



RETREAT EVENT GUIDE

Incorporate Operation Christmas Child shoebox packing into a student retreat to teach about global evangelism, international missions, the spiritual need for the Gospel, generosity, as well as other topics relevant to the retreat theme.

OVERVIEW

What is Operation Christmas Child?

[Operation Christmas Child](#) uses gift-filled shoeboxes to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way to children in need around the world. Every shoebox gift is a resource for evangelism and discipleship, which leads to the multiplication of new believers and churches around the world.

You can be a part of what God is doing in these communities through Operation Christmas Child. Individuals, youth groups, student organizations, Christian schools, and homeschoolers all can get involved in this life-changing effort.

What are the benefits for student groups to participate in Operation Christmas Child?

- Partner with Operation Christmas Child to share the Gospel around the world.
- Use this project to engage students outside or new to your group as well as regular attenders.
- Integrate faith and learning through personal experiences and group activities.
- Create and facilitate leadership development opportunities.
- Increase awareness about the global need for the Gospel.
- Foster partnerships within your community.

Promotional Suggestions and Resources

- Show [Operation Christmas Child videos](#) during general assemblies.
- Share [spiritual impact stories](#) your student media network and publications.
- Social Media:
 - ▶ Follow Operation Christmas Child on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).
 - ▶ Share posts and videos on the school's or student group's social media pages.
- Order [promotional materials](#), many of which are free of charge.
- Download our "[Why \\$9?](#)" resources to explain that every shoebox gift needs a \$9 donation for collecting, processing, shipping, ministry partner training, and Gospel materials. We have [fundraising tips](#) to help you collect donations, as well as a webpage to help you [create your own fundraising page](#) and chart your group's progress toward a goal.
- Find additional resources and ideas at samaritanspurse.org/occ-students.



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PRE-EVENT

- Prayerfully set a shoebox goal.
- Establish a process to [collect shoebox items](#) and [raise money](#) for shipping and other project costs. Remember, your only limitation is how many shoeboxes and how many items you have to put in those shoeboxes. Plan accordingly.
- Collect standard-size shoeboxes or order Operation Christmas Child [preprinted shoeboxes](#).
- Print or order [labels](#) to affix to each shoebox.
- Form a plan for the Operation Christmas Child portion of the retreat schedule.
 - ▶ Challenge groups/classes to pack the most shoeboxes, with the winner receiving a prize.
 - ▶ Plan festive activities, such as arranging for an ugly Christmas sweater competition.
- Invite a local artist or worship band to play Christmas carols or arrange for music to play during the event.
- Encourage students to invite friends to the retreat. Share your vision for the project and equip them with [promotional resources](#).
- Locate your nearest shoebox [drop-off location](#) and determine transportation for collected shoeboxes.

DAY OF THE EVENT

- Set up for the event.
 - ▶ Suggested stations:
 - ◇ Fold shoeboxes (if using preprinted ones).
 - ◇ Attach [boy/girl labels](#).
 - ◇ Pack shoeboxes.
 - ◇ Write a note of encouragement to the child who will receive your shoebox.
 - ◇ Pray over each shoebox.
- Separate donated items by category for easy packing.
- Create a festive atmosphere of joy and excitement, enhanced by fun music.
- Show [inspirational videos](#) that share stories of the impact of a gift-filled shoebox.
- Incorporate other fun activities, such as determining the winners of the shoebox packing contest and ugly Christmas sweater competition.
- Be sure to share the Gospel with all who attend.

POST-EVENT

- Transport shoeboxes to a nearby [drop-off location](#).
- Follow up with students who responded to the Gospel presentation during the packing event.