



# Operation Christmas Child Impact Stories

Below are a few examples of how God is at work around the world through Operation Christmas Child. As you read, be encouraged by the power of a shoebox gift and be sure to tell someone about at least one of these stories.

## **UKRAINE: SHOEBOX GIFTS HELP CHURCHES SHARE GOSPEL**

*Many churches in Ukraine are continuing to distribute shoebox gifts to minister to children traumatized by war. As displaced parents struggle to find work and provide shelter and food, they can't spend as much time with their children as they'd like, said one of the pastors. The children miss all they've left behind: their homes, their friends, their toys. Operation Christmas Child gifts are "a special bright spot," he said, for the children "just to have their own toys." The most important thing, he said, "is seeing the children receive Jesus as Savior."*

## **CENTRAL ASIA: PROVIDENTIAL MEETING GIVES ETERNAL HOPE**

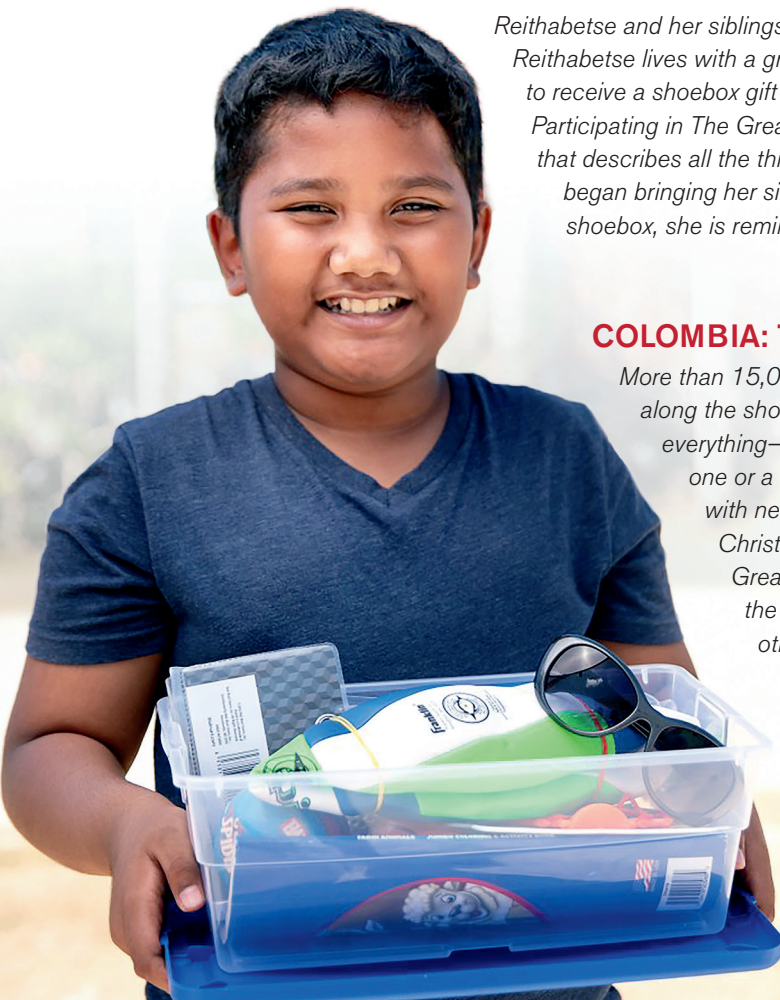
*As Pastor Gadi returned from an Operation Christmas Child outreach event, he saw two boys on the side of the road selling nuts. Having two leftover shoebox gifts in his car, he gave them to the boys and told them about Jesus Christ. As a result of this brief encounter, one of the boys, named Amir, responded, "I believe you, mister. I believe that Jesus came to save me from sin." Days later, Amir was hit by a car and died. Pastor Gadi visited the family, sharing the eternal hope of the Gospel, and Amir's mother and grandfather accepted Jesus as their Savior.*

## **LESOTHO: REMINDED OF GOD'S LOVE**

*Reithabetse and her siblings don't know their father. Their mother works in another country, so Reithabetse lives with a grandmother from the church in their village. Reithabetse rejoiced to receive a shoebox gift filled with a doll, socks, a washcloth, soap, books, and pencils. Participating in The Greatest Journey class for shoebox recipients, she marveled at Lesson 1 that describes all the things God created. Reithabetse soon gave her life to Jesus Christ and began bringing her siblings with her to church. Every time she plays with the gifts from her shoebox, she is reminded of God's great love for her.*

## **COLOMBIA: THE SPIRIT OF THE ONE TRUE GOD**

*More than 15,000 people known as the Wounaan live in South America, including along the shores of Colombia's San Juan River. The Wounaan believe that everything—humans, animals, and plants—is occupied by a spirit, either a good one or a bad one. A church in the region shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with nearly 400 children in a Wounaan community through Operation Christmas Child. A total of 247 boys and girls there participated in The Greatest Journey discipleship program. One of the children's parents told the ministry partner that their children routinely sing, pray, and tell each other the Bible stories they have learned. Several adults expressed that they, too, decided to walk with God.*





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## **SOUTH ASIA: 'OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELOUS LIGHT' (1 PETER 2:9)**

*Fear had stopped most of the evangelists in the area from visiting a village known for witchcraft, fortunetelling, and demonic possession. But when a local Operation Christmas Child ministry team asked the village elders if they could have an outreach event there, they were invited into the community that was buzzing with excitement because of the special event. A total of 140 children attended, with many responding to the Gospel message, resulting in 80 children studying the Bible through The Greatest Journey.*

## **MIDDLE EAST: SHOEBOX GIFT LEADS TO DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS**

*At age 9, a girl in the Middle East received a shoebox gift, including a stuffed animal she treasures. Her favorite item—a copy of The Greatest Gift booklet—came with the gift. Through follow-up lessons, she learned more about the Gospel and placed her faith in Jesus. When the class meetings had to be canceled during the COVID-19 pandemic, the girl started her own discipleship group with friends that met on the side of a road, and six children accepted Christ. She formed another class and five more children came to know the Lord. At least eight of the children now attend church with her.*

## **WEST AFRICA: HARD-TO-REACH VILLAGE OPENS TO GOSPEL**

*Pastors and evangelists had tried to share the Gospel in a village where opposition to it was entrenched, soundly turned away each time. Then a pastor heard about Operation Christmas Child and how God can use it to blaze a trail to preach His Word in places where people previously resisted. The pastor formed a team who received ministry training and prayed fervently for God to make a way where there seemed to be no way. When the team asked village leaders for permission to have an outreach event there, they agreed! Several children indicated that they wanted to follow Christ. Miraculously, their parents didn't object. What's more, the church was able to continue sharing the Gospel there through The Greatest Journey program for shoebox recipients. One of the students shared the Bible lessons with his brothers, who, in turn, joined the class and placed their faith in Jesus. The siblings started going to church, and praise the Lord, their parents became part of the congregation as well.*

To read more stories of spiritual impact through Operation Christmas Child, visit [samaritanspurse.org/occ-latest](https://samaritanspurse.org/occ-latest).

