

## Count your blessings, not your cash

In these times when money isn't flowing as freely, there are so many ways to enjoy the holidays without spending lots of cash.

So says the popular artist and greeting card writer Kathy Davis, who shares quite a few ideas in "75 Simple Ways to Celebrate the Holidays," a new gift book she co-authored.

"The goal of my work is to celebrate the simple pleasures of everyday life and help people scatter joy," says Davis, whose company Kathy Davis Designs has created more than 5,000 designs including cards, crafts, scrapbooking supplies and calendars.

The book, with its red flocked cover, reads like an extended holiday greeting.

Rhymed phrases on each page suggest ways to make the holidays more meaningful.

"Feast with family/Toast with friends/Come together/ Make amends. Remember loved ones no longer here/ Give life to their spirit/ Keep memories dear."

And in the spirit of "Write a letter/Reconnect/ Save a friendship from neglect," Davis suggests sending holiday cards and letters as an inexpensive and personal way to scatter joy during the holidays. Finding a card or letter in a

sea of junk mail and bills is guaranteed to brighten anyone's day, she says.

Here are her tips to make the most of card writing.

### Make a list, check it twice

Update last year's list with new names from your address book. Be sure to check your work and home e-mail accounts for people you correspond with often.

**Make it you** Choose a design that reflects you or your family, or pick a few designs suitable for different people on your list. You can give each card a personal touch with monogrammed gold seals, colored or glittered inks, or sealing wax.

**Break it down** Like any daunting task, preparing holiday cards becomes easier if you break it down into manageable tasks. Plan one session for writing messages, another session for addressing envelopes. The key is to take time to enjoy the process. After all, it's like spending time with old friends.

**Enlist elves** Delegate duties to willing hands and make a fun family activity out of it. You can get help with tasks such as folding letters, stuffing envelopes, and attaching stamps or seals.

**Get in the mood** Play some holiday music, light a candle, have a cup of tea and make a comfortable space organized with everything you'll need.

**Stick to it** Save time by ordering your postage stamps online and using preprinted return address labels and self-stick stamps.

**From the heart** Whether you type or hand write, a personal holiday message is always appreciated. Keep it simple and heartfelt, such as "Remembering you fondly during this special season." Mention a personal anecdote. If you do write a letter, limit yourself to one page.

**Say "Cheese"** A picture is worth a thousand words, so if writing isn't your thing, send a photo. It can be from school or

vacation pictures, or a holiday photo complete with your family pet.

**Extend the season** Holiday cards are appropriate at any time between now and the New Year. Many people find more time after the holidays to send cards.

**Make memories last** - Save the holiday letters and photos that you send out each year in an album or keepsake box. It will be a nifty time capsule of your family history that you can enjoy year after year.

Recycle old Christmas cards to schools, churches, assisted living homes or scout troops that will use them as craft supplies.

Kathy Davis boxed holiday cards can be purchased at Barnes & Noble and Papyrus stores.

Davis manages an extensive portfolio of more than 5,000 designs. For more information, visit [kathydavis.com](http://kathydavis.com).

