



# on mission

Catalyst Missions News

September 2024

## Operation Christmas Child

Operation Christmas Child is a project of Samaritan's Purse, a Christian organisation whose mission is to provide spiritual and physical aid to hurting people around the world. Since 1993, Samaritan's Purse has helped meet the needs of people who are victims of war, poverty, natural disasters, disease, and famine.

Operation Christmas Child is a unique project that takes gift-filled shoeboxes to children in need in over 100 countries around the world. The mission of Operation Christmas Child is to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way and, together with the local church worldwide, to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Throughout the years, Catalyst has partnered with Operation Christmas Child to do just that, bring hope to often hopeless situations, by blessing children in need around the world. All that is needed is a shoebox, filled with toys, hygiene items, school supplies, fun gifts, and a lot of love. The bonus is that it's not just a shoebox.



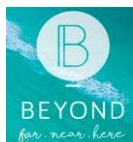
Included in each shoebox is what is referred to as The Greatest Journey, which is a 12-lesson follow-up discipleship program. Since 2009 more than 17 million children have made a decision to follow Christ after participating in The Greatest Journey. The Greatest Journey is implemented through a global church network to help children learn how to know and follow Jesus, with a focus on evangelism, discipleship and multiplication.

**Catalyst Collection Date: October 20, 2024**

**How to pack a shoebox:** <https://occ.samaritanspurse.org.au/home/pack-a-shoebox/>

**Pack a shoebox online:** <https://occdonations.samaritanspurse.org.au/product/pack-a-shoebox-online/>

***Boxes will be available soon!!!***



## *Story from the field:*

### **Samaritan's Purse serves Tahitian boys and girls who live away from the limelight of the Olympics surfing competition**

All eyes were recently on French Polynesia for the Summer 2024 Olympic surfing competition. Athletes from numerous countries, unified by the love of the sport and the spirit of competition, vied for gold, silver, and bronze medals on some of the world's biggest waves in Teahupo'o, Tahiti. Just an hour and a half to the north of the competition site, a Samaritan's Purse ministry partner in the city of Papeete is helping underprivileged Tahitian children and their families conquer waves of spiritual poverty and neglect. These boys and girls are unified by two things: they each received an Operation Christmas Child shoebox gift brimming with toys and other fun items, and today they are being discipled to pursue their relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Their reward? *"I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 3:14).

### **Excitement About Tomorrow**

The buzz began two years ago when a church in Papeete hosted an Operation Christmas Child outreach event for children from a neighbourhood nearby. Using colourful illustrations supplied by Samaritan's Purse, they presented the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a child-friendly way and surprised each of the 35 children with a gift-filled shoebox sent by loving people from around the world. The children rejoiced in their newfound treasures!



***CHILDREN FROM A NEIGHBOURHOOD IN PAPEETE, TAHITI, REJOICE TO RECEIVE GIFT-FILLED OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOEBOXES.***

Many of these children enrolled in [\*The Greatest Journey\*](#) discipleship course, and over the coming weeks, 17 children completed all 12 of its Bible lessons to graduate.

Even after the children celebrated this milestone, the church continued to reach out to their neighbourhood every other weekend. One Saturday as a teacher and an assistant were leaving, a child overheard them saying to each other, "See you tomorrow!"

"Are you coming back tomorrow?" asked the child, hopeful that class would resume again on Sunday. But instead, the teacher indicated that he would see the assistant at church the next day. "I want to come, too!" the child exclaimed.

This simple request led the church to begin welcoming as many as 15 kids from the often overlooked neighbourhood to their Sunday school classes every week. At first, their presence unsettled some of the longstanding members, but the joy they brought to the church was unmatched. Week after week, these children learned Bible stories and continued to be discipled as Christ followers.

***SARA (ROW TWO, SECOND FROM LEFT) SAID THAT THE CHILDREN WHO RECEIVED GIFT-FILLED OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOEBOXES CONTINUE TO BREATHE FRESH LIFE IN THE CHURCH***

