



PROJECT LEADER RESOURCE

INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



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Recommended for: All ages and group sizes

Event objective: To encourage event participants to increase their participation in Operation Christmas Child, including inviting others to join in shoebox packing efforts.

Program Overview

Welcome/Video #1—Host gives Welcome; introduces first video.

“Rain in the Desert in Namibia” video (6 minutes).

Video #2—“Faith: Crossing the Finish Line for 20,000 Shoeboxes” video introduction.

“Faith: Crossing the Finish Line for 20,000 Shoeboxes” video (3:13).

Video #3—“Light for Malawi” video introduction.

“Light for Malawi” video (6:06).

OPTIONAL: INTERMISSION (Snack break; Play background music)

Video #4—“A Small Church With a God-sized Goal” video introduction.

“A Small Church With a God-sized Goal” video (4:27).

Video #5—“Hope for Cambodia’s Children” video introduction.

“Hope for Cambodia’s Children” video (6:43).

Video #6—Introduction to “How to Pack a Shoebox”.

“How to Pack a Shoebox” video (2:51).

Conclusion—Host and Project Leader conclude event.

Event Preparation

Location suggestions: Church sanctuary, fellowship hall, gym, community center.

Decoration suggestions:

- Decorate area with maps and travel photos.
- String white Christmas lights to decorate the venue.
- Arrange seats in rows or seat guests around tables.

Food suggestions: Popcorn, candy, soft drinks.

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Theme Option: Add a Red Carpet

Decoration suggestions:

- Roll out a red carpet at the entrance of the venue. Check your local dollar store for a roll of red vinyl.
- Decorate walls with construction paper stars. A long wall decorated with stars could serve as a “Step and Repeat” area for guests to take photos.
- Arrange for the host to wear black tie or formal wear.

BONUS IDEA: If your church has a broadcast ministry, enlist an interviewer and camera operator to interview guests as they arrive on the red carpet. Besides fun red carpet questions, such as “Who are you wearing?” ask the guests, “What is the best gift you have received?”

BONUS IDEA: See how many people the host can fit into a selfie.

Event Promotion

Sample Invitation Text:

Come see how God is working on both ends of a shoebox
International Film Festival
Presented by (Your Church or Group) and Operation Christmas Child
Event Details: (when/where/contact)

Sample Poster Text:

COMING ATTRACTION: International Film Festival
Presented by (Your Church or Group) and Operation Christmas Child
Come see how God is working on both ends of a shoebox
Event Details: (when/where/contact)

What people are saying about Operation Christmas Child:

“The shoebox will go where I could never afford to go.”

“My daughter teaches us the Word of God. Our family has greatly benefitted from that.”

“I prayed and asked God where I can start a church.”

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Pulpit/Bulletin/Web Announcement:

Have you ever wondered what kinds of journeys Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes take? Come to our International Film Festival and find out. See shoeboxes transported through desert sand, rowed into shore via canoe, and carried on carts to reach children in the farthest reaches of the world. But that's only part of the story. The journey of a shoebox starts here at home. Our film festival will include testimonies from shoebox packers as well as shoebox recipients because God is changing lives on both ends of shoebox gifts.

Event Details: (when/where/contact)

During the Event

Welcome to the Event Introduction:

Welcome to our International Film Festival! We are delighted to take you on a journey to far-off lands to see how God is using Operation Christmas Child to draw children, their families, and their communities to Him. Local believers typically are the ones who distribute the shoebox gifts in areas in need of the Gospel. You will hear from some of these local believers as they share how God is working in these unreached communities. But far-off lands aren't the only places being affected by shoebox gifts. You will hear the testimonies of some shoebox packers whose lives have been transformed through the simple gift of an Operation Christmas Child shoebox.



“Rain in the Desert in Namibia” video introduction

Video can be found on the 2017 Kit DVD or online at video.samaritanspurse.org

The oldest desert in the world is located in Namibia (Na-mib-e-ah). It stretches along the entire west coast of the African country. The desert is so close to the water, yet water is what it lacks. Namibia has the least rainfall of any country in sub-Saharan Africa. Drought makes it more difficult for people to earn a living there raising crops.

In fact, the country that borders the Atlantic Ocean is situated between two deserts. The terrain is vast, but Namibia is among the least populated countries in the world. The landscape is home to diverse wildlife, including cheetahs, rhinos, and giraffes. Namibia is the first country to incorporate environmental protection into its constitution.

There is German colonial-era architecture in the African country’s coastal towns because Germans colonized Namibia in the late 1800s. After World War I, it was named South West Africa since it came under the rule of South Africa. It had a strict system of apartheid. Many Namibians despised the policy of racial segregation and fled to other nations as refugees. When Namibia gained independence in 1990, it ended apartheid—four years before it was abolished in South Africa.

