

Circle of Hope - Connect



What is the importance and value of the local inner-city church?

What qualities do effective inner-city urban churches demonstrate?

What are some of the weaknesses you've observed in many inner-city churches?

The goal of Cru staff serving in the inner city is to provide authentic churches more resources that are needed by their community and which **connect** these churches with people in genuine need in their community. Most of these links occur through the distribution of compassionate products.

How would you describe a connection that a believer would make with a needy neighbor through a compassionate product?

If you talk to virtually any church in America, they will say they would like to have contacts to whom they could show the love of Christ and to explain how Jesus can change a life. These compassionate products help to facilitate that meaningful connection.

The partner churches have expressed the need for the compassionate products or have responded to the ones offered. In the early days of Cru, we sat down with a ministry we wanted to serve. This ministry worked with over 2,000 kids every week. As we explored how we could expand the impact of the ministry, the leaders said, "Would you help us reach the families, especially the parents, of the kids?" One of our very creative staff came up with the concept of the Box of Love at Thanksgiving time.

The ministry said, "Let's try it." As a result of distributing hundreds of Boxes of Love, that ministry grew by hundreds of adults within two weeks of the distribution.

This is why it is so important that you, the city affiliate, meet with pastors face to face. We must get the pulse of these inner-city leaders so that we are indeed serving them. If they say one of our compassionate products is not effective, then we should stop distributing.

Our Basic Compassionate Product List

Boxes of Love® The purpose of **Boxes of Love** is to provide a Thanksgiving meal to a family who might not otherwise have one. Each Box of Love feeds a family of six. Each box holds a turkey with stuffing or a ham or chicken (depending on what is culturally appropriate to the neighborhood), along with vegetables, potatoes, juice, yams, apple or cranberry sauce, bread, fruit, dessert, and more ... plus Scriptures.

Holiday Care Box Similar to Boxes of Love, but distributed in December (Christmas time)

Easter Bags Paper bags filled with some of the things inner-city children treasure: candy, fruit, crayons, a toy ... a full-color children's activity book about Jesus, for children with little church background

Homeless Care Kits Each Kit includes a blanket, warm gloves, a scarf, socks, toothbrush, soap, and spiritual materials. These kits often serve as the first step of a spiritual journey for a desperate person.

PowerPacks™ Backpacks with school supplies and age-appropriate spiritual materials

One of our largest national donors, who grew up in a single-family home on the south side of Chicago, started investing in Cru because he said that each of our compassionate appeals represented something he would have wanted his mother to bring home.

The assumption is that many of those linked to the church through these compassionate products do not have a relationship with the Savior. Therefore, our church partners should be oriented about the compassionate product and how to minister spiritually to the neighbors contacted. We would expect an evangelism training involving partner churches at least once a year to make sure the confidence and competence level of those volunteers grows.

Because we want the local neighborhood church to do the spiritual nurturing (growth), most of those delivering are from the inner-city partner churches. Other resource-church volunteers could help deliver the compassionate products, but they should be partnered with local neighborhood believers from the partner churches.

Another ministry impact of compassionate product distribution is to host a “packing party” for the product. This would bring together individuals from inner-city partner churches as well as resource churches. This activity has proven to be one of the most significant contributions Cru can make to a cross-cultural Christian body event. In NYC we have so many people who want to be a part of these events, we must pack in shifts.

The most encouraging impact of our compassionate product outreach is the fact that a number of folks who were reached through a compassionate product were spiritually nurtured by their neighborhood church who delivered the product, and are now leaders in their compassionate product distribution.

Partner Commitment –

The guidelines for using the national compassionate products would be the following:

1. Evangelism and follow-up training at least once per year
2. Doctrinal and Use Agreement signed by each participating church (acquired from Dan Howe – national office)
3. Report of results with pictures. No or poor reporting should affect the amount of product given to a ministry.
4. When raising funds you must represent cost as agreed upon nationally. Can not ask for less than what national and other cities are requesting for the product.

Ray Taucher
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