

OCC Spiritual Impact stories

CONGO

The parents of a 12-year-old boy named Bakatwamba could not afford to buy him a school bag, so he had to use a paper bag. In his Operation Christmas Child gift box was a brand new school bag! The gift encouraged him to continue with school and also to enroll in Bible lessons. As a result, he has received Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. When he graduated from the discipleship program and received his certificate, his whole family became interested in the Lord, and now they have all started attending a local church.

–Samaritan's Purse ministry partner

INDIA

"My mother died when I was 8 years old and my father remarried. He and my step mom did not take good care of me, so I was a very unhappy girl. My friend told me she is happy because she goes to church, so I decided to go to church with her every Sunday.

"The first time I went to church there was a big gift box waiting for me. I'm the only one in the Sunday school who got a gift. The other children told me they got their boxes last year.

"Real happiness came to my life after I started to learn about God and the relationship between God and me. I learned how to pray for my needs. I started praying that my step mom would treat me well, and within a few weeks my step mom started to change and treat me better.

"Jesus helped me through the Bible lessons to deal with my problems. No idols have helped me for the last 10 years even though I offered prayers to them. Jesus is my God, and He is the only God who will not only help me but also change people."

–T. Buvaneshvari, 9th grade

IRAQ

"Through the lessons, my faith in Jesus Christ became stronger and my life changed and I accepted Him as my Savior."

–Nora, age 13

NICARAGUA

"Hi brethren, I want to thank you for your loving care of our children by giving them the Operation Christmas Child gifts. They are happy for the gifts they received, and this was a good way to bring them to our church. Now I'm teaching them the Bible lessons. This has been a great blessing to me, because through them I'm also acquiring more knowledge and the children are happy for the lessons too. Always when they complete a lesson they ask me when we will study the next one."

–Askenaz Marin, Bible club teacher

PARAGUAY

"I'm very grateful along with my classmates for the beautiful gifts that we received from Operation Christmas Child, but the most wonderful thing was to meet Jesus. In the lessons I learned that He died on the cross for me. I got chills when I learned how much He suffered for me. Now I keep talking to others about Jesus, telling them how much God loves them. Some of my friends have already trusted Jesus as their Savior."

–Maribel, age 14

PHILIPPINES

Ronald Gabido had been praying for a pair of shoes when his younger brother came home with a neatly-wrapped box filled with school supplies and black sneakers. The shoes were too big, so he gave them to Ronald.

Ronald wore the shoes during the remainder of high school, throughout college, and during his first year working as a teacher. Although holes now dot the soles after several years of use, the shoes still remind him of God's faithfulness.

"I am so thankful that God answered my prayers," Ronald said. "It was the grace of God that led that box to my brother."

–ministry staff

SRI LANKA

"I received a shoe box gift and enrolled to do the Bible lessons soon after the tsunami affected our home. I was able to finish the lessons with the help of my teacher. I love Jesus who gave new life to us after the disaster."

–J. V. Veronica

TOGO

Mawuena is one of 13 children. Born into a polygamous family, the children have the same father but different mothers. Mawuena did not feel loved by his father as much as the other children. His father had rejected Mawuena's mom too because she is a Christian. The young boy went with his mother to church, and it was there that a miracle happened. He received a shoe box gift that day and rushed home to open it in front of his brothers and sisters. Among the items inside was writing stationery that he had pleaded for his father to buy him. The father was astonished when he saw the box contained some of the same items his son wanted. This brought newfound respect to Mawuena and his mother. Now they boldly go to church and worship the Lord.

–ministry partner

UGANDA

"There are 80 of us who took part in the Bible school in Kyeey. I am an orphan and felt very alone. Nobody loved me. Through the lessons I learned and accepted that I have a father in heaven, our God the Father. I do not feel small and alone now because I am a child of God. I am a part of God's kingdom and family. I also thank my grandparents who have helped me with my school fees. I am in primary 3. I promised God that I will try my best to obey Him. I surrendered my life and will serve Him throughout my life. May God continue to bless you."

–Lillian

UKRAINE

"Thank you for the lessons and the gifts that you sent me. I go to church with my mother. My father was in prison, and for a long time my mother and I prayed for him. When someone from church went to visit him, he repented and received in his heart Jesus Christ, and now he is at home and we all go to church together. When I receive your lessons, I read them with my mother and father."

–Alina, age 12