

Dear Editor,

For several years Pax Christi groups in New York have campaigned against the common practice of purchasing toys and video games that glamorize violence as gifts for children during the Christmas season.

This Christmas we urge you to take a minute to think about the toys you are buying for the young people in your life. We wish each other a Merry Christmas, we talk about peace on earth, we call Jesus the Prince of Peace and yet often place toys that encourage violence under the tree and around the manger.

Many video games glamorize violence, encourage discrimination and make killing seem exciting and fun. Be careful to avoid such videos for the young people on your list. Toys and games that encourage group play, cooperation and old-fashioned fun will offer hours of quality time. Dolls, trains, blocks, music and musical instruments are still great values and favorites for the younger set. How about tickets to a theatre, concert or sporting event for the others? Spending quality time together is a simple gift that will bring many hours of enjoyment.

For something different and truly meaningful take part of your allotment for each child and donate it to a worthy cause. Tell your child what you did and why. Organizations such as Heifer International will send a card depicting the animal you chose to send to a family in a developing country, or give to the Arbor Day Foundation and have a tree planted in someone's name.

Make a contribution to the regional office of Pax Christi Metro NY (www.nypaxchristi.org). Your generosity would help us continue our peacemaker efforts. There are also many groups who need your donation of even \$10. They provide help for families suffering from natural disasters and war. In this way Christmas Day will become a true celebration of the birth of Christ,

Remember don't buy any toys or games that encourage war and violence, choose gifts of peace and give presents from your heart. Never forget, the children are watching.

Wishing you a peace filled Christmas,

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