



Ideas to Engage Your Group



Get your group ready to participate in Box of Joy through these fun ideas. Please feel free to use your own creative ideas or modify the ones below.

We pray that God draws your community closer together as you reach out to bless children for his glory.

THE JOY METER

- This idea gives you some room for creativity! Set a goal for how many children your group wants to help, and then place a “Joy Meter” in a prominent place. Each time a box is brought in, fill your meter a little more. Your Joy Meter could be a thermometer drawn on a large piece of paper; it could be a map-of-the-world coloring sheet that gets filled in as benchmarks are met; or it could be a large plastic tube that you fill with different-colored sand each time a gift is dropped off — the possibilities are endless. Remember, the more creative you are, the more it will inspire your parishioners to “feel the joy!”

FAMILY CHRISTMAS PARTY

- Serve hot chocolate, Christmas cookies and candy canes and ask every family to bring the items to pack in their boxes. Play Christmas music and set up a Christmas card and box-wrapping station. Each box can include a Christmas card to make the children feel special. (Lids must be wrapped in a way so the box can still be opened.)

BOX OF JOY OLYMPICS

- In catechism classes, turn your Box of Joy campaign into a friendly competition to see who can pack the most Box of Joy gifts! This competition could be between boys and girls, between grades, or between teams within your group. Give children weekly updates on who is winning — and give them a fun incentive to participate. For instance, the winning team receives a pizza party.

TEENS ON A MISSION

- Don't forget to get your parish's youth group involved in this project. Ask them to volunteer to promote Box of Joy in your parish and community. Don't forget to listen to their suggestions — they have some of the most creative ideas in your congregation and can get your campaign circulated all over social media!

BOX OF JOY CHRISTMAS TREE

- Encourage your parishioners or students to bring enough boxes to build a “Christmas tree” at a gathering area in your parish. By the time Box of Joy Week comes, you will have gathered plenty of boxes and made a beautiful Christmas display!

BOX OF JOY BLESSING CEREMONY

- Before your gifts are taken to the Drop-Off Center, have a special time of blessing for the Box of Joy at Sunday Mass. Pray that the Lord will bless the gifts on their journey and that they will show the love of Christ to the children, their families and the entire community.

- The priest's message can be about giving to the poor, fulfilling the Works of Mercy and other lessons on showing the love of Christ to the world.

- Pray for the priests, nuns and lay missionaries in the countries receiving the Box of Joy.

“JOY” RIDE

When your groups Box of Joy gifts have been collected, caravan them to your Drop-Off Center. Make it fun for the children in your parish or school by decorating cars. Use window paint to say things like, “I Packed a Box of Joy for Christmas,” or “For Kids Who Wish for Just One Gift.”

POVERTY EDUCATION

- Once a week, before the Box of Joy gifts are collected, explain to children's catechism classes what it means to be a child living in poverty overseas. Many children might not be aware that other children don't have food to eat, clothes to wear, a pencil for school or toys to play with like they do.

RUN FOR JOY

- Host a 5k run/walk in your community; make the entry fee a filled Box of Joy for a child in need.

CRAFTING PARTY

- For the Women's Group in your parish, gather to make items for your boxes in order to save money on supplies and to give children creative, one-of-a-kind gifts. For instance, you could sew a pillowcase dress for a girl aged 2-4, sew bean bags or knit a hat for a child of any age. Search the internet for additional creative ideas.

- For your Children's Group, gather children to make Christmas cards to be placed in each box. This will make the Box of Joy more personal and make the children feel more involved. See the printable “Kids Activity Page” at boxofjoy.org/resources.

FAMILY TIME

- Encourage each family to make this a part of their Christmas celebration. Have a family fun night by going to the store to buy items, and then come home to pack the Box of Joy and make a card for the children who'll receive them.

PRAYER TEAM

Recruit a prayer team from your parish or social justice team to meet regularly the month before Box of Joy Week. Here are some ways they can cover this ministry in prayer:

- Pray for each boy and girl who will receive a box, that they will receive the box God meant for them to have.
- Pray for your parish, that God would open each member's heart to give generously of their time and resources.
- Pray that each Box of Joy will show God's love to each child who receives one, opening his or her heart to the lifesaving message of Jesus Christ.
- Pray for God to work in the hearts of people in the communities where these poor children live. May these gifts show Christ's heart for the poor and build a bridge to the local Catholic parish.

SKIT PROMOTIONS

- Promote your Box of Joy campaign through skits in catechism classes and other children's or youth ministry events. For example, ask two adult members to dress up as Box of Joy, and have them talk about the journey they're about to make across the world. Or have children participate, representing children from the U.S. and children in the developing countries that would be receiving the boxes. Show the difference in the children's lives and build compassion for the poor in the hearts of your students.

HONOR OR MEMORIAL GIFTS

Have a program in your parish or school to pack a Box of Joy in honor or memory of someone.

- Create a card to be filled out in the person's honor or memory and place it in your Box of Joy.

- Instead of giving traditional Christmas gifts to family members, fill a box in their honor.

A "Joyous Gift-a-Week" (8-week program)

- Beginning the first week in September, designate a category for each week and ask the participating community to donate items that match the appropriate category. We suggest seven categories: Toys, School Supplies, Apparel, Hygiene, Accessories, Useful Items and Candy/Gum.

Example: First week in September: Toys; Second week in September: School Supplies; etc.

- Dedicate the eighth week (or any week of your choice) to a fundraising event that will collect the \$9 shipping cost of each gift box. As an alternative, you can ask each participating family to donate \$9 for every gift box they would like to pack.

- During the first week in November, have a fun, faith-filled packing party with the children and families in your community. Pack at least one item from each category into the gift boxes. Add a special note, card or picture, and pray for the children receiving the gifts!



**Cross Catholic
OUTREACH**

Delivering Food, Shelter and Hope to the Poorest of the Poor

Box of Joy is a ministry of Cross Catholic Outreach.

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