

# OCC Children's Workshop Lessons

## Written by Sandi Flowers

These lessons were written to be used for a 2-hour workshop with a break in between. You can use the lessons however best fits your situation; break it up into several lessons over a couple of weeks or shorten the lessons to fit your schedule. They can be used for any age group, adjust as needed. I have incorporated them with the other lessons I found from the OCC resource page. I have also used them with a variety of ages, in our children's missions' program and with Awana clubs.

Worksheets included are all from the OCC resources webpage. Other items, such as the "How to Pack a Shoebox" brochure, "Journey of a Shoebox" fold out and "Follow your Box" labels, can also be ordered from the resources page, most are available at no cost.

Photos of transportation used in Activity #3 were gathered from the OCC website, OCC Facebook page and internet from a variety of sources.

I also save any OCC promotional materials and magazines to use later for pictures or activities. They have a wealth of awesome pictures you can cut out and use!

The large shipping OCC boxes were borrowed from my drop-off center, you can ask your local OCC team or drop off center to borrow one. Or you can create your own.

The small display shipping boxes were created using my Cricut cutting machine.

OCC alpaca and airplane character (Greatest Journey App Admiral Sam Plush Toy) can be purchased from OCC website. A variety of other items are also available to purchased, uniform patches, clothing, cookie cutters, and more to use in your program.

I used leftover items from a previous VBS with these lessons and decorations, but you can create your own.

For the craft items: I purchased an old atlas and used by Cricut to cut out the banners to attach to the planes. Instructions for the planes were from my VBS curriculum, or use the link provided in the activity #6.

Videos are available to download through the OCC resource page.

In each activity there are a few things you will need to prepare ahead of time.

**Welcome:** Introductions, Class rules, etc.

## **Activity #1: What is Operation Christmas Child/Shoebox Gift?**

Supplies: Empty Shoebox, written questions. You can read the questions or let children take them out of the box, doing them in order is best.

**Ask:** Have you ever received a special gift? How did that make you feel? Did you do anything special to receive it. Or other questions that will help them understand the importance of giving a shoebox.

**Ask the following questions** and let the children answer, even if they aren't sure what you are talking about. Guide them as needed.

1. Do you know what this is? (Show them an empty shoebox box)
2. Have you ever packed a shoebox?

At this point if no one has packed a shoebox, stop here and move to the next part.

3. Who helped you pack it? (Parents, school, church, etc.)
4. What did you pack in your shoebox?
5. Did you take your packed shoebox somewhere to be given to a child?
6. Did you ever find out what country your shoebox went to?
7. How did that make you feel to give your shoebox gift?

## **Share about what a shoebox gift**

Based on the answers you were given expand on the ministry of OCC and why we pack shoeboxes. Based on your age group describe the situation that those receiving the shoeboxes might in.

**Optional:** Show are video from the resources page, there are several that are created with children in mind as the audience. This is great if you have a large group of children or the majority of your children in attendance aren't familiar with the ministry of OCC. The video are often 2 or 3 minutes.

Allow for questions, and if they are questions that can be answered later, let them know that you will answer those as they participate in each activity.

**Notes:**

## Activity #2: Let's Pack a Shoebox

Supplies: Enough items to pack in the shoebox you are showing them. Include items that are on the no list such as toothpaste, candy, food, or other items. Be sure to include a wow item.

Shoeboxes: have several examples, a plastic one from OCC, a paper box from OCC, hand wrapped shoebox, good quality plastic shoebox.

"How to Pack a Shoebox" Brochure and the "Follow Your Box" label that are adhesive (they come in packs of 50 on the OCC resource page)

1 Shoebox for each child, plus a few starter items for their box such as pencils, a small toy, toothbrush, etc. You will hand those out as you go through the lessons.

Letters/Photo: Examples of letters and photo you would send to a child. A copy of the Let's be Friends or similar item for each child. A Christmas Card or even a homemade card is acceptable.

"Word Search" worksheet

### How do we pack a shoebox?

1. Choose what age, Boy or Girl? Most needed age: Boys 10 to 14 and Boy or Girl age 2 to 4
2. Choose a box (at this point give each child a shoebox)
3. Talk about how there are some items we can put in a shoebox and some we cannot. Go over things, like food, candy, glass/breakable, seeds, etc. Explain why it's important to not include these. Give them each a brochure to put in their box, telling them will help them remember how to pack their box when they go home.
4. Go over the list of everything you can pack. (You can include the handout "101 Items" available from my website) Talk about what a Wow item is and why that is important to include.
5. As you go through the items as you pack your box, give them the items your brought for them, telling them this is to help them get started on their own box.
6. Once you have all your items packed, ask them "What is the most important item you can include in your box?" Show them the various letters explaining why it's important. Give them each their own to fill out (you will do this in another activity) Share with them that with their parents permission that can include their address (or their address of their church or organization) and they might get a thank you card back. It does happen but not very often.
7. Close the box and demonstrate the label. Make sure each child receives a label of their own. Share with them how they can "Follow your Box." If you have ever done that, show them how you found out where your box went.
8. Tell them they have now started their own shoebox and they can take it home and finish it, then have their parents help them bring it to a drop-off center.

