



GIVING TREE

**SERVES:
POOR / PARISH**

**TIME:
NOV / DEC**

PRESENTING THE NEED TO MY TEAM

- Do you know that there are kids in your own parish that may not get Christmas presents this year?
- How would you feel waking up Christmas morning with no Christmas gifts under the tree?
- The economy the past few years has been very tough and there are many parents out of work. Their priority is to put food on the table and to pay for their housing (rent or mortgage). There may not be money in their budget for Christmas gifts for their family. How do you think they feel?
- Many kids also lack clean, durable clothes, not just toys.
- Do you think that people in our own parish are aware of this need?
- What can we do as a team to help those in our own parish in need?
- How can we get the word out, and gather help from all parishioners?



HOW WOULD YOU FEEL WAKING CHRISTMAS MORNING WITH NO GIFTS UNDER THE TREE?

OUR CALL TO SERVE

Let's organize a "Giving Tree" this Advent season to help those in our parish in need, as well as giving other parishioner's an opportunity to be generous this Christmas season.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

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WEEK	STEPS	QUESTION OF THE WEEK
1	<p>Reach Out: The first thing to do is to reach out to the pastor to obtain permission, and to ask for a few families from the parish who are in need. Sometimes it is good to work through the parish St. Vincent DePaul Society, as they already work with families in need.</p> <p>Plan Tree: You will need to plan on obtaining a Christmas tree for this project no later than Thanksgiving week.</p>	XXXX
2	<p>Gather Info: Get information from the families directly or indirectly. You need to find out each family members clothing size, their most urgent clothing needs and what toys the kids would like (wish list). Most likely tell the boys this should remain confidential.</p>	XXXX
3	<p>Connect Info: By this week, you should have all of the information needed. Make a complete list of all items you want to help the families obtain. Try to ensure that each family member gets two gifts, a much needed clothing item and a toy.</p>	XXXX
4	<p>Make ornaments: Use a template to cut out paper ornaments to hang on the tree. You will need to put the name (and size) of one item on each ornament in writing. Have the boys decorate them, and attach colored yarn to hang each one on the tree.</p>	XXXX

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WEEK	STEPS	QUESTION OF THE WEEK
5	<p>Install Tree: The Christmas tree should be installed in the parish entry area/foyer, where all parishioners will pass by going into the Church. Decorate the tree with lights to make it more noticeable, and put all of the paper ornaments on the tree.</p> <p>Announce: Someone should announce the project after each Mass this weekend, and a flyer should be placed in the bulletin if possible. Direct people to drop off items after the next 2 weekends after Mass.</p>	XXXX
6	<p>Collect Items: Make a schedule to have some boys/dads present at each Mass to collect the gifts that people will drop off. You could also work with the parish office to have people drop them there during the week as well (if possible). People should be told to tape the ornament to the box/gift so you can easily sort them on the list.</p>	XXXX
7	<p>Collect Items: Continue to collect the gifts during the weekend Masses, and during this weeks meeting, organize them and wrap each gift. (it would be good to have the moms organize this ahead of time, and come to train/help the boys gift wrap)</p>	XXXX
8	<p>Give!: The boys ideally should drop off the gifts to each family (if possible). If not, the dads should work with the parish to ensure each family on the list receives their gifts anonymously.</p>	<p>Service Project: There is a short Gospel Reflection to help motivate the boys for this apostolic project.</p>

PROJECT OVERVIEW

TACTICS BY AREAS

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LOCATION

- The boys should try to do this for their own parish where the Conquest group is located.
- The pastor should provide permission prior to starting this project.
- The ideal location to setup the Giving Tree is in the vestibule of the Church. It should be in a high traffic area where all people coming to Mass pass by.

PROVISIONS

- Christmas Tree – the larger the better. Try to see if you can get one donated, or even use one that the parish may already have available.
- Flyers – need to be made to stuff in the parish bulletin to promote the project or an add needs to be made to place in the actual bulletin for 2-3 weeks.
- Paper ornaments – construction paper in multi-colors should be used to make the ornaments
- Yarn – Yarn is needed to hang the paper ornaments to the tree
- Christmas lights – needed for the tree decoration
- Storage – storage space is needed for the gifts people will be dropping off
- Christmas wrapping paper, bows, tape, etc. – You could choose to ask people to wrap the gifts if they can before dropping off, however you cannot confirm what is actually inside to match to list of items.

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TACTICS BY AREAS



RESPONSIBILITIES

- Each boy should have a responsibility on the team for this project
- Christmas Tree: needs to be secured
- Provisions: such as construction paper, markers, yarn need to be secured.
- Wrapping: stations should be set up, with all materials and supplies obtained.
- Flyer: or bulletin ad to provide to the parish office 1 week prior to launching the project for promotion.
- Schedule: for boys to work the weekend Masses to collect the gifts.
- Storage: Someone needs to be in charge of storage for the gifts until they are wrapped.
- Logistics: Someone needs to work with an adult leader for organizing and delivering the gifts.

CONTACTS

- Pastor: The pastor needs to see that this project is helping those in need at his parish, not another outside organization.
- St. Vincent De Paul Society: Work only with the local chapter in your parish if possible, to support first the real needs of your own parish families.
- Dads / Adult Leaders: Ask them for support with logistics and working with the pastor and St. Vincent volunteers as well as finding suitable storage for the gifts, possibly even at someone's house.
- Moms: See if a few moms could assist with the wrapping of gifts with the boys.
- Families in need: If it is possible to actually deliver the gifts in person to the families, it would be good to plan to have the boys give them a special card they can all sign, possibly even a homemade card about Christ at Christmas.

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DEBRIEFING

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SPECIAL OPS

- This project is not only to help the poor families in your parish, but also to help the people in the parish be generous. Special attention should be given to announcements about the project after weekend Masses, as well as any bulletin ad or flyer to reflect this reality of giving.
- A special guest speaker could be brought in during one of the weeks to talk about the virtue of generosity, where true giving is not from surplus, but giving when it hurts. (sacrifice)
- It would be good to put a note in the bulletin after the project, thanking all of those who helped to support it in the parish. You should list how many families/children were reached with their help, and enjoyed a wonderful Christmas thanks to their personal generosity.

CONTINGENCY PLAN



- If the parish already has a “Giving Tree” type of project going, it would be ideal to have the team volunteer to help with the project.
- If it is difficult to find the needy families in the parish, you could ask permission from the pastor to seek to work with an outside organization.
- You could do any sort of collection of gifts/goods for the poor for Christmas. People are much more generous around this time of year, no matter what you choose to do.

GIVING TREE



ROLL CALL

ORGANIZING THE TEAM

NAME	PHONE	EMAIL
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PROJECT NOTES:

