But there are some things I gladly throw in the trolley. And that's supermarket products that exist either purely for the purpose of charity or that give a lot of money to it.

That's pretty exciting in my opinion, don't you think?

Let me run you through some of my faves, and then you can tell me in the comment section about ones I've missed.





**Thankyou.** You can buy cereal, water, body wash, sanitiser, snacks and now baby products (including nappies) that donate all profits to related projects. So if you buy a bottle of water, it helps fund clean water projects. If you buy baby products, the proceeds go to funding birthing centres and so on. The brand only exists to be awesome and fund charitable endeavours. I have to buy oats anyway, so it's a total no brainer for me. We profiled the founders last month, talk about awesome folks!

**Dick Smith Foods** I only found this out recently, but since its launch, Dick Smith foods have donated over 7.4 million to Aussie charities. The company was created to help Aussie farmers and to this day they only use Australian suppliers, products and manufacturers. Cool right?



**Moxie** As a Western woman, I never had to worry about my period stopping me from getting an education, and to be honest, as a teenager I didn't even know this was a thing. But it was and it still is the reality in many developing countries. For every marked pack of pads and liners sold, Moxie donates the equivalent amount of locally made, reusable products to the young Ugandan girls so that they can continue their schooling. Need more encouragement? 10888 Ugandan girls have benefited so far and 130 Ugandan women are employed to manufacture and distribute the products. What an awesome opportunity to support the cause and start a conversation with our daughters about this issue!



**Who Gives a Crap Ok** So you can't actually get this from most supermarkets, but I always forget to get loo paper when I do the groceries anyway. So it's time to start ordering online.



**CHILD MAGAZINES**



**34**





Why? Because over 2.5 billion people across the world don't have access to a toilet. That's roughly 40 percent of the global population and means that diarrhoea related diseases fill over half of sub-Saharan African hospital beds and kill 1400 children under five every day. I have two children under five and I'm not okay with that at all. So I choose to start buying toilet paper that donates 50 percent of profits to WaterAid.

**Sanitarium** I'd heard a lot about their tax status, because they were church owned and I always associated this with negative connotations. So I was dubious of including them in this list. Let me explain: As an organisation that operates as a charity, Sanitarium is exempt from company income tax. It does pay other taxes that apply to Australian companies though. The reason I decided to include them is, Sanitarium funds numerous breakfast clubs that provide almost one million serves of breakfast to Aussie kids in areas of greatest need. Also, each year more than 300000 serves of Weet-Bix are distributed to charities through Foodbank. Not bad right?



**Domestos** UNICEF and Domestos have partnered in committing to help 25 million people have access to proper sanitation by 2020, because women and girls living without any toilets spend 97 billion hours each year looking for a place to go to the toilet. In some situations they risk shame, harassment and even attack because of this issue. Make sure you grab the specially marked bottles if you want a percentage of proceeds to help this cause.



Keep an eye out for other products that help raise money, awareness and hopes for people around the world! The way you choose to spend your money may just be the greatest power you have.