Notes:

## Activity #3: The Journey of a Shoebox

Supplies: Separate pictures of the journey a shoebox. You can great your own or you can cut apart the “journey of a shoebox” handout. Use the “The Journey of a Shoebox” fold out to show the complete journey.

A variety of photos of how a shoebox travels: camel, plane, horse, motorcycle, helicopter, boat, etc. Have good variety of them.

Small foam plane or something similar to toss onto the pictures.

“Journey of a shoebox Maze” worksheet and “Shoebox Journey Timeline” worksheet

### The shoebox Journey timeline

*Say: Did you know your box has to go on a journey before it gets to the child who will be receiving it? (Explain the word journey if needed) Let’s see if you can help me put this in order.*

Take the time to see if they can do, don’t fix it, let them work on it and when they are satisfied with it, open the journey map out and see how they did.

Walk through each step with them, taking time to explain each step, (based on your age group of children) however you don’t need to spend a lot of time on this, we just want them to have the understanding what it takes for a shoebox to get to the child.

More information here: <https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/the-journey-of-a-shoebox/>

### Fun ways a shoebox travels activity:

Set up the pictures on the floor upside down in a grid.

Have the children take turns tossing the plane (or other item) to one of the pictures. Turn it over and show the photo of how a shoebox travels. After all the pictures are turned over ask if any of the ways surprised them or what was one way one they liked best.

Explain that sometimes it takes a long time for the boxes to get to their destination because unlike here where we live these boxes have to travel in some very unusual circumstances.

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## Activity #4 Processing Center Practice

### Supplies:

Large OCC packing box

Rubber bands (put on each of your shoebox examples)

Extra shoebox labels

Sign of what is not allowed in a shoebox. At the processing center they have a sign on each table that has pictures with words to show items they are “inappropriate.”

Have a damaged box: you can talk about how they will go to the shoebox hospital to get fixed.

Kids love this concept!

A small basket of “extra items” these are called fillers if a box needs some extra items.

Several packed boxes, include items with an envelope that has “money” in it, inappropriate items, and maybe one that it isn’t very full.

More information here about the processing centers: <https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/volunteer-at-a-shoebox-processing-center/>

### How to inspect a shoebox

*Say: One of the places your shoebox travels to is a place called the Processing Center. Show where it is on the journey timeline. What is special about this place is that when you are older you can volunteer to work there! Boxes arrive here to get inspected. (explain inspected if needed) Since you aren’t quite old enough to volunteer there, we are going to practice it together here!*

Explain how a shoebox is inspected.

- Volunteers Open the box, remove any money or envelopes with money.
- Check for any items that are not allowed, called inappropriate. These are items that are not safe, will cause damage or won’t be allowed in the receiving country. For older children: you can explain customs and that some items are not allowed in countries. These items are removed, but they will not be thrown away, Samaritans Purse who runs OCC will donate them to others in need here in the states.
- If the box isn’t quite full, you can add some fillers. Explain that it is very important to OCC that we keep the integrity of the box. Because the person who packed it did it with love and did their best at packing it. But sometimes things have to be taken out and that is ok, so at the processing center, they will do their best to make sure the box is ready for the next part of the journey.
- If the box is full and completely checked, it is then taped up with a special tape (you won’t have access to this for this workshop just pretend), check for the correct label. The box is sent to be scanned if there is a Follow your box label then packed, or if not, it is packed into this big brown box.

Depending on the age, let the older kids do more of the work and let them decide what can stay or needs to be removed based on your instructions. Younger ages will need more assistance.

## Activity #5 Where do shoeboxes go?

Supplies:

Large world Map: Mark all (or as many as you can!) the receiving countries with red and green stars. Blue stars for where the shoeboxes gifts are collected from: Australia, Austria, Canada, Finland, Germany, New Zealand, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the United States

List of receiving countries: Download from OCC resource page.

Hang the Map up if you can or lay it on the floor and the children can stand around it.

### Collecting Countries:

The blue stars show the 11 Countries that collect shoeboxes. These countries do what we are doing, packing shoeboxes then sending them to other countries.

