

Read Alouds

Not only are the books listed below a great fit for Giving Hearts Day concepts, such as thankfulness and generosity, they can also be used to reinforce story elements, such as plot line, characterization, and theme of literature.

Boxes for Katje, by Candance Fleming and Stacy Dressen-McQueen (Fiction)

Katje's family lives in Olst, Holland and the entire town must scrape by with very little after World War II. Clothing is frequently mended, and soap is considered a luxury item most go without. As spring arrives, so does a mysterious package. Katje discovers a trove of delights inside including chocolates, soap, and fresh socks. Rosie, an American midwestern girl, has sent the package in an effort to help people affected by the war. Katje sends a thank you letter to Rosie and soon, two communities are connected despite the distance separating them. An excellent lesson in generosity and the impact one single act of kindness can have on others.

The Gift of Nothing, by Patrick McDonnell (Fiction)

When we teach our children about giving, we are often referring to material things. But what about the gift of friendship? In this lovable book, the stars of the Mutts comic strip star in a simple, but important story. Mooch the cat wants to get Earl the dog the perfect present. But what do you get for a friend that has everything? Earl already owns a bowl, a bed, and a toy. What more could he need? Mooch decides nothing is what he needs and shows readers that giving your time and love to someone is often the greatest gift of all.

Under the Lemon Moon, by Edit Hope Fine and Rene King Moreno (Fiction)

Rosalinda has a beloved lemon tree in her backyard, but one night she discovers a man leaving the garden with a sack full of lemons from the tree. Within a week, the tree becomes sick and Rosalinda scours the Mexican countryside in search of help. A wise old woman gives her advice, which Rosalinda follows, and soon lemons appear. With a bounty of lemons, Rosalinda disperses her crop, giving the last one to the man who stole from her. What she tells him will plant seeds of generosity in your own heart.

What is Given from the Heart, by Patricia C. McKissack (Fiction)

This final book by the late McKissack is a sweet and poignant story about a poor boy who doesn't realize how much he has to give. James Otis and his mama have fallen on hard times, but that doesn't stop Mama from turning her cherished tablecloth into an apron for a family that has lost everything in a fire. What does James Otis have that's worth giving? It just needs to come from the heart.

The Invisible Boy, by Trudy Ludwig (Fiction)

It's all too easy for kids to overlook a shy classmate, like the book's main character Justin. There's a sweet but not cloying message at hand when Brian extends a hand of friendship and helps Justin shine during a class project.