



St. John Amelith Parish News - August 2024

From the Pastor's Desk

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20

Summer break is a relief, but often sporadic. Such a way while fun is not useful to the routines and patterns needed for life. The stores are already bear witness the return to normality with back to school sales. August brings change saying, “Ready or not here it comes!” The institution of schools and even general education has become a hallmark of our society. Where the church used to be the center of communities now it revolves around the schools. Of course, long before formalized education was the deeper value of what it meant to be a student. If education today is simply for future endeavors such as a job, we have lost the value of lifelong learning. If education is only seen as data but denies how a person is being shaped for life, we miss the craftiness of how the Devil can turn learning against God.

As inheritors of the Reformation, Lutherans have always tied being Christian directly to learning. We call this “Catechesis” which means instruction or teaching. Most relate this term to what we see maybe of Sunday school and Confirmation. However, institutionalizing learning even in the Church was never to be divided from the home. Luther in a sermon on why children should go to school told parents, “He did not give you children and means for their sustenance only so that you might do as you please with them or raise them to strive for worldly splendor. Instead, you are commanded to raise them in service of the Lord or else be uprooted together with your children and everything else...” Likewise, none can claim Christian without having to take seriously how Jesus told His Church to make disciples.

Lifelong learning as God gave it flows out of baptism whether that be an adult or child. More than learning as a Law it has come from the Gospel that has saved sinner. Instead of accumulating information, Jesus creates and calls us to be His disciples. Disciple in Greek means student or pupil! This is not some ecstatic experience, but from how God relates to us by His Word. Baptism granted a new way of life out of the death and resurrection of Christ. Where “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” has become the standard of having a life together. Making disciples is taking advantage all our days of the Lord’s promise to be with us and that includes learning from Him.

The Church has regrettably established the tradition of being a “volunteer” based organization. Yet, Jesus made it abundantly clear that church is to “make disciples of all nations” which is not volunteers or for organizational glory. Disciples can learn to be servants. Disciples can learn to be good stewards. Disciples can learn to be witnesses. Disciple can learn to love one another. Disciples can learn to bear the cross. What disciples cannot do is reject the need for learning. In other words, Jesus remains the teacher and our master has made the promise, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31-32). Freedom by the Gospel is for discipleship and that is far different than a world against God and His grace for sinners.

The synod at convention in 2023 reaffirmed again the motto, “Making Disciples for Life.” They look to encourage, “all LCMS districts, congregations and schools to ground their local mission and ministry upon this emphasis, making disciples for life to the glory of God and for the extension of Christ’s kingdom.” Teaching matters, so consider helping St. John pursue another school year with children from church and as outreach to families. Pray goals to restart Sunday school or whatever might arise to help parents raise children in the faith. May adult Bible study and other learning among us be blessed with the Holy Spirit at work by the Word. The question remains, “Teaching to what end?” Luther’s Small Catechism is not a textbook but a tool to shape life at home and church in the Word. Learning is good and needed, but disciples of Jesus have the great promise, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mark 16:16).

Remain as His disciples,

Pastor Gauthier



School Happenings

The BOTTLE/CAN Drive to help offset costs for the school will continue through the summer. There are two barrels outside the school entrance for you to place your bottles/cans in. If you'd prefer to have someone pick them up from your home, please contact Jill @ 989-714-3811. Thank you to all who continue to donate we have raised over \$800 thus far!

The St. John Amelith Lutheran Church and School Parent-Teacher League is conducting a bottle and can drive to help offset costs for the school. There are two barrels outside the school entrance to deposit cans. If you'd prefer to have someone pick them up from your home, please contact the school office.



How do we uphold a Christian Lutheran Education?

St. John Lutheran School is committed to walk with families in, "Helping children grow in Faith, Knowledge, and Service." This happens ultimately with everything centered on Jesus Christ, since His Word is truth and life. Having it to be a Christian Lutheran education is to say what "we believe, teach, and confess" also comes through the lens of Lutheran Christianity. The Bible as God's Word is the foundation while the Small Catechism is the tool that shapes and teaches (catechizes) what this means for life. It is there in weekly Chapel, prayer and devotions, through music and art, and the faith applied to the daily task of academics. In order to be effective, the faculty receive doctrinally sound material, ongoing instruction in Lutheran teaching, and the attention of St. John's pastor regardless if they are called or non-called workers.

