# PRACTICAL WAYS TO CREATE MEANING

**Great ideas for year-around giving**

(Pick 5; Gift handouts-Option 1)

**Time:** 20 minutes; adaptable to 30- and 40-minute presentations

**Audience:** Adult audiences such as civic groups, congregational groups, parents

## Preparation:
1. Review the stories from the handout *Iowans’ share their innovative ideas* ([link](http://www.uni.edu/ceee/sites/default/files/Hometown/stories.pdf));
2. Make copies of the *Pick 5* handout or use an electronic version ([link](http://www.uni.edu/ceee/sites/default/files/Hometown/pick_5_survey.pdf));
3. Review and print various sample handouts from www.ReclaimYourHolidays.org or show the tips electronically.

**Supplies needed:** Copies of the *Pick 5* handout for each participant and sample copies of handouts as listed above.

## Learning objectives:
At the conclusion of your session, participants will be able to say: *I can…*

- Name two to five factors that I believe are essential to a good quality of life.
- Identify at least two actions to take to create richer, more meaningful celebrations.
- Commit to taking one action to make a holiday or celebration more meaningful and pleasurable.
- Retrieve additional information about topics such as gift-giving, entertaining, communicating effectively and sustainability.

## 2-3 min. Welcome/Icebreaker
Welcome participants and introduce yourself.

Share a story from *Iowans’ share their innovative ideas* and/or share one of your own stories about why you are interested in the green celebrations/Reclaim Your Holidays topic. Ask two to three participants to share briefly why they are interested in the topic.

After this icebreaker, explain that this session is part of a state Reclaim Your Holidays initiative, a program of the University of Northern Iowa Center for Energy and Environmental Education in partnership with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Two grant programs in Iowa—the Resource Enhancement and Protection Act Conservation Education Fund and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Solid Waste Alternatives Program—have provided support for this project. You can find out more about this initiative—and get many more ideas for reclaiming holidays and celebrations—at ReclaimYourHolidays.org.

## 4 min. Distribute and ask participants to complete the *Pick 5 exercise* or show the survey electronically and have participants mentally choose their top 5. (2 min.)

Then, read the factors aloud and ask participants to quickly stand and then sit again when a factor that they chose is read aloud. Keep track of how many participants stand for the most popular factors, then summarize the top 3–6 factors. Explain that this exercise is a reminder of what’s really important to us and a way to encourage participants to remember which factors are important to them so they can take actions with those in mind. (2 min.)

## 10 min. Practical tips
Review with participants one to two of the gift ideas handouts, highlighting your personal favorite tips and giving examples of times you have used any of these ideas with success. Welcome participants to share ideas and, if time permits, give them an opportunity to work in groups of three to discuss what gift idea they have tried that worked, or a gift idea they would like to try in the coming month(s). Select handouts that are most appropriate for the audience you are speaking with. Some of our favorites are:
- Give Gifts of Experience
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<th>4-6 min.</th>
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<td>Invite participants to take a few minutes and write down one to three actions they will take in the next four weeks to make an upcoming celebration more fun and/or meaningful. (Encourage them to plan ahead for major holidays, if they don’t have other celebrations coming soon.)</td>
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<td>They may try a new gift-giving idea, use local foods as refreshments or as a gift, and/or they might plan a group activity. You may want to refer back to the Pick 5 exercise and encourage actions that help them live those priorities more fully.</td>
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<td>Then, ask them to tell their elbow partner their plans. If time permits, ask several to share their actions with the entire group. Encourage them to also post their actions on their refrigerator or place them where they will be reminded of the goal. (Research shows they are more likely to follow through if they make a public commitment or write down their intention.)</td>
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<td>Conclude by encouraging participants to check out the website (ReclaimYourHolidays.org) where they can find many creative gift and entertaining ideas. They can also find resources to help them save money and live more sustainably. Several resources provide how-tos on communicating effectively with friends and families about gift-giving and other challenging issues that sometimes crop up during the holiday season or at celebrations.</td>
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<td>Thank participants for engaging in the session; invite them to continue thinking about how they can create holidays or celebrations that most reflect their values and priorities.</td>
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