

## **Ideas We've Implemented to Help Us Make More Boxes**

1. The most important thing we do is pray. God can provide resources, discounts, free gifts, and partners that will supplement your regular OCC budget. He gives to those who ask. He is creative and faithful. He can make something out of nothing. Ask Him to bless your shoebox preparations with supplies and thank him when he does. Talk to others about your vision and wait for the Lord to send people to you that want to help you. It's amazing what the Lord can do when you ask him to help you reach the lost with the Gospel and a shoebox!
2. Shop year round. Have a giving budget, then make it stretch! Watch for seasonal sales and take advantage of 75%-90% off prices after Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, etc. Back to school sales are usually at the end of June or beginning of July depending on where you live. That's often the best time to get school supplies for your boxes. And if you catch Old Navy's flip flop sale in June you can get flip flops for \$1. It's only one day, but if you sign up for their emails, you'll be notified when it's happening. Shop clearance racks year round too. Know your local thrift store's sale days and look for like new toys and clothing items. Watch for underwear still in the package.
3. Let your friends and family know what you're doing in person or on social media. Ask for shoebox items or gift cards for your birthday and Christmas. You might be surprised how generous people can be when they know what you're doing.
4. Buy in bulk to save money. We've bought soccer balls (and pumps), canvas bags, whistles, yo-yos, hacky sacks, dice, soaps and soap holders, and toothbrushes, are all things we've bought in bulk. Compared to buying individually, the bulk price was much less.
5. Make homemade items. Making simple coloring books, lovies, fishing kits, string back packs, and tote bags can save money. Check out the tutorials on this web site to download coloring books and find step-by-step instructions for several homemade items.
6. Use coupons. Hobby Lobby, Michaels, and Ben Franklin have coupons online that give 40-50% off nearly every week. Take someone shopping with you and you can each use a coupon. Two items at 50% off can be a big savings.
7. Take advantage of Dollar Tree, if you have one near you. We do recommend items that are high quality. Shop for the child your building a shoebox for as you would shop for your own child or any child that you love. Keeping this in mind, many items at Dollar Tree are name brand and good quality, like 4 Colgate toothbrushes for \$1. And they have solar calculators for \$1 each. The little puzzle tins are also good quality for \$1.