As a church and school, it is really about God's Holy Word and all the good things it would provide to help families and children. While "religion" typically gets treated as purely an academic among others, Lutherans know how the formational aspect of the faith matters most of all. Whether it is listening to Bible stories, memorizing Bible verses, singing hymns, daily prayer, and growth in the liturgy or catechism. What children learn by doing allows the Christian faith to go with them in life and is a blessing for the home, church, and society. While lower levels receive basics from the Bible and Catechism, upper levels learn to evaluate worldviews, culture, and life from God's Word and what comes with the faithful Christian confession.

Confirmation is a public rite of the church to receive the Lord's Supper, to confess the faith as taught by the Small Catechism, and to join into membership at St. John. Children can do so outside of the day school schedule. This period of instruction lasts two years for baptized youth (7th-8th grade) and is not the same track as adult instruction. Class is taught by pastor together with youth from other parochial or public schools. Besides using the Bible, Small Catechism and hymnal, attendance at the Divine Service (worship) is required along with helping to acolyte. Since education is the primary task God gave parents to do for their children, confirmation includes the involvement of parents to help in the process of teaching their children.

Pastor Gauthier



August Office Hours

Monday	9am-3pm
Wednesday	9am-3pm
Friday	9am-3pm

These are the hours that Molly will be in the office working and there to help you. Pastor Jerry and Jonathan (the new principal) will have varied hours until school begins.

St. John Amelith

Fun for the whole family!

\$15 German Dinner including german sausage, saurkraut with pork, german potato salad and bread/roll
Plus a Full Concession stand with choices for everyone!

Bake Sale starts at 12pm and is open until sold out!



September 14, 2024

Thanks be to God for He is good!

St. John Amelith Church and School
1664 Amelith Rd
Bay City, MI

We are honored to present
Frankentrost Band 12pm-2pm
An Amelith Skit 2-2:30pm
Gemutlichkeit Verein Singers 2:30-3pm

Floyd Grocholski's Family Tradition from 3pm-7pm

Cornhole tournament starting at noon
\$20 per person with drawing for teams

Bounce houses by Bouncing Bellas

Many of us remember Emma (Ledford) Jensen, who was a music director here at St John for a short time before moving with her husband to Germany. A couple copies of their latest newsletter is available in church. If you would like to contact them, their address is:

Pastor Nathaniel and Emma Jensen
Danzigerstrasse 7
66849 Landstuhl



Cardinal Comfort Signup Form

In the wake of recent events, most (if not all) of current Concordia University Ann Arbor Cardinals have faced fear, sadness, anger, and anxiety about the future. Cardinal Comfort, a new program, is looking for volunteer Champions to pray for and encourage current Cardinal students, faculty, and staff for the 2024/25 school year. Champions will be assigned a Cardinal to pray for daily, send an encouraging letter or card at least monthly, and send a care package at least once per semester.

If you are interested in offering prayer and hope by becoming a Cardinal Comfort Champion, please sign up by contacting Wendy Jacobs via email at wendyLKJ@jmkusch.com.

SAVE THE DATE

VALLEY LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL'S

25th
ANNIVERSARY

GOLF

Outing



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2024

MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE AT
WWW.VLHS.COM/GOLF

We continue the series of articles about every Sunday communion for our newsletter. There are plenty of things that we need daily if not weekly in life. David celebrates this care of our Good Shepherd feeding him in Psalm 23 declaring, “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies...” (vs. 5). Truly the table of our Lord is today His true body and blood to eat and drink for us men and our salvation. Our Lutheran Fathers made every Sunday communion part of their defense at the time of the Reformation. They confessed, “At the outset we must again make the preliminary statement that we do not abolish the Mass (Lord’s Supper), but religiously maintain and defend it. For among us masses are celebrated every Lord’s Day and on the other festivals, in which the Sacrament is offered to those who wish to use it, after they have been examined and absolved. (Augsburg Confession, Apology, Article XXIV).

