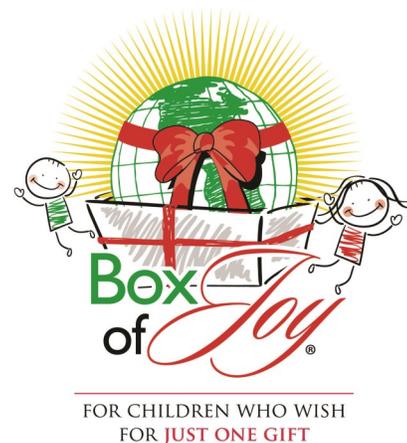




BOX OF JOY



Time is quickly running out for your Council to sign up to participate in the Box of Joy Program this Fraternal Year! Councils must sign up online at crosscatholic.org/boxofjoy no later than Monday, October 15th.

If you are not yet familiar with the program, which is now in its second year as a Maryland State Council program, in a nutshell, we pack shoe boxes of Christmas presents and send them to some of the world's poorest children, many of whom have never received a Christmas Present before. Last year, 46,360 children in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Haiti and the Dominican Republic were served by the Box of Joy Program. Maryland Knights played a key role in the program, with 15 Councils helping to pack and collect hundreds of boxes in our first year of participation. This year, we would like to see every Council participate in the program, delivering Christmas cheer to children who wish for just one gift.

Here are some answers to some important, frequently asked questions I've been asked:

Q: Jimmy, as State Chairman, do I order my Boxes of Joy from you?

A: No. As stated above, you must sign up online by going to crosscatholic.org/boxofjoy and clicking on "Groups Sign Up" to sign up. The sign up page is a secure Google Form in which you put in your Council's and project chairman's information and specify the number of boxes you would like to order. Cross Catholic then ships the boxes and other materials to your Council at no charge.

Q: Once our Council has the empty boxes, who should we give them to?

A: Anyone can fill a Box of Joy! You can give them to Council members and their families, fellow parishioners, other ministry groups within your parish, school children, neighbors, whomever! Our Ladies Auxiliaries are also welcome to sign up to participate in their own right!

Q: What should we put in the boxes?

A: Each box must be designated for either a boy or a girl in the age ranges of 2 to 4, 5 to 9, or 10 to 14. You can access a list of suggested items, and other resources, online at crosscatholic.org/boxofjoyresources. Your Council's project kit will also have a printed copy of the suggested packing list which can be copied and distributed. Possible items include small stuffed animals, school supplies, hygiene items, and hard candies. A person can pack a box individually or, if your Council is so inclined, you can have your members and their families purchase or donate items to bring to a "packing party." A Box of Joy packing party could make for a great social meeting.

Q: When and where do we take the filled Boxes of Joy?

A: Box of Joy "Collection Week" is from November 3rd to November 11th. No later than Sunday the 11th, all Boxes must have been dropped off at a Box of Joy Drop-Off Center. Currently, I am aware of four Knights of Columbus Councils which have committed to serve as Drop-Off Centers: Patuxent in Laurel, Cardinal Gibbons in Baltimore County, St. Michael in St. Mary's County, and Sacred Heart in Bowie. St. Thomas More Academy in Frederick County is also a Drop-Off Center. If you and your Council are interested in serving as a Drop-Off Center, please contact me and I can help you get set up. We could really use a Drop-Off Center on the Eastern Shore.

Q: What about the \$9 per box for shipping?

A: Each of Box of Joy is requested to be returned with \$9. This includes \$7 for shipping and \$2 to support the missionaries who work with the children receiving Boxes of Joy. In my experience, most people who put together a Box of Joy are more than willing to include the \$9 with their box. You will also find you have members who are willing to donate in lieu of packing a box. These donations will help offset boxes which don't come back with a donation. Your Council or Auxiliary could also consider a donation to help subsidize the \$9 per box. This per box donation is important, as it is quite expensive to process and ship the Boxes of Joy to the children receiving them. Cross Catholic secures sponsorship for about 50% of the cost, and those of us who pack the Boxes provide about 50%.