



## Connecting more, costing less this holiday

Time is one of our most valuable assets. However, the value we place on our time is often an underrated commodity and undermanaged resource. When we invest our time in something or someone, the value of the object or connection seems to increase. This holiday season, explore ways you can sidestep the stores and shops. Instead, shift your focus from retail to relationships.

Perhaps Dr. Suess had it right when he penned these now-familiar words in the 1957 classic, “How the Grinch Stole Christmas”: *“It came without ribbons, it came without tags. It came without packages, boxes, or bags. ... What if Christmas, he thought, doesn’t come from a store. What if Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more.”*

Gifts of our time instead of a purchased item not only saves us money, it creates memories that may mean more than anything we could buy. This holiday season, consider ways to invest your time rather than your money when giving gifts with these *Use Less, Spend Wisely* activities. The benefits may be priceless!

### Maximizing connections

- **Gift your time** – Choose someone who could use a hand, and offer to help them with a DIY project or task that could save them money.
- **Homemade happiness** – Handmake a gift for someone this holiday. Consider your time, talent, and resources to create a gift from the heart.
- **Get your game on** – Has the pandemic canceled your plans or left your family bored? Try a board game! Or a puzzle, charades, videogame, cards, or outdoor fun — from cornhole to catch. Game nights minimize costs and maximize memories.

### Minimizing costs

- **Stuff swap** – Finished a book? Changed home decor styles? Kids outgrown toys or clothes? Rather than a small-group gift exchange, host a “stuff swap” with friends or neighbors. Everyone brings items they no longer use to swap.
- **Gifts of experiences** – Rather than gifting a “useless” item this holiday season, choose to give someone an experience instead. Plan a day to go to a low- or no-cost museum, park, or local landmark.
- **Channel your chef** – Think of your favorite restaurant meal, then make a copycat version to enjoy at home for less. Find a recipe, shop for ingredients, and taste the savings. (Or gift someone the ingredients needed to make their favorite meal at home this holiday season.)

For more information about the Use Less, Spend Wi\$e Challenge, or to obtain an official activities grid, contact your local Extension agent. Then visit <https://www.facebook.com/moneywise> to enter. The first 200 participants to complete six or more *Use Less, Spend Wi\$e* activities by 11:59pm, Nov. 19, 2020 — Use Less Stuff Day — will receive an insulated lunch tote to help them save money by packing meals on the go! Share the fun by posting a photo on Facebook or Instagram of yourself participating in a challenge activity with #UseLessSpendWise.

### **Reference**

Seuss, D. (1957). *How the Grinch stole Christmas*. New York: Random House.

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