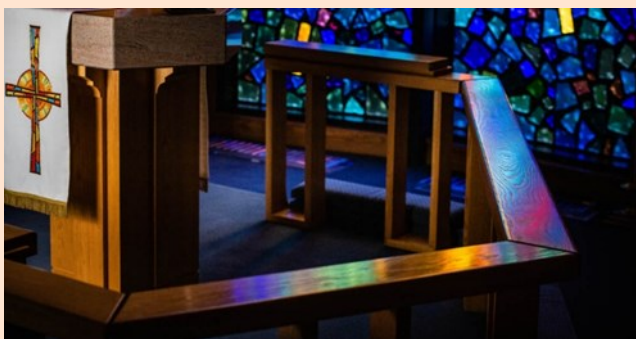
God’s peace be with you in Christ Jesus, Pastor

Weekly Communion Too Common?

January 4, 2021

4. Is Weekly Communion Too Common?

In Easter season 1999, I surveyed all LCMS pastors regarding weekly communion. Their members largely feared that weekly communion would make the Sacrament “too common.” This perspective grows out of the infrequent use of the full Divine Service in the history of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS).



LCMS communing statistics first appear in 1930 and report an average communion of 2.10 times a year per member. At that time, most congregations offered Communion four to six times a year. In 1950, 1970 and 1990, LCMS members communed on average 3.22, 5.91 and 8.44 times per year. Through these decades, most congregations increased offering the full Divine Service to at least twice a month. Many now also add the fifth Sunday and feast days.

In view of the significant absence of Holy Communion through these decades, the “too common” objection is quite predictable. Additionally, this sentiment is nearly guaranteed when the Sacrament is mistakenly understood as our work.

God’s work

Recall that Dr. Luther described as fanatical the perspective that views the Lord’s Supper as our work (LC V 7). Helpful and revealing questions about the Sacrament being “too common” should therefore be asked with Jesus as the subject, not us. “Does Jesus serving us His body and blood each week make it ordinary?” “Is anything ever common that our Lord Jesus Christ comes to do for us?”

Consider how people responded to Jesus’ deeds in Scripture. They did not view His healings and other miracles as common. They sought Him for more. People in the presence of Jesus did not view His feeding with earthly food as common. He fed 5,000 with the normal fare of daily diets. Yet “they were about to come and take him by force to make him king” (John 6:15). When Jesus withdrew, they pursued Him like a runaway vending machine. They hungered for more of His miracles. They would have joyfully received a greater frequency of His giving of daily bread.

Jesus warned them about their faulty hunger for bread that perishes: “You are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you” (John 6:26–27). The ascended Lord does not serve perishable food to His church today. What Jesus bestowed as the New Testament in His blood is holy food. This is forgiveness food and totally uncommon. This food is a miracle, a mighty work of the Son of God.

Greatest work and great work

On the night He gave the New Testament in His blood, Jesus said to His disciples, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father” (John 14:12). Jesus went to the Father by means of the greatest work of all — His crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. The greater works of Christ’s apostles and church came from Christ’s authority and by means of His sending the Holy Spirit (John 15:26–27; 16:7–14). Jesus said of the Spirit, “He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you” (John 16:14).

There were great miracles of healing done through the apostles in the days following Pentecost (Acts 5:12–16). These greater works magnify Jesus’ presence in the proclamation of His Gospel throughout the world. In these last days, His presence is no longer limited to His geographical location as during His three years of visible earthly ministry. Through the public preaching of Christ’s called servants and through Christians’ witness in their vocations, the great work of conversion has gone into all the world. So also, the greater works Jesus spoke of include the Holy Sacraments by which He promised eternal blessing. In these end times, Jesus’ greater works flow directly from His greatest work (Heb. 10:19–22). They include His Sacraments carried forth through His sent ones after His ascension.

