



PROJECT LEADER RESOURCE

# SHARING THE VISION





# SHARING THE VISION

Helping Church or Group Leadership Understand  
How God is Using Operation Christmas Child

This resource is designed to assist you in sharing the vision of Operation Christmas Child with your church or group's leadership. As together you grasp how packing shoeboxes transforms communities around the world by the power of the Gospel, you will be poised to motivate others to get involved.

## **Pray**

Seek the Lord first. Ask Him to open and close doors according to His will. Pray for your leadership, remembering that they have many unseen pressures and factors that influence their decisions. Pray for wisdom, clarity, and an opportunity to meet with them at the right time.

## **Prepare**

Before you attempt to share the project with your leadership, be sure to understand personally the scope of Operation Christmas Child. Every shoebox gift is an opportunity for a child to discover, know, and share Jesus Christ.

1. Consider how being involved in Operation Christmas Child benefits your church or group. Possibilities may include:
  - An opportunity to fulfill the Great Commission
  - A tool to teach children about giving
  - A tangible way to equip churches around the world in outreach and church planting
  - A fun and personalized project that unites people of all ages in your group or congregation
  - A Christmas outreach that can be completed before Thanksgiving and the busy holiday season
2. Think through exactly what you are asking of your leadership. It will be important to reassure them that involvement in Operation Christmas Child will not require additional work on their part. As a Project Leader, you will organize your church or group's involvement in shoebox packing. You are simply looking for your leaders' endorsement and support.



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3. Gather materials from [samaritanspurse.org/occ](http://samaritanspurse.org/occ) that will assist you in sharing stories of Operation Christmas Child.
  - Order the Resource Sample Kit from our [Specialty Items](#) page. This pack showcases the evangelism and discipleship tools of Operation Christmas Child. For explanation on how each of these pieces is used, see the enclosed "Make Disciples" booklet or the page on our website entitled "[A Deeper Look](#)."
  - Visit our "[Latest Stories](#)" page for a selection of Operation Christmas Child testimonials. Find one you especially enjoy and learn it well enough that you could retell it to your leadership.
4. See the appendix at the end of this document for a list of in-depth questions occasionally posed by church or group leadership. Review them in advance so you can be prepared with an answer if you are asked something similar. For answers to more general questions about the Samaritan's Purse project, see our "[Frequently Asked Questions](#)" page on our website. If you have a question that isn't answered in either of these places, please email us at [occinfo@samaritan.org](mailto:occinfo@samaritan.org).

## Set Up a Meeting with Leadership

Evaluate who would be the best person(s) with whom to discuss your plans. Consider who has the ability to make the necessary decisions. It is best to talk to the people who are going to be able to ultimately say yes or no.

## Practice Your Presentation (15-20 minutes)

1-2 minutes: Communicate the benefits of Operation Christmas Child for your church or group and your role as a Project Leader.

5-7 minutes: Relay the scope and spiritual influence of the project

2-3 minutes: Share a story or video

3-5 minutes: Answer questions and communicate action steps



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## **Watch God Work**

Just be faithful and obedient. This is the Lord's conversation. As you trust Him, He will direct your steps. Do your best, but allow Him to lead. No matter the outcome, if God was honored, it was a success!

## **APPENDIX**

### **In-Depth Questions About Operation Christmas Child**

#### **1. Who delivers shoebox gifts?**

Operation Christmas Child is a global program facilitated through hundreds of thousands of trained volunteers. Local believers in more than 100 countries deliver Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts, present the Gospel, and facilitate our follow-up discipleship program, The Greatest Journey.

With this approach, local Christians who know the culture and language best are given effective resources with a solid Biblical foundation to share the Gospel in their communities. We equip ministry partners—a local pastor or church leader—to be our volunteer representatives by providing thorough, detailed training for them to be able to facilitate a shoebox outreach event and present the Gospel.

