

on your feet

*Goat,*  
**frankincense  
and myrrh**

Discover the true meaning of giving a gift at Christmas. There are some unusual gifts in **Kate Maynard's** stocking this year.

[www.greatgifts.org](http://www.greatgifts.org)

Telephone 0845 600 6446

[www.goodgifts.org](http://www.goodgifts.org)

Telephone 0207 794 8000

Postal catalogues are available from both companies.

[www.sendacowgifts.org.uk](http://www.sendacowgifts.org.uk)

[www.oxfam.org.uk/what\\_you\\_can\\_do/shop/Christmas](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_you_can_do/shop/Christmas)

**H**ave you considered buying a goat for your mother-in-law this Christmas? A donkey plough for your cousin in Salford? It might sound strange, but the true recipients of these particular Christmas gifts won't be returning them to the shops in January.

Charity gifts are becoming increasingly popular and are widely available at prices to suit every budget. The Alternative Gift catalogue run by the Christian charity World Vision offers gifts starting at £5. What might buy a few pairs of unwanted novelty socks could pay for a mosquito net to protect a child in a third world country from malaria. Just £8 could pay for a fruit tree to help provide an income and improve the health of a family living in poverty, and £20 could immunise a child from diseases like measles, whooping cough and polio. Since World Vision established their catalogue four years ago, over 5,000 children have been immunised and 12,000 fruit trees have been planted. Their customers have helped millions of people in almost 100 countries.

Fellow catalogue Good Gifts has 34 different charities involved, including UNICEF and Ethiopia Aid. Customers can order goats

for Rwandans, bicycles for midwives in Sierra Leone, or an acre of rainforest (£25). When you've chosen your charity gift, the recipient will be sent a description in a keepsake card or e-card. Good Gifts guarantee that the money spent will be used solely for the stated purpose.

Charity gifts aren't just for third world countries, but for causes closer to home too. In Britain, £15 could pay for a teenager to have access to help with their problems – relationships, family difficulties or bullying; and £25 could pay for a much-needed Braille book for the National Library. If you're finding the range of gifts just as bewildering as high street shops, you can also opt for a gift voucher from £15 upwards. Even children would enjoy choosing between a hive of bees for a family in India, or 15 baby chicks for a community in Kenya. Uncle John, however, is bound to be proud of a virile ram (£40)!

So stop pondering over those toiletry selection packs, jumbo tins of biscuits, gaudy scarves and useless gadgets. Spend your money on something really worthwhile this Christmas. The absence of false smiles and unconvincing platitudes alone will be worth it!