English is the official language, but there are more than 11 languages indigenous to Namibia. It’s common for people there to speak two or three of these languages.

Operation Christmas Child began distributing shoebox gifts in Namibia in the year 2000. Nearly 450,000 Namibian children have received a shoebox since then. Of its 2.4 million population, about 880,000 people are 14 years old or younger.

In this video, a boy explains how a shoebox was an answer to prayer.

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“Faith: Crossing the Finish Line for 20,000 Shoeboxes” video introduction

Video can be found on the 2017 Kit DVD or online at video.samaritanspurse.org

We just saw what happened when a boy in Namibia prayed for his own Bible. Now, I want to tell you about a girl in Tennessee who was praying that she could collect 20,000 shoeboxes. Faith Russell, 10, was born with spina bifida. Doctors had told Faith’s parents that she would never walk. But in September 2016, during the annual Team Faith 5K race in Maryville, Tennessee, Faith walked her 100th cumulative mile.

In 2013, her church packed 150 shoeboxes in honor of Faith’s birthday. The next year, they packed 300 shoeboxes. Faith began to walk in 5K races, then asked her parents if her next birthday gift could be a 5K race of her own. Each year, she and her brother, Griffin, ask race participants to bring items for Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes.

In December 2015, NBC Nightly News featured their story. The CEO of Keller Williams International saw the segment and later asked the siblings to speak during the organization’s conference in February 2016. Unfazed, the duo told 12,000 conference participants about their goal of packing 20,000 shoeboxes. The company not only decided to help meet the goal by paying for enough hygiene items to fill 20,000 boxes, they set their own goal of collecting 200,000 shoeboxes at their offices in 2016.

Leading up to the September 5K, members of the Maryville community helped the Russells get collected items ready to be packed by participants after the race. Last year, they packed 20,001 shoeboxes.

Think you could never do something like this? Faith’s mother, Robin, had the right idea. She said: “We knew God had a plan, and we weren’t willing to step in the way of His plan.” See how God’s plan unfolded in this video.

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“Light for Malawi” video introduction

Video can be found on the 2017 Kit DVD or online at video.samaritanspurse.org

Reading to your children can be a special time for the family. It's even more special when children read to their parents, especially when they are sharing the Gospel with them.

This is occurring in numerous families across the globe after shoebox recipients bring home a Gospel booklet called The Greatest Gift that they receive along with their shoeboxes. Many of the children also participate in follow-up Bible lessons taught for 12 weeks by local Christians. The booklet, with lessons to teach the children what it means to be a believer in Jesus Christ, is called The Greatest Journey.

Nearly half of Malawi's population of 18 million people is 14 years old or younger. In the southeast African country, more than 800,000 children have participated in Operation Christmas Child outreach events.

Operation Christmas Child hasn't been the only outreach that Samaritan's Purse has done in Malawi. In early 2015, Samaritan's Purse responded to flooding there, which displaced nearly 175,000 people. During a 24-hour period, Malawi received one and a half months' worth of rain. The flooding left people without food, clean water, or healthcare. They sought refuge from the floodwater in churches, schools, and camps.

A Samaritan's Purse disaster relief team delivered emergency relief supplies, sometimes via helicopter, to areas cut off by the floodwater.

In this video, you will see how Christians in Malawi are shining God's light and showing children and their families The Way, The Truth, and The Life that is found in Jesus Christ.

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“A Small Church With a God-sized Goal” video introduction

Video can be found on the 2017 Kit DVD or online at video.samaritanspurse.org

When you think of children coming to faith in Christ because of how God is working through Operation Christmas Child, you tend to think of a faraway place. While that’s often the case, a 7-year-old girl in Texas trusted in Jesus after she saw “the miracles and provisions of God” at Grace Baptist Church in the Gulf Coast community of Wild Peach.

What was so miraculous? The congregation of 25 people set a goal of packing 500 shoeboxes in 2014. Pastor Mark Brumbelow preached from 2 Kings 4 where Elisha tells a widow with no money to borrow jars from her neighbors to fill them with oil. Mark’s wife, Cherry, realized that it was the church’s job to gather the shoeboxes and to trust in God to provide ways to fill them. The church packed 532 shoeboxes! The real challenge was aiming to donate \$7 per box to cover shipping costs. Through community donations, they exceeded the \$3,724 needed.

The story doesn’t end there. In 2015, they upped their goal to 2,000 shoeboxes. They collected 2,118. But at \$7 per box, that’s \$14,826 needed to cover shipping. In prior years, the small congregation had struggled to provide a salary to the bivocational pastor.

