

How to Pack More Items in an OCC Shoebox

I started packing OCC shoeboxes from the start of the program. My family packed three boxes, one for each of our children. It was so much fun. All of the cousins participated. We met to share our boxes with each other and my sister-in-law turned them in to the processing center for all of us.

Since then I've become better at packing more items in a box and I learned when to take the packaging off the item to reduce the trash contained in the box and when to keep it on.

The reason I love taking off the packaging is to make more room in the box. I admit it was challenging at first. I'm used to keeping the package intact so the item looks new. In fact, when I give a gift, I wrap the item in tissue paper, put it in a gift bag, stuff more tissue paper in and include a card in a paper envelope! It felt strange giving a gift that didn't include the packaging.

But now I LOVE taking the item out of the package for my shoebox gifts because it means I can pack up to twice as much. Plus, I've learned that many other countries don't have serious problems disposing of wastes. Many OCC shoeboxes go to children who live in poorer countries that do not have waste management systems. Rubbish is rarely collected and it often piles up on land, in rivers or lakes causing health hazards and environmental concerns.

In order to decide whether or not to remove packaging, I determine if important information will be lost. For example, save important directions or pictures that will help the child put a puzzle together. If the package is simply decorative and isn't needed, take it off and throw it away. Stickers on notebooks, price tags, hang tags, labels can all be thrown away. You will then be able to fill the extra space with useful and fun items. This will also eliminate the possible disposal of packaging issue later.

If you're new to packing shoeboxes, or even if you've been doing it a long time, I hope these tips will help you make more and better shoeboxes. I know my shoebox building skills become better every year. Happy shoebox building!