



## **Children of the Nations' Gift-Giving Policy**

### **Why We Have a Gift-Giving Policy**

#### **1. To promote equality among our children**

It's common that certain children or in-country staff receive special attention from nearly all visitors. Unless we have rules for gift giving, some children or in-country staff will end up with an abundance while others end up with nothing. This can cause jealousy and self-esteem issues for the children.

#### **2. To support our in-country staff in raising children who transform nations**

These policies respect the authority of our in-country staff who directly care for our children daily. They are the best people to make decisions regarding the welfare of our children and COTN desires to make them the heroes!

#### **3. To encourage Christ-like behavior**

- Giving gifts in an open forum encourages honesty and discourages secrecy.
- Being as inclusive as possible avoids causing jealousy.

### **Correct Ways to Give Gifts**

#### **1. You may mail photos and a single sheet of stickers to your sponsored child, which can be included with your letters.**

- Children highly value your photos and proudly display them!
- Gifts other than photos and a single sheet of stickers may not be mailed to your child.

#### **2. If you are traveling on a COTN Venture Team, you may bring small gifts for your sponsored child or a child sponsored by someone in your family.**

- This is allowed because, according to local customs in the countries COTN serves, it is often expected that visitors bring gifts.
- Gifts purchased must not exceed \$25 in value for each sponsored child.
- Once in-country, all gifts must be checked in with COTN staff.
- Sponsors should give their sponsored children gifts in the presence of COTN staff.
- Please see a list of appropriate gift ideas below.

#### **3. If you are traveling on a Venture trip, you may bring gifts for COTN's in-country staff through a pre-approved event.**

- Please only bring gifts for staff as part of an approved appreciation event, birthday party, graduation, wedding, anniversary, or birth.

- Please do not mail or wire gifts to COTN's in-country staff.
- Please do not tip COTN staff members. Alternatively, donations may be made to the Staff Well-Being Fund by calling 360-698-7227.

**4. You can give items that benefit all the children in COTN's care, by visiting our website at [cotni.org](http://cotni.org).**

- Note: Items will be distributed wherever the need is greatest, and cannot be designated for a specific child.

### Appropriate Gift Ideas

Gifts should encourage creativity, learning, and exercise, or meet practical needs. Ideas include:

- School supplies (coloring books, art supplies, stationery, pencils, pens, crayons)
- Small toys
- Sports equipment (soccer in Africa and Haiti, baseball in the Dominican Republic)
- T-shirts
- Band-Aids

### Inappropriate Types of Gifts (please note, this list is not exhaustive)

- Monetary gifts (no cash or checks allowed)
- Items that could be harmful to a child or used as a weapon
- Political/governmental items that show war, fighting, guns, camouflage, suffering
- Violent superhero gear or action figures
- Expensive jewelry or perfume
- Electronic items (iPods, CDs, DVDs, thumb drives, video game systems, phones, etc.)

We hope these guidelines help you feel fully empowered to bless children and in-country staff in a way that allows them to thrive spiritually, physically, socially, and mentally.

Thank you for being a blessing to the children!