### Receiving Countries:

**Option #1:** Using your foam airplane toss it to an area. Where it "hits" or "lands" telling them what countries they hit, whether they are receiving or sending. And if you know anything about it you can share a little fact.

**Option #2:** Have a box or basket with at least one of the countries for each child to pick. They can be both receiving and sending. Choose countries that you know some of your shoeboxes or ones from your area have been delivered to.

Ask children if they can think of any countries they would like to find out if they receive shoeboxes.

Notes:

## Activity #6: How to Pray for OCC and your shoebox & Prayer Reminder

Supplies:

Premade craft stick and clothes pin airplane: Instructions for making your own. This is very similar to the one I did for our class. <https://icraftgifts.com/blog/easy-airplane-craft-for-kids-371.php> I did not paint the ones I had so that children could color their own.

Banners cut out that will be attached to their airplanes. They can be from a map or any color paper you would like.

Crayons, markers, pencils

Large poster board, titled "How to Pray for OCC" or something similar.

### Prayer and prayer reminder craft

Talk with the children about prayer. Ask if the children know what prayer is and discuss why it's important for the OCC ministry and their shoeboxes. Show them your example of the airplane prayer reminder, explaining they will make their own.

Using the large poster board, ask the child to help you list ways we can pray for OCC.

Examples would be:

Praying for those are packing shoeboxes

Pray for those who receive shoeboxes

Pray for those who will deliver the shoeboxes

Pray for children to come to know Jesus

Allow children to choose what they would like to write on their own banner. For younger children help them fill in the prayer part. **Or** everyone could write the same thing that you have printed out and placed on the table, such as "Pray for OCC"

**Optional Idea to the Poster Board:** Ahead of time make several airplanes and banner sets. And instead of writing on the board write directly on the banners. Use those on the table so children can copy if they would like.

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## Activity #7: Craft, “Let’s Be Friends” Letter

Supplies:

Craft stick and clothespin Airplane: A second airplane that we used in activity #6, crayons or markers

Alternate Craft idea: Choose a craft that is easy, this complete craft that will be put in their shoebox as a homemade craft from them. You can find a variety of examples by googling them or looking at Pinterest. OCC would like to see crafts but make sure they are good quality ones and not ones made from items we would consider trash. You could purchase small craft kits at your local craft store and let them use those to make a craft.

“Let’s Be Friends” Letter: If you would rather not do a craft, have the children color the “Let’s be friends” letter found on the occ resource page. Help younger children fill in their answers. These will go into their packed boxes.

Use blank greeting cards and let children write their own message or create their own cards.

## Wrap Up Activity:

Supplies:

Decoder Activity Worksheet

Christmas Pencil

Pictures of children receiving children their shoeboxes

Greatest Journey children’s workbook

Picture of children participating the greatest journey program

Optional: Video of children receiving their shoeboxes and/or participating in the greatest journey=

Give each child a copy of the worksheet and help them decode the missing words. Go over each statement. Show pictures or videos of children receiving their boxes on statement 3.

For the last statement show the children the greatest journey workbook, pictures (or video) and explain how these children participate it.

More information here: <https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/the-greatest-journey/>

**Before the children leave or finish with the series of lesson if doing them over a course of several weeks:**

Put all the children’s items in their boxes

Gather up all their worksheets and any other items they have received.

Share with them how grateful you are that they are sharing the gospel by packing a shoebox.

As parent pick up their children remind them to finish packing their shoebox and where to find their local drop-off center.

# Optional Activities

## Optional Activity #1: Build-A-Shoebox-Online

Supplies: Computer with access to the internet open to the Build a Shoebox online page.

This is a completely optional activity you could do. I didn't use this activity, but I added it to this activity that you could use with older children, grades 3<sup>rd</sup> and up. The Build a box online allows for people who don't want to purchase their own supplies. These shoeboxes are most often used for country that OCC cannot identify due to security reasons. These boxes will also be unmarked with the OCC logo. You can walk through the process online with the children.

## Optional Activity #2: Country Focus

At the event that I did my workshop at, the adults would be hearing about one of the team members who went to Liberia to help distribute shoeboxes. I worked with the speaker to get information that she would be sharing and had pictures from her to show the children that I put together on a poster. We talked about where the country of Liberia was and about the children there.

You could do something similar by highlighting a country that you know that your shoebox has gone too. You could also show a video that is age appropriate for your group from the OCC resource page that features a shoebox recipient. You could show the children where their country is and a little about where they are from.

## Optional Activity #3: You Choose!

What can you come up with that would work with your group. There are so many great ideas on the OCC website. In addition, you can go to the website Pinterest and search for Operation Christmas Child Children or Student lessons or activities.

If you do use the lessons, please let me know by leaving a comment on my website!