



EXPERT ADVICE on what to pack in an Operation Christmas Child Shoebox

Select items from each category.

Wow Item (choose one)

- Soccer ball & manual pump (deflate ball)
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Doll or stuffed animal
- Large toy car
- Musical instrument (recorder, slide whistle, harmonica)

Toys (include 2-3)

- Foam ball or bouncy balls
- Small frisbee
- Small Etch-A-Sketch
- Marbles
- Hacky sack
- Toy cars
- Finger puppets
- Slinky
- Plastic toys and figures (nothing war-related)
- Small Lego set

Personal Care Items (include 3-5)

- Hairbrush or comb
- Toothbrush with holder
- Bar soap (Ivory brand with cover)
- Washcloth or towel
- Adhesive bandages
- Plastic dishes or containers with lids

School Supplies (select 3-5)

- Pencils, colored pencils, and a manual sharpener
- Erasers
- Pens and crayons
- Notebook or journal
- Solar powered calculator
- Safety scissors
- Ruler

Clothing & Accessories (include 1-2)

- Plain t-shirts
- Flip-flops
- Wrist watch
- Sunglasses
- Hats
- Princess crowns
- Jewelry
- Tote bag, purse, backpack
- Hair accessories
- Socks

Crafts & Activities (choose 1-2)

- Travel games
- Binoculars
- Sewing kit
- Playing cards
- Jump rope
- Coloring books
- Small tool set
- Rubber band bracelets

Packing Tips

1. Remove packaging from all items inside your shoebox in order to maximize space and produce less garbage to dispose of.
2. Even hard candies were reported to melt during transit and created a sticky mess all over the other items in some shoeboxes. If you must include candy, Smarties are recommended. They don't melt and are small enough not to be a choking hazard.
3. No fragile or cheap toys. If a toy is fragile enough to get damaged in transit or to break the first time it's played with, it isn't a good choice.
4. Water bottles are great to stuff with personal care items or school supplies.
5. Pack small items inside plastic zipper bags. The items will stay contained, and the bags are useful as well.
6. Don't include anything with instructions only in English. Many of these gifts will be distributed in non-English speaking countries.
7. Don't over-do the Christmas theme. While Samaritan's Purse collects most of these shoeboxes in November, they are actually distributed throughout the year.
8. Place 1-2 large rubber bands around your finished shoebox. One distributor noticed it was much easier for the children to hold their boxes together with the rubber bands.
9. Silly putty and Play-doh are not recommended. Most children had no idea what to do with the Silly Putty, and Play-doh is not a long lasting toy in many climates.

Items Not Allowed

No liquids including glue, paint, lip gloss (solid lip balms are fine), or lotions.

No food or chocolate that could melt. Some examples are fruit rolls, fruit snacks, or powdered drink mixes.

No used or damaged items. This is a gift. Items should be new and never used.

No war-related items such as toy guns, knives, or military figures.

No breakables such as snow globes, glass, or aerosol cans.