During the year, the church collected more than \$1,645 for shoebox shipping. Then, they collected \$3,200 during their packing party. That left them with about \$9,980 left to go. Then, a member of the community handed the pastor a check for \$14,000, more than enough for the shipping cost. The church donated all of it, more than \$18,845.

This year, their goal was 5,000 shoeboxes. They packed 5,173. At \$7 per box, that’s \$36,211 in shipping. How much was donated? — More than \$45,780! That’s almost the amount of the church’s \$50,000 annual budget. At Grace Church, miracles are spoken of in present tense as well as past tense. See for yourself in this video.

**The suggested per shoebox donation is \$9 as of 2017.*

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“Hope for Cambodia’s Children” video introduction

Video can be found on the 2017 Kit DVD or online at video.samaritanspurse.org

Grace Church has seen miracles beyond their wildest dreams. Imagine if you didn’t have any dreams because you didn’t have any hope of a better future. That’s the case for many children in Cambodia born into a cycle of poverty: They don’t dream because they don’t have hope.

The Southeast Asian nation is still reeling from genocide and a civil war that killed nearly one quarter of the population. The brutal Khmer Rouge (Koy-meer Rooz) regime wiped out an entire generation—nearly 75 percent of Cambodians are younger than 35 years old.

Imagine mothers and fathers working endless hours in fields or factories for less than \$2 a day. They want to be able to buy presents for their children, but the bare necessities of life are all they can manage. The joy of a shoebox gift not only excites a child, it often uplifts their families. It shows them that someone cares.

A shoebox isn’t just a gift, it’s an infusion of hope into a community. The aim is to draw children and their families to faith in Christ. The result is often a growing church or the start of a new one after local believers follow-up with the children through a 12-week Bible study called The Greatest Journey.

This year, about 90,000 shoeboxes were distributed throughout 18 provinces in Cambodia. Nearly 700 churches in Cambodia will enroll children in The Greatest Journey this year.

Watch this video to see how a church in Cambodia is growing as they disciple new believers drawn to Christ by the message that accompanies Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes—that Jesus is The Greatest Gift they can receive.

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“How to Pack a Shoebox” video introduction

Video can be found on the 2017 Kit DVD or online at video.samaritanspurse.org

Now that you’ve taken a closer look at the difference these gifts are making in the lives of both shoebox packers and shoebox recipients, we’re going to give you a refresher on HOW to pack a shoebox. In keeping with one of the themes of this event, this final video will feature a child taking the lead in showing you how to pack a shoebox.

Conclusion

Shoebox gifts are just the beginning, not the end result, of Operation Christmas Child. In Namibia, shoebox gifts are showing children the power of prayer. In Tennessee, people probably thought a girl was dreaming too big to go from collecting 150 shoeboxes to 20,000—but not for a girl whose name is Faith.

Similarly, in Malawi, children are taking the lead in teaching both young and old that Jesus Christ is The Way, The Truth, and The Life. A small Texas church is becoming a bright light in its community and beyond—pointing people both near and far to the faithfulness of God that is exceeding their biggest dreams.

In war-torn Cambodia, children are learning to dream again and to dare to hope. Local churches are teaching the children and their families that trusting in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is life’s greatest journey.

You can be a part of this journey and invite others in your family and community to be a part of it as well. Our Operation Christmas Child Project Leader will come tell us how we can do that. Please welcome:
Project Leader’s name: _____.

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Project Leader

Thank you. It is so exciting to see what God has been doing around the world through a simple shoebox, which points to The Greatest Journey anyone can take. We have set our shoebox goal at: _____.

For you who have not packed a shoebox before, and to even experienced shoebox packers, here are some things you need to know:

- In the shoeboxes you pack, you want to be sure to include school supplies, hygiene items, toys, and a WOW item—a gift that will immediately catch the child's attention, such as a stuffed animal or backpack.
(Bring a filled shoebox with you and show the audience these examples.)
- One of the most practical ways you can be involved is to also cover shipping costs for shoebox gifts. The suggested donation is \$9 per box. If you make your donation through Follow Your Box at samaritanspurse.org, you can find out the countries where your shoebox gifts will be delivered. You can do this by attaching the tracking label you will receive to your shoebox gifts.
(Show the guests the lid of your shoebox, where you have attached a Follow Your Box label.)
- The more people who pack shoebox gifts, the more children who can receive them. Encourage others to participate in Operation Christmas Child. And, you don't need to wait until Christmastime. Shoebox packers collect items for shoebox gifts all year long. We have good news and great joy to share, that Jesus is The Greatest Gift anyone could ever receive.

Thank you for attending. Let's close in prayer.