

the JOY MAKER CHALLENGE



generationOn
A POINTS OF LIGHT ENTERPRISE



Be a Joy Maker!

The holidays are a wonderful time when people celebrate with their family and friends. But for some people, the joyful holiday season can feel lonely. By completing acts of joy through meaningful service, you can bring holiday cheer into the lives of people in your community and across the country.

Project Name: **Share the Season**

What You're Doing: Help troops feel a little closer to home with a seasonal care package.

Why it Matters: Hundreds of thousands of service men and women are deployed around the world. Many are serving in places where their family cannot join. It can be difficult to get into the spirit of the season when away from loved ones over the holidays. Help our troops by giving them a taste of home!

Budget: \$12-20

Ideas to Chat About:

- How would you feel if you were thousands of miles away from your family during the holidays?
- Why is it our duty to remember service members and show appreciation?
- What are some things that deployed service men and women would miss?
- How can we make the troops feel like they are home during the holidays?

What You Need per Kit:

- USPS Priority Mail Flat Rate Envelope - \$5.75
- Seasonal Items, i.e. candy canes (\$1) or hot chocolate packages (\$3-\$5)
- Holiday Décor- \$0-\$5
- Packing Tape and Materials- \$3-\$5

Project Instructions:

- **Grades K-2:** Keep it simple! Follow the instructions.
- **Grades 3-5:** For older children, write a "thank you/holiday" poem or letter to include in the kit.
- **Grades 6-8:** Hold a schoolwide/community drive to gather items for the packages.
- **Grades 9-12:** Organize a "Share the Holiday Season" packing event at your local school, non-profit or house of worship where people can donate items and pack kits to send to service men and women around the world.

How to do it!

1. Make a list of people you know that are serving in the military that you could send a care package to. If you don't know anyone serving in the military, ask friends, family, neighbors or your local school if there are any people from your community who are serving overseas.
2. Contact your local government office or get in touch with a military base to find out more about who is serving and how you can send your package to them.
 - o For organizations that allow you to send care packages to soldiers deployed abroad, check out <http://www.military.com/spouse/military-life/military-resources/how-to-support-our-troops.html>.
 - o USO—If you have trouble finding a service person to support, try Operation USO Care Package: <http://www.uso.org/operation-uso-care-package.aspx>
3. Find out what NOT to include by visiting this link: <http://anysoldier.com/WhatToSend.cfm>
4. Gather the items you would like to include in the package. You can hold drives to collect the items or ask if participants are willing to bring an item to contribute.
5. Draw seasonal pictures to include with the package.
6. Assemble the package. Make sure to include a detailed list of all items in the package.
7. Write the mailing address on the outside of the package and send it.

Reflections:

1. How did the project help our service men and women?
2. What can we do better next time?
3. How can we do even more to help military members deployed overseas?

Additional Resources and Suggestions:

- Check out this [fact sheet](#) on Military and Veterans for other ways you can help.
- Include telephone cards to troops so that they can talk to their families and friends.
- Read *The Christmas Box* by Joanne S. Wetzel: Learn about how being stationed away from family can be hard for soldiers with a touching book about a father's determination to stay in contact with his son.
- Use Sesame Workshop resources for talking about military deployment featuring Sesame Street characters: <http://www.sesameworkshop.org/initiatives/emotion/tlc>