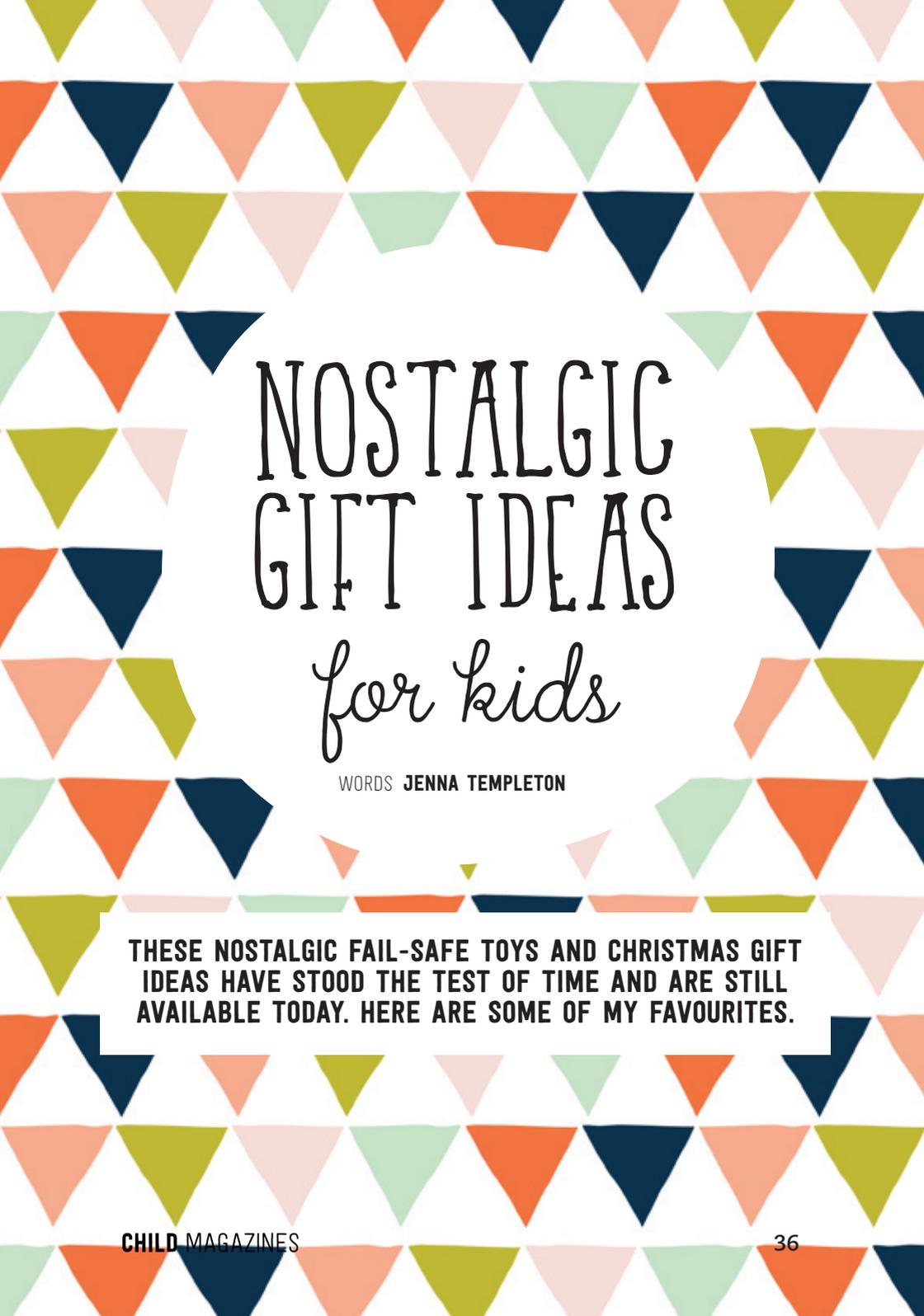


**CHILD MAGAZINES**



**35**





# NOSTALGIC GIFT IDEAS *for kids*

WORDS JENNA TEMPLETON

**THESE NOSTALGIC FAIL-SAFE TOYS AND CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS HAVE STOOD THE TEST OF TIME AND ARE STILL AVAILABLE TODAY. HERE ARE SOME OF MY FAVOURITES.**



### **Book sets: Peter Rabbit + Goosebumps**

**The Peter Rabbit mini library collection** is the perfect gift for a new baby, and as an older child I couldn't wait until the next Goosebumps book came out. It was an exciting day when I'd unexpectedly see the new edition on the bookshop shelf before the actual release date. I'll be taking my nephew to see the new Goosebumps movie when it comes out early next year.

### **Space Hopper**

Once you started hopping, you just couldn't stop!

### **Lego**

I would spend hours playing with my Lego sets. Fave collections included Fabuland, Pirates and Enchanted Islanders.

### **Trampoline**

So many hours of my teen years were spent jumping on the trampoline with my walkman, listening to Mariah Carey and John Farnham cassette tapes.

### **Mouse Trap, Cluedo, Connect 4, Monopoly**

I didn't personally own Mouse Trap, but some of my friends did, so I'd always request to play it when I was over at their houses. We had travel sets of Connect 4 and Monopoly, so my sister and I could play boardgames on holidays.

### **Sylvanian Families – Dollhouse**

My dad built my sister and I a wooden dollhouse and gave it to us for Christmas one year. Every so often (when we were really good or had a birthday) we'd get some new Sylvanian Families bunnies and furniture to deck out the house with.



### **Fuzzy Felt**

The Fuzzy Felt sets were fun to play with and always taught you about something, like what happened at a hospital or how to make a treehouse.

### **Velcro Tennis Bat + Ball Set**

My nan gave me a velcro tennis bat and ball set when I was young. My sister and I would play with them all the time.

### **Mr Potato Head**

I had one of the sets where you could put arms, legs and eyes etc. in playdough to make your own Mr Potato Head.

### **Cabbage Patch Kids**

I loved how the Cabbage Patch Kids dolls came with a birth certificate and sometimes a little book about them. I also used to collect 'Garbage Pail Kids' collector cards. They were the subversive version of Cabbage Patch Kids, with names like 'Potty Scotty'.

### **Swing Set Plum Wooden Double Swing Set**

One Christmas morning, I woke up to find a yellow and green double swing set in our backyard. Our backyard was the place to be for the next few years.

