



# OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD PARENT CUE

## 7 STEPS TO A THANKFUL HEART

### ...A night of fun for the whole family!

WE HAVE SO MUCH TO BE THANKFUL FOR. THIS MONTH, WE'RE EXCITED TO HELP YOUR FAMILY DEVELOP A HEART OF THANKFULNESS—WHILE YOU SHARE WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN YOU WITH CHILDREN IN CRISIS AREAS AROUND THE WORLD.

#### 1 SET THE STAGE

Parents, set aside an evening or weekend afternoon for your "7 Steps to a Thankful Heart" and packing an Operation Christmas Child box. Sit down with your kids in advance and decide how many shoe boxes you will fill, whether they will be for boys or girls, and the age group. (Suggested: one box per child, matching the gender and age of that child.)

#### 2 THE 2-FOR-2 RACE

Set a timer for two minutes and race through the house to grab two of your favorite things. Make sure they fit in the car and don't require feeding or a leash!  
*Proceed to your favorite family restaurant. (Chick-fil-A, anyone?)*

#### 3 FIRE DRILL

Every time the car stops, someone must yell out things that he/she is thankful for until the car is moving again. If you get stuck, you can tag someone else. No repeats!

#### 4 CHOW & CHAT

Take your favorite things into the restaurant with you. Over dinner, use them as an inspiration for what to put in the box. Example: "I love drawing on my iPad mini, so I'm going to put fun paper and markers in the box." (See the Discussion Key for more questions. Make sure younger children understand that they are not putting their own favorite toys in the boxes.)  
*Full and talked out? Head over to a nearby mall, superstore or dollar store.*

#### 5 SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP

Divide into teams and race against the clock to find all your shoe box items in ten minutes or less. Make sure you fill your box to the top!  
*Bonus round: The winner picks where you'll eat dessert! When you're finished, head home for the final steps.*

#### 6 THIS IS ME!

Give each child a "Let's Be Friends" coloring sheet, and if needed, help them fill out the information about themselves to include with the gifts in the shoebox. Make sure to include child and/or family photos. If you include your name and address, it is possible (though not guaranteed) that the child may be able to write back.

#### 7 PACK & PRAY

Follow the instructions and pack your box(es). Then take time as a family to pray for the child or children who will receive your gifts. Many kids who receive shoeboxes will have the opportunity to go through a 12-lesson discipleship program called the Greatest Journey to learn more about following Jesus!

#### Discussion Key

Parents, you can use these questions with your K-5 kids:

1. What does it mean to have a "thankful attitude"?
2. What if everything you have (toys, TV, clothes) was gone tomorrow? Would you still have anything to be thankful for?
3. On a scale of 1 – 10, how thankful do you think we are as a family?
4. Why is it important that we're a family that gives to others?
5. How do you think that giving to other people shows God we're thankful to Him?

#### Preschool Helps

Make sure to include your preschooler in the family fun!

- Slow it down. Don't feel like you have to race, and let them go at their own pace. You might want to buy the gifts one evening and pack and pray the next day.
- Help them relate. Make sure their box is for a child of the same age and gender. That way, they can pick out their favorite toys to include.

#### Questions just for them:

1. What are you thankful for?
2. Do you know who gives us all those things? God! And we should thank Him. You say, "Thank you, God!" and I'll say something we're thankful for. (Like "Thank you, God ... for puppy dogs!") Great job!

Visit [theparentcue.org/occ](http://theparentcue.org/occ) for more creative ideas to use in packing your shoebox.

Visit [video.samaritanaspurse.org/channel/operation-christmas-child](http://video.samaritanaspurse.org/channel/operation-christmas-child) for more stories and videos about families who send boxes and the kids who receive them!

