

An A to Z Christmas

by Pauline Long

Several years ago when neither of my children could come home for Christmas, I knew something must be done to brighten bleak days. So I decided to send each one a box of 26 gifts, representing each letter in the alphabet. Being able to afford only a few nice gifts and needing to consider weight and postage, a lot of creative thinking and shopping would have to be done in the days ahead.



The first step was to write their names at the top of a sheet of paper, with letters of the alphabet down the side at the left. Then each time I entered a store, especially the grocery store, my imagination took over, guiding me to select little fun gifts. Later, my house was searched for little odds and ends. When finding a gift for a specific letter seemed impossible, I improvised. These last gifts were the ones that brought the most laughter when the gift boxes were opened, according to my children. Each gift was wrapped separately and labeled with a big letter cut from bright red construction paper.

Over the last few years, I have expanded this idea to send boxes to bedridden or lonely children, overseas military personnel, etc. This Christmas, birthday, or other special occasion, you might like to consider a similar idea. Your heart will be uplifted by the joy expressed by the receivers of your thoughtfulness.

Here is a list of a few things that could go into A-Z boxes. You can think of much, much more. Let age, gender and postal requirements be your guide in selecting this package of fun gifts.

A

aftershave, address book, aspirin, alphabet soup, all-purpose cleanser, applesauce, absorbent paper towels

B

batteries, bookmark, billfold, Bible, bubble bath, books, "buter de penut," baseball cards, bean soup mix

C

candle, caramel corn, calendar, cassettes, candy canes, CDs, card games, chip (memory card), cup, chocolate cards, bean soup mix

D

doodads, dictionary, dominoes, detergent, drawing paper, Doritos, dinner-for-two gift certificates, DVD

E

earphones, emery boards, ear swabs, emergency kit, easy sudoku or crossword puzzle

F

flashlight, fluffy face cloth, frame, fragrant perfume, flowers (silk), feather duster, fruit-flavored candy, figurine

G

gown, gift certificate, Girl Scout cookies, gum, golf balls, glitter, games, gemstones, gingersnaps, gloves

H

hosiery, houseshoes, hard candy, ham, handkerchief, hot chocolate mix, honey, hairstyling brush

I

instant salad dressing mix, incredibly good soup (can), insulated coffee cup, index cards, iced tea bags, ink pens

J

jewelry, jams, jellies, jumprope, jack-in-the-box, jigsaw puzzle, jacks, junk food, jug of jelly beans, juice, Jell-O

K

knife, kitchen gadgets, keyring, kite, knick-knacks, kaleidoscope, kazoo, knapsack, keepsakes

L

looking glass, lavatory accompaniment (hand towel), locket, lotion, laughter producer (joke book)

M

mandarin oranges, mints, magnifying glass, magnets, money, magic markers, mittens, music box, music, computer mouse

N

nuts, note cards, notions, necklace necktie, nightgown, nacho cheesedip, nail clippers, needlepoint kit

O

onions (canned), onion soup mix, orange drink mix, Oreos, ornament, oven mitt, Old Maid cards

P

pajamas, powder, pears, pot holder, puzzle, perfume, paperback, pencil, pen, peanuts, popcorn, paper, Pokemon game, pillow, pasta

Q

quarters, Quaker oatmeal, quilt pieces, quiche recipe, quill pen, quit smoking

R

rainy day soup cups, ramen noodles, raisins, recipes, ring, rain guage, riddle book

S

socks, sardines, suckers, stationery, stamps, soap on a rope, sweatshirt, scarf, shower gel, sunflower seeds, gift subscription, sea salt, software

T

tape (sealing, duct, or electrical), towel, tissues, tea, trivia game, tee shirt, tickets to event

U

underwear, "undying love" (printed on red heart-shaped construction paper), umbrella, "unusual" food item

V

vegetable juice, Vaseline lotion or gel, very pretty vase, vest, videotapes, vitamins

W

watercolor paints, washcloth, watch, whistle, wind chime, wheat crackers

X

"xcellent" pens (two crossed pens taped to a card), "xpeller of xcess air from lungs" (balloons), xylophone (toy)

Y

yams, Yardley soap, yardstick, yarn, yucca plant, yo-yo, yard goods, yuletide decoration

Z

zesty horseradish, zwieback toast, zucchini, zircon (ring, necklace)