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10 gift ideas for the homebound *Everyone enjoys receiving a gift.*

By Timothy Merrill

Isn't it part of our nature that we enjoy gifts? Don't we like to be recognized for our achievements? Since we were children, we've been given gold stars, stickers, trophies, awards, medals, ribbons, certificates of merit and the like. And when we receive things like this, it brings us a little joy? Right?

That feeling doesn't change. That's why, when we can occasionally send or take a little gift to a homebound person, it is a joy-giving moment. Perhaps the best or most appropriate opportunity is a person's birthday. Perhaps Christmas. But whatever the occasion, people, even homebound people, like to get something special. It signifies that people are thinking about them.

So here are some ideas in no particular order. I hope that they inspire even other possibilities for gift giving for your homebound people.

1. A coffee table book

This book could be a photo book of the city or state in which you live. But you might also do a little research to learn where the recipient grew up. If the person is a transplant from another state or another country, then find a beautiful coffee table book with lots of photos. He or she will enjoy many hours thumbing through the pages, appreciating the memories the photos help them to recall.

2. Magazine subscription

Learn what interests really excites the recipient. Find a magazine that fits this interest and give him or her a subscription. Barring this, give them a subscription to *National Geographic*. It is usually a favorite among the elderly, as they probably saw this magazine with its famous yellow border lying around the house or at



school. This is a wonderful gift for a homebound person. There are hundreds of magazines covering all kinds of topics. Magazines that cover the world's different cultures, such as the *National Geographic*, provide a great way for someone who is unable to travel to explore the world. Other subjects covered by magazines are history, travel, art, hobbies and sports. A magazine subscription can provide a homebound person with a link to the world and something to look forward to each month.

3. Jigsaw puzzle or puzzle book

Again, do some research to discover what kind of puzzle the homebound person enjoys. If he or she likes to have a jigsaw puzzle in progress, then get him or her a jigsaw. What about word searches? Crosswords? Sudoku? Most bookstores will have books for the beginner, intermediate or advanced players of these types of puzzles. Consider a large print version.

4. Books

This reminds us, of course, that books are always a good idea — assuming the person likes to read. You

might be surprised by the number of large-print editions that are available. One option, instead of buying a book as a gift, is to offer to take a monthly trip to the local library to get some books that your homebound person really wants. Usually books can be checked out for three weeks, and often, libraries will allow you to renew by phone.

5. Bedside, chair or walker caddies

This is something that the ladies of the church could actually make for the homebound. You know what I'm talking about, right? These caddies are the bags that fit over the arms of chairs or over the front of walkers or hang from the handles of a wheelchair or that sit beside the bed. They have pockets where regularly used items can be kept for easy access. These are great gifts for homebound people. They can keep a number of items, such as remote controls, keys, glasses, pocketbooks, and magazines, within reach so they don't have the worry about moving around or having to ask for help.



6. DVDs

This might not be appropriate for some homebound people who get nervous using anything that looks "technological," or for some who have difficulty using their hands and fingers. But if your homebound person is comfortable using the DVD player, then by all means, a DVD or a set of DVDs is an excellent gift idea. DVDs cover a huge array of topics, such as

nature programs, documentaries, historical events and movies. The church or your church's homebound ministry team could even burn a DVD with videos of church events, choir concerts, sermons, worship services and more.

7. Craft and hobby materials

A homebound person may have a particular hobby or craft that they enjoy, such as scrapbooking, painting, drawing, knitting, crocheting, stamp collecting, etc. What gesture would be nicer than giving a basket of supplies for their favorite crafts and hobbies?

8. Electronic photo frames

An electronic photo frame looks like any other 5x7 frame that might sit on a dresser. But this one is connected to the Internet or a service where photos can be uploaded and then looped on this screen for the enjoyment of the homebound person. One such company that offers this service is Ceiva. Go to ceiva.com for more information.

9. Church photo directory

Give the homebound a copy of your church's photo directory. If your church does not have one, then your homebound ministry team might consider taking this on as a project. It's quite easy if you use Instant Church Directory. Try InstantChurchDirectory.com. When completed, print a copy for the homebound person and present it with a greeting card. Give them an updated version every six months.

10. Time

Even though this gift is mentioned 10th in the list it is probably the most precious gift you can give someone, and it doesn't cost a penny. Make a gift promise to spend a minimum amount of time with the homebound person each week or month. But establish a regular schedule. This gives him or her something to look forward to. Being confined to home or to a room in a care facility can be lonely and isolating. Your time spent with those who are confined can be one of the best gifts he or she receives. 🏠

NOTE: Clip-art and photos used in HTQ are available through ChurchArtPro. To subscribe, go to: ChurchArt.com.

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