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The gift of theater keeps on giving

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THE ROSE THEATER PHOTOS

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It's that time of year again and the quest for the perfect present for the kids in your life has begun. Where do you find a gift that is exciting, but also educational, inspiring, will help them build lifelong skills — and maybe let you spend some quality time together as well?

The best gift, research suggests, is an experience. The Journal of Consumer Research recently found that giving an experience as a gift instead of a thing forges stronger bonds between people.

Thankfully, The Rose Theater has a variety of experiential gifts for children ages 2 to 18.

“Live theater and theater education have a crucial role in developing the minds and hearts of our young people,” Rose artistic director Matthew Gutschick says. “Plus, it’s an experience that involves enjoyable quality time spent as a family.”

Here are some ways you can give the gift of theater this holiday season.

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See a show!

Watching a show is a great way to spend time with your family. You can experience the magic of theater at The Rose for just \$25 to \$32 per ticket (less, if you purchase them at any Hy-Vee customer service counter). A performance at The Rose is certain to give children an experience they will remember for a lifetime.

Package those tickets with a few fun add-ons for a present that is certain to pack a punch.

Gift-giving suggestions:

- **"The Lightning Thief":** Wrap up a copy of the popular book (or even the entire series) by Rick Riordan to read during the holiday break, then plan a special night together in anticipation of seeing The Rose’s production of the hit musical in January. (Bonus: the Disney+ series about Percy Jackson is scheduled to hit the airwaves in 2024, giving your family plenty of time to read the entire series!)

- **"Havana Hop":** Bring a little bit of the tropics to your holidays with a gift inspired by The Rose’s upcoming production of "Havana Hop." Kids will love some Cuban-inspired musical instruments like bongo drums or maracas, and you will love watching them discover a love of music. Be sure to plan a family salsa night and find your own unique beat!



- **"The Stinky Cheese Man and Other**

Fairly Stupid Tales": The laughter won't

stop when you unwrap "The Stinky Cheese Man." Start with the picture book by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith, then challenge your family to create their own twisted fairy tales to share. (Bonus points for serving a charcuterie board of the stinkiest cheeses you can find!)

- **"Last Stop on Market Street":** Packaging show tickets with a copy of this award-winning book by Matt de la Peña is an easy choice. Car- and truck-obsessed young ones will be thrilled to unwrap a toy bus and a playmat featuring lots of city streets. After reading the book, bring the message home by volunteering as a family to help people in your community.

- **"Beauty and The Beast":** The princesses in your life will feel like real royalty when they unwrap tickets to see The Rose's production of the classic fairy tale. Whether you include a few fun dress-up items, an appropriately-themed Lego kit, or a loveable Funko Pop, it's a gift that is sure to be a "tale as old as time."

Create memories with a family membership

When you give a Rose family membership, you give a family the opportunity to spend quality time together in a fun, entertaining atmosphere. A basic Rose membership for a family of four includes four tickets to each of the remaining shows in the season — a total of 16 tickets for a recently discounted price of just \$80! Other packages are available for larger families, so there are no worries about finding the perfect fit.

Gift-giving suggestions:

Family membership: Package a gift membership with a photo album and encourage the recipients to take a picture of themselves at each show. Include gift certificates for a favorite restaurant or ice cream shop to help them start a family theater night tradition.

Nurture a budding artist's talents

For a gift that truly keeps on giving, give the children in your life a Rose class. The Rose offers dance, musical theater, voice and acting technique classes throughout the school year. Many classes feature students on stage at The Rose and at The Rose Studios for Youth Artists, complete with costumes, sets, professional lighting and more. Classes are available for students ages 2 to 18, with prices starting at \$30 per month.

Gift-giving suggestions:

- **Dance class:** An embroidered shoe bag featuring the gift recipient's name ensures your student is ready for ballet, tap, hip hop, jazz and more. You can even add fun attire to wear to class.

- **Musical theater class:** Purchase your performer a favorite Broadway soundtrack and vocal music book.

No matter what you choose, the real gift you are giving is the gift of memories. When you give an experience, children learn to value knowledge, creativity and personal interactions, rather than material possessions. And that is truly a gift of a lifetime.

For more information on experiential gifts available at The Rose Theater, call 402-345-4849 or visit [rosetheater.org](https://www.rosetheater.org).