On Easter Eve, the risen Christ sent His apostles to bestow the greater work of absolution (John 20:23). Before His ascension, He sent them to bestow the greater work of Holy Baptism (Matt. 28:16–20). Luther called this work of God an unspeakable treasure. The apostles proclaimed its miraculous power as a washing for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38), a gift that clothes one with Christ (Gal. 3:27), a gift that saves you (1 Peter 3:21) and a washing of rebirth (Titus 3:4–7). This gift directly connects the baptized to the central miracle of human history, the sacrificial death and the resurrection of the Son of God (Rom. 6:1–11). Nothing can make Holy Baptism common. Only a sinful disregard and dullness treats Baptism as common. Daily remembering and depending upon it makes it less common, not more.

Not a common gift

So also with the Lord’s Supper. The Holy Spirit led the infant church in devotion to this gift and to God’s Holy Word (Acts 2:42). There is nothing common about the Lord’s Supper. Jesus’ words of giving His body and bread, blood and wine, are what Dr. Luther called the sum and substance of the Gospel. He also said, “the entire Gospel and the article of the Creed — I believe in ... the holy Christian Church ... the forgiveness of sins, and so on — are embodied by the Word in this Sacrament and presented to us” (LC V 32). God holds nothing in reserve as His Son gives us His flesh and blood.

Sometimes, weekly worship and the weekly sermon may feel ordinary. The default setting of our sinful hearts treats God’s gifts as ordinary. The solution is not to let Jesus speak to us less or to gather the church less frequently (Heb. 10:24–25). The solution is repentance, turning from our work to Christ’s work in love for us.

“Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually! Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he uttered” (Psalm 105:4–5). The strength of the miracle of the Sacrament of the Altar is the judgment God uttered on the altar of the cross. He condemned His Son and redeemed us. In the Lord’s Supper, the crucified and risen Christ continues entering the world through His church with the fruits of His once-for-all sacrifice. This meeting of heaven with earth in the flesh of Jesus is so very uncommon (*LSB* 639:3).

Uncommon work, food, peace

At His altar, He does the uncommon work of a blessed exchange. As we sing, “All that you are we here receive, And all we are to You we give” (*LSB* 623:3). He exchanges His perfection for our sin, His righteousness for our unrighteousness. This is justification fully expressed. There is nothing more freeing and joy-filled for the week ahead.

At His Table, the Good Shepherd makes us to lie down in green pastures. His uncommon food satisfies those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. As we sing, “To pastures green, Lord, safely guide ... Your table well for me provide” (*LSB* 625:2), and “The gifts that You have given Have filled my heart with rest” (*LSB* 642:1). At His Table, our Good Shepherd provides the greatest rest and refreshment for the week ahead.

At His altar, Jesus gives us uncommon peace, peace the world cannot give. Jesus gives objective, outside-of-us peace with God. In Christ, God is at peace with you whether you feel it or not. As we sing, “O taste and see — the Lord is peace” (*LSB* 629:1), indeed, “Peace beyond all understanding” (*LSB* 636:5). The refuge of God’s peace in the Sacrament provides for the pressures of the coming week.

Food for dying

In His Supper, Jesus serves life-giving food that surpasses death. As we sing, “Where the paschal blood is poured, Death’s dread angel sheathes the sword” (*LSB* 633:3). “For You have freely given What earth could never buy, The bread of life from heaven, That now I shall not die” (*LSB* 642:2). “This food can death destroy” (*LSB* 642:3).

I have heard of members who expressed to their pastors: “If I knew I were going to die soon, I would want Holy Communion at least every week, perhaps even daily.” We are not promised tomorrow on earth, but now is the day of salvation. We are promised eternity with our Savior who comes to us on earth to prepare us body and soul for the new heavens and the new earth. God grant us to hunger and thirst for Jesus’ food that does not perish just as the crowd of 5000 pursued Jesus for earthly food.

About The Author

The Rev. Dr. Kenneth W. Wieting is a retired pastor and author of *The Blessings of Weekly Communion* and *Lutheranism 101 - The Lord's Supper*, both available from Concordia Publishing House.

Source: witness.lcms.org/2021/weekly-communion-too-common/

Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift” (2 Cor. 9:15)! This is St. Paul’s exclamation upon hearing the Corinthian church’s response to the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and his request for support for the church in Jerusalem. The Christians in Corinth heard and received God’s mercy in Christ, and they responded to St. Paul’s call to support Christians in Jerusalem with a collection. The Corinthians’ joy filled Jerusalem’s need.