Trained National Leadership Team members, ministry partners, and The Greatest Journey teachers are volunteer roles filled exclusively by these national Christians. To learn more about these roles, visit <https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/volunteer-network/>

#### **2. How do shoebox gifts impact local economies?**

The mission of Operation Christmas Child is to provide local churches who are our ministry partners around the world with shoebox gifts as a way to reach children in their communities. For many children, this is the first gift they will ever receive. More important than the items inside the shoebox, the gifts are an opportunity to share God's love—and the Good News of Jesus Christ—with children in need.



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In each shoebox receiving country, we partner with a volunteer [National Leadership Team](#) that consists of year-round volunteers from various church denominations. Together, they strategize how to reach children in their country with the Gospel. It is our desire to give one shoebox to a child in their lifetime, and this is the model used in our training. Local churches distribute shoebox gifts to children in different communities each year. Because of this strategy, the economic impact on a community is minimal which allows us to reach millions of new children every year with the Good News of Jesus Christ and disciple many, with millions now sharing their faith with their friends, family, and beyond.

As Henry Mankhanamba, a volunteer national prayer coordinator from Malawi, put it, "If shoebox gifts impacted our local economy, the government would never allow them in. They see it as a blessing to the children of Malawi."

### **3. How do shoebox gifts impact the local church?**

In more than 100 receiving countries, shoebox gifts are used by local Christians as a strategy for [evangelism, discipleship, and the multiplication](#) of believers and churches in their communities. More important than the items inside the shoebox, the gifts are an opportunity to share God's love—and the Good News of Jesus Christ—with children in need. Local Christians who know the culture and language best are given effective resources in their own language and a solid Biblical foundation so that they can communicate the Gospel within their own communities through shoebox outreach events and The Greatest Journey discipleship program.

For example, in Fiji, a [pastor](#) hosted an Operation Christmas Child shoebox outreach event in a rural community that had no church. He then invited the children to attend The Greatest Journey follow-up discipleship program. [As the students gathered for the discipleship lessons](#), their parents grew curious and began attending too. The village elder became a believer and offered his property as a place for the new church to meet. Today 80 people attend regularly, and five additional churches have been started in surrounding villages! This is one example of hundreds of churches planted annually as a result of Operation Christmas Child in regions where we work.



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The evangelism and discipleship resources utilized by Operation Christmas Child were intentionally developed with input from local believers in 16 countries, from six continents, and are specifically focused on children.

In the eight countries where shoebox gifts are packed, Operation Christmas Child provides an opportunity for participants to be a part of fulfilling the Great Commission. Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). In this church-to-church ministry model, churches who pack shoebox gifts partner with local churches around the world as they share God's love with children in need and provide follow-up discipleship through The Greatest Journey.

#### **4. How are different cultures and local contexts incorporated into shoebox distribution events?**

More than 75,000 pastors and church leaders share the Gospel every year at outreach events where shoebox gifts are delivered and the Gospel message shared. The shoebox outreach events are planned and implemented by volunteers in the local church who know the culture and language best. Through our volunteer National Leadership Team, local believers are trained to present the Gospel in a child friendly way. We work with the volunteer National Leadership Team to develop an annual strategy for evangelism, discipleship, and multiplication of believers and churches in their communities.

#### **5. Do children have to say or do anything to receive a shoebox gift?**

Shoebox gifts are given to children regardless of their gender, ethnicity, or faith. We seek to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way through each shoebox gift. Children do not have to do or say anything to receive the gifts. We work in and through local Christians in each country who understand the context in their area. Simple gifts—packed with love in Jesus' Name—deliver hope and joy to children all around the world, regardless of their faith or religious background.



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## **6. How does a shoebox gift impact a child in need?**

Operation Christmas Child is not intended as a solution for meeting physical needs, but rather a strategy for the local church to meet spiritual needs of children in their communities. The unexpected gift delights and sparks hope in the life of a child as they hear of Jesus' love for them. Simple gifts—packed with love in Jesus' Name—deliver hope and joy to children all around the world, regardless of their faith or religious background. Shoebox gifts are given freely in Jesus' Name.

## **7. Will Operation Christmas Child compete with other service projects our church or group does?**

Operation Christmas Child collects shoebox gifts the third week of November. Most churches and groups pack shoeboxes in early November which allows time for other local and international service activities in December.