



## FACT SHEET

### What is Operation Christmas Child?

- The Samaritan's Purse project Operation Christmas Child collects shoebox gifts—filled with fun toys, school supplies and hygiene items—and delivers them to children in need around the world to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way. For many of these children, the gift-filled shoebox is the first gift they have ever received.
- Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child, the world's largest Christmas project of its kind, has collected and delivered more than 146 million shoebox gifts to children in more than 160 countries and territories.
- In 2017, Operation Christmas Child hopes to collect enough shoebox gifts to reach another 12 million children in countries like Peru, the Philippines, Rwanda and Ukraine. Nearly 11.5 million shoebox gifts were collected worldwide in 2016, with more than 9.1 million collected in the U.S.

### Process

- Anyone can pack a shoebox. Individuals, families, churches and groups fill empty shoeboxes with school supplies, hygiene items and fun toys, such as dolls or soccer balls.
- During **National Collection Week (Nov. 13 – 20, 2017)**, Samaritan's Purse will collect the gift-filled shoeboxes at nearly 5,000 drop-off locations in all 50 states and Puerto Rico.
- Learn how to pack a shoebox, view gift suggestions, get your Follow Your Box label and find the nearest drop-off location at [samaritanspurse.org/occ](http://samaritanspurse.org/occ).
- **Do Not Include** candy; toothpaste; used or damaged items; war-related items such as toy guns, knives or military figures; seeds; chocolate or food; liquids or lotions; medications or vitamins; breakable items, such as snow globes or glass containers; or aerosol cans.
- Participants can donate \$9 per shoebox gift online through Follow Your Box and receive a tracking label to discover its destination.
- Participants who prefer the convenience of online shopping can browse [samaritanspurse.org/buildonline](http://samaritanspurse.org/buildonline) to select gifts matched to a child's specific age and gender, then finish packing the virtual shoebox by adding a photo and personal note of encouragement.
- Shoebox gifts are prepared for overseas shipment at eight major processing centers across the U.S.—Atlanta; Baltimore/Washington; Boone, North Carolina; Charlotte; Dallas/Fort Worth; Denver; Minneapolis; and Southern California.

### Scope

- Shoebox gifts are collected in the U.S., Canada, the U.K., Australia, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Finland, Spain, New Zealand and Japan.
- Nearly 500,000 volunteers worldwide—with more than 150,000 of those in the U.S.—are involved in collecting, shipping and distributing shoebox gifts.
- Operation Christmas Child is a project of Samaritan's Purse, an international Christian relief and evangelism organization headed by Franklin Graham. Samaritan's Purse currently works in more than 100 countries to provide aid to victims of war, disease, disaster, poverty and famine.

### Eternal Impact

- Delivered into the hands of children through local churches, every shoebox gift is an opportunity to share about Jesus Christ and God's love.
- Since 2010, more than 11 million children who have received a shoebox gift have participated in *The Greatest Journey*—a 12-lesson discipleship program. Children learn from trained, local volunteers what it means to follow Jesus and share their faith with friends and family.

### Social Media

To spread the word, tag Operation Christmas Child on any social media posts related to the project. You can also share your shoebox stories and photos by emailing them to [occinfo@samaritan.org](mailto:occinfo@samaritan.org). Your content may be used on national social media pages. Be sure to like, comment and share Operation Christmas Child posts.

**Facebook** [@OperationChristmasChild](https://www.facebook.com/OperationChristmasChild) | **Twitter** [@occ\\_shoeboxes](https://twitter.com/occ_shoeboxes) | **Instagram** [@operationchristmaschild](https://www.instagram.com/operationchristmaschild)