This is the reality of stewardship. Because of God’s generosity in the giving of His Son to die on the cross for us, we are to be generous with all that we receive from Him. What do we receive? Everything. All that we are and all that we have is the Lord’s. He is the creator and the giver. We are His creatures and those who receive what He gives.

It sounds easy. And it is. But then again it isn’t. Stewardship is easy because it is God’s work. Through what God gives, we give to others. Through what God gives, we support the work of the church for the life of the world. He gives; we receive. And like our generous Father in Heaven, we, as His children, use what He gives to us to love and serve others.

But stewardship is also difficult. That is because it goes against our natural inclination to think that what I have is mine to do what I want with. This is our sinful nature. It is our selfishness and our greed. How can we who have been given everything — life, food, clothing, house, home, forgiveness, divine sonship, an eternal inheritance — be so stingy with what we give to the church, the place where we hear about and receive all that God gives us and does for us? We are all guilty of this kind of thinking. And the only godly response is to repent and trust in the Gos-pel.

For if God has given you His own Son, will He not give you all things? Yes. He will. This is His sure and certain promise. God provides for His people. He provides everything we need for this body and life and for



Watch for it! It will arrive the
first week in August!

Contact us!

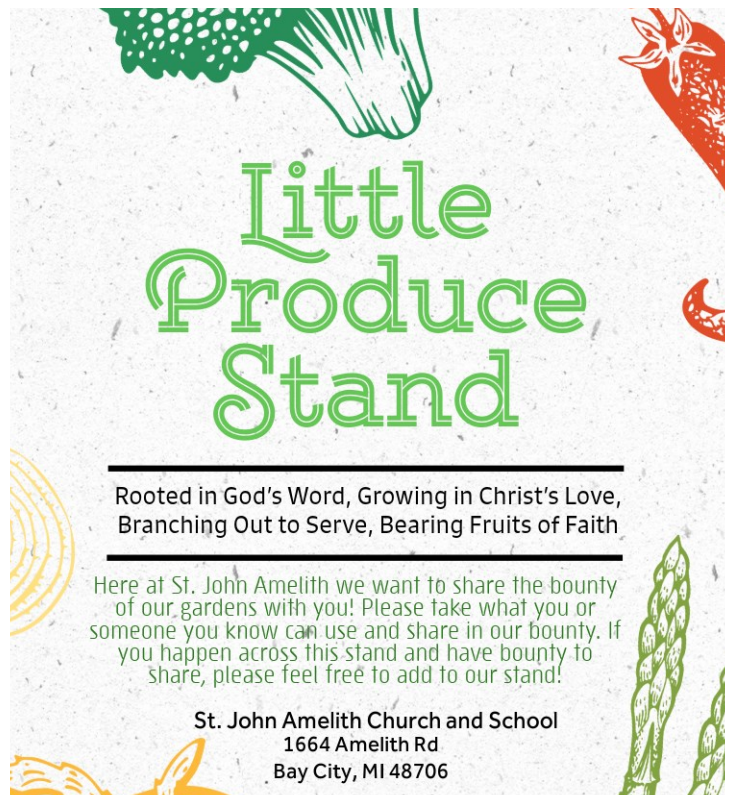
1664 Amelith Rd

Bay City, MI 48706

989-686-0176

office@amelith.org

www.amelith.org



Please join us in welcoming our new teachers to SJA!

Thank you to the hiring committee for all of your hard work!



My name is Heather Bukowski. I am going to be teaching kindergarten here at St. John's Amelith. With over 12 years of teaching experience, I hold a Bachelor Degree in Elementary Education along with an Early Childhood Endorsement. I then continued my education at Oakland University where I completed my Master's Degree in Reading and Literacy. I am excited to be a part of St. John's Amelith! Kindergarten is my passion and I cannot wait to share my passion for teaching with others. As a teacher, I am committed to creating a fun, safe, and inclusive learning environment for all students. I believe that every child has the potential to succeed and it's my job to help them reach their full potential. My goal as a teacher is to inspire my students to become lifelong learners and critical thinkers. I hope to inspire my students as it was my own kindergarten teacher that inspired me to become a teacher.



