

HOW DO YOU BLESS

A MISSIONARY?

The quick and easy answer is "Make Contact!" For a missionary to know people are remembering them and they are not forgotten as they serve on the mission field is very meaningful. Don't get caught in the trap of trying to do such a big thing that you end up doing nothing at all! A simple letter or an email will brighten their day and encourage their hearts.

What Do Missionaries Want?

Sometimes that is a hard question to answer because they may feel awkward giving you a list of wants and needs. We found this article on the internet from a young woman who is a missionary in Taiwan. Someone had asked her to write an article about care packages. She gave so many helpful insights and ideas we've included part of her letter below.

Here is an excerpt from her letter about care packages:

The thing about most missionaries I know is they would say they don't "need" anything. Living overseas has taught us to learn to do without a lot of what we thought we needed before coming to our new countries. Also, there are now so many things that we are able to find in our host countries. Here in Taiwan, we have a Costco near-by where we can get brownie mix and extra chunky peanut butter.

The greatest thing about care packages though is the little glimpses of home they offer. They scream "we miss you," "we are thinking about you," and "we care." I guess that is why they are called "care packages" and not "things-you-need-to-survive packages."

So, even though most I know would say they don't "need" anything, we all delight to receive stuff from back home because it is a reminder that we are not alone. And, little bits of comfort are nice. :)

I brainstormed about things we'd like to receive in a care package with a good friend of mine who has been a missionary in Taiwan for 12 years--she is married and has 3 small kids. Together we came up with the list below, so please know that this is NOT my own personal wish list).

Things that might bless an overseas missionary family:

* (Sugar free) Kool-aid packets

- * (Sugar free) Jello packets
- * Envelopes of prepared mixes (sloppy joe, taco seasoning, salsa mix, ranch dressing, Italian dressing, gravy, so on)
- * Instant cooking things (ex: Shake and Bake)
- * Bisquick mix (great for frying onion rings for those of you who didn't know!)
- * Canned Refried Beans
- * Frito Lay Bean dip (for some recipes)
- * Cream of Mushroom Soup
- * Cream of Celery Soup
- * Marshmallows (these make good packing material!)
- * Velveeta
- * Don't forget the canned Rotel to make dip!
- * Tortilla chips
- * Cereal (any kind, but here's some of our favorites: Quaker Oatmeal Squares (all flavors), Life, Honey Nut Cheerios, Frosted Flakes, Lucky Charms, Cinnamon Toast Crunch, and really any cereal!
- * Other dried foods, like trail mix, oatmeal, or PopTarts (Here in Taiwan, we have a good supply of oatmeal and cereal, but in other countries these things are not so easy to get a hold of.)
- * Extra-active yeast (for making bread)
- * Hair stuff (clips, barrets, pony tail holders)
- * Candy (things like Jolly Ranchers, Starbursts, Twizzlers
- * Sugar Free candy (Lifesavers, things like that)
- * (Sugar free) Chewing Gum or Bubble Gum (for kids)
- * Magazines in English (My grandmothers occasionally send me copies of Woman's World and Reader's Digest)
- * Scented/Smell good things (for example: small candle, potpourri, or Plug-ins, with the plug-in device unless you know they already have it. Scents are so important to me now. Especially the holidays it is nice to have a "smells like Christmas" feel in my home. But, something like plug-ins might not in other countries; Taiwan has the same electricity system as the US)
- * Decorations for holidays (holiday plates and napkins, even something like a paper 4th of July table cloth could be fun. My grandmother also once sent me Easter clingies to put on my windows.)
- * Other holiday related items sent near that holiday (like an Easter egg dying kit before Easter or candy canes near Christmas).
- * Things that are "American" or in my case "Texan" . . . you get the idea. (I loved it when my mom sent a very Texan "fixin' do list" pad and some chili mix.)
- * A memento from their fav sports team

- * DVDs (Especially for children. You might want to ask your missionary if they have a Region 1 DVD player if you are sending DVDs from America)
- * CDs, but an iTunes gift card would work too
- * Books in English
- * Tampons
- * Razors
- * Deodorant
- * Mascara
- * Socks
- * Over the counter meds (cough drops, coldeze, aleve)
- * Children's books in English, small toys (match box car or stuffed toy), or things like fruit roll ups or gummy bears (IF they have children)
- * Hobby supplies (things for scrap booking, quilting, cross stitch, card making or stamping--IF they have those hobbies)
- * Small games (new card games or logic puzzle to solve)
- * Online gift certificates (amazon.com and landsend.com both ship overseas)

Tricks and Hints

- * You don't have to send a lot to mean a lot. A small envelope with a few packages of gravy mix and a card would mean a lot.
- * Don't be afraid to ask the missionary specifically for help. For example, "I'd like to send you some reading material is there a book or magazine you've been wanting to read?" Or "We are wanting to send you some personal items, do you need razors or deodorant? If so, which brands and scents could we get for you?" By asking specifically, it helps us not be so shy in telling you what we need. It is really hard to answer the question "What do you need us to send you?"
- * If they have children, try to include least something small for them. It is nice for them to know that they are remembered too.
- * The USPS has an international shipping envelope-- Priority Mail International--that allows you to send up to 4 lbs at a flat rate. Each country is different--to Taiwan it is \$9. If you ship this way, you can send it on Monday, and we will have it by Friday. Wow! That is awesome. They also have a box with a variable charge rate, but it costs more.
- * If you are sending big packages, consider sending it by ground and not by air to save on shipping.
- * You can cut and paste the address in the country's language--ask the missionary for an image of their address (well, if they are computer savvy). Just add in all

caps the name of the country in English underneath the foreign language address. (This is how my family sends me stuff.)

That is all I can think of for now. Thanks.

Here are a few more ideas. Ask your adopted missionary for specific ideas – some countries have access to items that others don't. No need to ship items they can buy locally.

- * Wipes - all kinds: baby wipes, face wipes, disinfectant wipes - they all help!
 - * Sermons on cd or tape (music to the ears of those who listen to sermons delivered in another language)
 - * Music cd's, sheet music
 - * Holiday decorations (Not all countries celebrate the same holidays you do.)
 - * Tweezers
 - * Shower flip flops
 - * Car care items (if they have a car)
 - * Beach towel
 - * Packaged food— instant soups, muffin mixes, chewing gum, herb tea bags
 - * Reminders of home—a souvenir t-shirt, a scenic calendar, a home team sports cap
 - * Sun screen
 - * Comic strips and editorial cartoons from the local newspaper
 - * Collections of greeting cards they can send to others
 - * Postcards of their hometown or state they can give away
 - * Simple toys like balsa-wood airplanes, paper dolls, stickers, puzzles
 - * Photos
 - * Recipes
 - * Cosmetics - mascara, blush, lip gloss, face powder
 - * Hair products - gels, hair spray (remember to get the pump kind, no aerosol cans!)
 - * Magazines
 - * Adult and children's books
 - * Hobby supplies
 - * Plastic containers - anything from Tupperware to disposable plastic containers
 - * Ziplock bags are highly prized!
 - * Travel-sized toiletries
 - * Number One Most Coveted Care Package Item: chocolate chips!
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For more care package ideas visit our website at:

<http://www.friendswomen.com/Missionary%20Gifts.html>