



# Tips for Hosting a Shoebox Party

Getting together with your book club, church choir, knitting circle, or workplace to fill Shoeboxes with “little luxuries” for local women experiencing homelessness is a wonderful way to spend time together! It’s also great to know that you are able to make a positive impact in your community. Based on several volunteers’ experiences over the last few years, we’ve collected the following tips for hosting a fun and successful Shoebox Party.

## Who Brings What

For your Shoebox Party, you can either have every person bring their own items worth \$50, or you can decide how many boxes you want to make and designate the items you want each person to bring – each set of items totaling around \$50. For example, say your group is making 5 Shoeboxes. Mary brings 5 \$10 gift cards, Alana brings 5 bottles of lotion and 5 high-end chocolate bars, Jim brings 5 pairs of slipper socks and 5 sets of hair ties, Ule brings 5 travel umbrellas and 5 nice pens, and Sue brings 5 bottles of body wash, 5 packages of face pads, and 5 blank holiday cards. So each Shoebox would then have one of each item.

## What Kind of Shoeboxes Will You Use

Chances are, you have an empty Shoebox in good condition at home that you can use. But if you don’t, something to consider is to get either plastic Shoeboxes or printed storage boxes from the dollar store.

- The plastic boxes can be lined with holiday-themed tissue paper. It shows through the plastic. You can also decorate the top of the box (inside or out).
- Please make sure whatever boxes you use are a relatively standard size Shoebox (i.e. not a boot box or not a child’s shoebox); we want to make sure each woman receives a similarly sized box to avoid disappointment.



## SHOEBOX INSPIRATION

- ✓ Pick a colour scheme and fill your box with matching items.
- ✓ Envision the items you would be excited to receive.
- ✓ Save cash and fill your Shoebox using your Shoppers Optimum Points.

## Wrapping & Decorating Your Shoeboxes

Wrapping Shoeboxes is often the most involved part of any Shoebox party:

- Use thick wrapping paper. Each box is usually inspected at least twice as well as moved 2 or 3 different times before it finally reaches its recipient. You want your lovely wrapping job to last.
- You will use more tape than you think you will.



- Shoeboxes with separate lids are easier to wrap than those 1 piece, fold-over shoeboxes.

Remember that your Shoeboxes will be stacked with anywhere from 20 to 200 other Shoeboxes as they are going to their final destination. This means that flat décor (stickers, calligraphy, etc.) is MUCH better than puffy décor (giant bows, pinecones, holly springs, etc).



### Pack Your Boxes -----

There's definitely an art to packing your Shoeboxes:

- Lining them with tissue paper, particularly if they are the clear plastic shoeboxes, is a nice touch.
- If you include small, delicate items in the boxes, like a pair of earrings, please try to put them in a smaller box or container (ie. a makeup bag or envelope) so they don't get lost, missed or broken.
- Try not to overstuff your boxes – the lids should fit securely and not pop off in transit.

### Include A Personal Touch -----

One of the best things about The Shoebox Project for Shelters is the personal nature of each Shoebox. Ideally, we are giving little luxuries that we ourselves would like to receive. It is very meaningful to the women who receive these boxes to have that personal connection:

- In every box, include a card with a note that is signed by each member of your group (first names only).
- Include a verse or quote from each person's favourite holiday song.



### Share the Joy -----

We're so excited that your group is creating these Shoeboxes for women in our community – thank you for your generosity! We'd love to see pictures of your group and the boxes you create.

- Email pictures to [muskoka@shoeboxproject.com](mailto:muskoka@shoeboxproject.com) with any details you want to share