I was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan. attended school in Michigan until junior year of high school. My family moved to Tennessee and that is where I graduated. I moved back to Michigan after high school and married my high school sweetheart. We had 4 children and I stayed home to take care of them for 10 years until I went to college to become a math and chemistry teacher. I was hired to teach 7th grade math at the local school district and went on to become the department chair. We were able to write a grant to improve math and science. Using the grant money, we brought the science and math MEAP scores up to the 90th percentile. Ellen is going to be the 5/6 homeroom teacher. She will be teaching math and science for grades 5-8.

Dear St. John Amelith Members

God has blessed us tremendously, and continues to look down upon our school with his blessings. We have hired 4 teachers so far, with one being a principal/ teacher position. A couple of our teachers are very involved with STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) which is an approach to education that focuses on the hard sciences, develops critical thinking skills, and improves problem solving abilities. This puts our students in a good solid path for high school and future learning. We are waiting on a few parents to make their final decision to enroll their child/children. The teachers' salaries depend on tuition and fundraisers so we are praying that . The school has secured new 2024 curriculum to ensure the children are receiving the newest education possible. The school has also secured new 2024 religion curriculum from Pastor Gauthier to ensure that each grade is instructed in religion. The school is committed to bringing fun and new activities to the children's day. The front lobby décor is being enhanced a bit, and our dedication to school safety has taken on a whole new look. Thank you to all who helped make the tutor program such a success last year! We are going to continue that for the 2024/2025 school year and need your help. The tutor program would begin mid-September and you don't need to have teaching experience just patience and love to help those that really need you. If interested in becoming a tutor let Molly know by calling the office or emailing office@amelith.org. She will be compiling a list with names, times available, and subjects. Included you will find bios of the four teachers and their photographs. We have an interview scheduled for a 1st/2nd grade teacher and will make final decisions once the parents we reach out to give us their final decision. School registration will be August 8th at 6 pm for families to pick up new parent handbooks and sign up for new activities. School starts August 20th with a half day. On August 22, there will be school orientation in the gym beginning at 6 pm. We are also coordinating a meet your teacher night in the future. Any questions please feel free to reach out.

God's blessing. St. John Amelith School Board

Rooted in God's Word, Growing in Christ's Love, Branching Out to Serve, Bearing Fruits of Faith

LWML is collecting school supplies for Orphan Grain Train which are sent to places where even the few required school supplies may be more than a family can afford. The list of supplies are on the poster board in the gathering area. Get what you can find on sale - you don't need to furnish a complete kit. LWML is supplying all of the cinch up backpack bags. There will be a container for these items under the hangers in the gathering area until our meeting to assemble the school bags on September 17th. Thank you for your help. You are blessing many children in need.



SCHOOL KITS

CONTENTS

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 backpack | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 ruler |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 spiral notebooks | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 glue sticks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 pencils | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 scissors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 pens | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 eraser |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 sheets of construction paper | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 package colored pencils (12 count) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 package crayons (24 count) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pencil sharpener |

ASSEMBLY

1. Stack flat items together.
2. Place all items inside school bag.
3. Close bag if applicable.

PLEASE NOTE

- Backpacks, drawstring athletic bags, or homemade tote bags are all acceptable.
- We recommend leaving contents in the original packaging, but it is not required.
- No additions, deletions, or substitutions.
- Do not add money, photos, or personal notes.
- Do not include items with religious, camouflage, patriotic or military symbols.
- Pack only new or gently used items.
- Do not include plastic bags.
- It costs an average of \$11 to ship each box of kits. Please consider a donation to your local OGT branch to help with shipping.

Although well-meaning variations are tempting, please do not do this. It may result in heavy fines and/or the entire shipment being confiscated by customs officials.



Thank you for making a difference in these children's lives. Your love of your Savior, Jesus Christ, is sent with each kit packaged. May God continue to bless your life as you serve Him.