



Christmas Angel Flight Manual

Christmas Angel Ministry

St. Ignatius Loyola ~ Spring, Texas

2009 Edition



Welcome, Christmas Angels!

Thank you for opening your hearts to a special family in need of your help! We encourage all Angels to begin with a quick prayer for God's guidance as you prepare to help your assigned family this Christmas season.

We hope you will find this "Flight Manual" helpful as you begin your work as an Angel. **For our Returning Angels, please review the "What every Angel needs to know & do" page for updated logistical details.** If you are new to the Christmas Angel Ministry, you will find lots of information and ideas here and on our web page.

Angels will deliver gifts and food to the Christus Center on Saturday, December 12, between 8 AM and noon.

Please take a moment to mark your calendars now before it is forgotten amidst the Christmas rush.

We have included answers to some of our most Frequently Asked Questions on our web page. If you have other questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact us.

24 hours a day, 7 days a week, You can e-mail questions, comments, and suggestions to: christmasangels@sbcglobal.net (This address is checked at least once daily from October 1 - December 14.)

Additional information is available on the Internet.

Go to <http://www.ignatiusloyola.org/>, select **Outreach** then **Christmas Angels** ministry.

Christmas Angel Coordinator, Luci: 281-376-8117



What every Angel needs to know & do!

Checklist:

- Wrap and tag ALL gifts.** Individual gifts should include the person's name only. Remember not to sign your name.
- Remember to include **gift receipts**. Make returns easier by ALWAYS getting a gift receipt. They can be included with each gift or simply put them all in an envelope. Gift receipts are needed at most stores if an item needs to be returned. Remember to ask the cashier for a gift receipt BEFORE purchases are rung up. If you can't get a gift receipt, pay in cash, and include the store receipt. This will protect your personal information (no credit card info or names).
- SEAL envelopes containing gift cards, gift receipts, etc. and LABEL with the Family Number and Mom or Dad's name.** Include these in a sealed box/container with other gifts or food.
- Mark "**Open before Christmas**" any specific boxes or envelopes that are appropriate for the family to open prior to Christmas such as food, gift cards for dinner, decorations, etc.
- Combine all gifts and/or food into larger containers or boxes** which will easily fit into a car. This is very important in order to facilitate drop-off and pick-up.
- Count and then label each container/box and all loose gifts in the upper-right corner with your Family Assignment's number and the item number.** Example: I have 2 boxes of food, 2 boxes with multiple gifts inside, a gift bag with gift inside, and a large gift wrapped, so the total item count is 6. My family assignment is #23. Each of the listed items would then have a label of Family #23 – Item __ of 6 in the upper-right corner. The gift bag and large wrapped gift would also include a label with the person's name.

Special Notes:

- ✓ *Please, please, please – no alcohol, tobacco products, medicines, or drugs of any kind.*
- ✓ *No cash.*
- ✓ *Remain anonymous – make sure all receipts, boxes, and other items do not have your name or address.*
- ✓ *Avoid electronics and items requiring batteries. Video game systems aren't much fun without multiple games to play, and children will not be able to play together. Replacement batteries are also expensive for families.*
- ✓ *Avoid toys and games that are violent or promote violence. This includes toy guns, most video games, and toys that glorify war, killing, etc.*
- ✓ *Important Final thoughts...All families will pick up their gifts at the same time. Consider packaging things in boxes or containers so the amount is not so obvious to others. We want everyone to leave feeling equally important.*



If you are providing Christmas Dinner...

Shopping List: Food

Cultural traditions vary. If you know the cultural preferences of your family, use that as your guide. If not, here are some suggestions.

A few things to keep in mind:

- **No perishables** (anything frozen or requiring refrigeration)
- **Absolutely NO alcohol, tobacco products (including cigarettes, cigars, pipes, etc), nor any other drug or medicine of any kind.**
- **No candles** (no one wants a Christmas fire)
- Sometimes Angels purchase enough food for more than one meal for families with exceptional circumstances...staples such as rice, pasta, sugar, flour, cereals, soup, peanut butter, canned fruits and vegetables, cooking oil are always welcome, especially while children are home from school and not receiving government-subsidized breakfasts and lunches.

Christmas Dinner Suggestions

- Gift card for purchase of frozen turkey or ham and perishables
- Instant potatoes and can/jar gravy
- Cranberry sauce or equivalent
- Cornbread mix
- Canned vegetables or fruit
- Stuffing mix
- Dessert item (cookie or cake mix), candy canes
- Family size bottles of cider, cranberry juice, etc
- Ingredients to complete mixes, etc.

Other ideas for Christmas Dinner Celebration: (Optional)

- Festive paper plates, napkins
- Sturdy plastic flatware (forks, knives, spoons)

NOTE: Combine food items into a box or container which will easily fit into a car. This is very important to facilitate drop-off and pick-up.



If you are providing Christmas gifts...

Gift Ideas:

Most families will give you ideas of what their children (or adults) in the house might like. This is only meant as a guide...the choice is yours. If you are at a loss for ideas, here are a few to get you started.

***Please avoid toys with batteries, if possible. They are expensive to replace and toys are unusable without them.**

For very young children (under 18 months)

- Baby toys that stimulate the brain (bright colors, shapes, textures)
- Cloth and board books
- Diapers, sleepers, blankets, etc

**Avoid things with small pieces like eyes on stuffed animals or sharp corners or edges*

For toddlers and preschoolers (18 months – 3 years)

- Toddler toys like Little People that allow kids to play together
- Simple puzzles (big pieces)
- Board books
- Baby dolls and stuffed animals
- Trucks and cars
- Blocks

**Children under 3 should not have things with small pieces (like eyes on stuffed animals) or sharp edges or corners. Quality plastic cars & trucks are a good choice.*

For school-age children (4 – 10 years)

- Cars and trucks
- Board games
- Fun books appropriate for the age range
- Dolls, hair items, jewelry
- Building sets
- Basketball, soccer ball, football, etc
- Art supplies

For pre-teens/teens (11 – 18 years)

- Gift cards for Old Navy, McDonalds, Payless, etc
- Sports equipment (baseball, soccer ball, basketball, or football)
- Jewelry, purse, nail polish, etc

NOTE: Combine all wrapped gifts into a box or container which will easily fit into a car. This is very important to facilitate drop-off and pick-up.



If you are providing Christmas gifts (continued)

Clothing ideas:

Not all families will need clothing, but remember how great it is to have something new for Christmas? Fancy is not necessary – something a little more practical will get a lot more mileage.

Remember to ask for gift receipts, so you can include for return if needed. This protects your identity and makes it easy for your special family to get just the right thing.

Basic Clothing Ideas (especially for kids)

- Jeans/Pants
- Sweatshirt/Sweater/Hooded Sweatshirt to wear as a jacket
- Underwear
- Socks
- Shoes - Note: We have found that children's shoe needs are best handled with a gift card to a shoe store, such as Payless. Some past Angels have also purchased socks to wrap with the gift card and included a little note, "Pick out a new pair of shoes and have a wonderful Christmas!" (Just remember *not* to sign the note...angels appear and disappear without a trace.)
- Gift cards for shoes or clothes (Old Navy, Payless, JCPenney, Walmart, Kohls, Target, etc)

Additional Gift Ideas from Past Angels:

- A book for each child in addition to gift request
- Backpack/Book bags for each child (sized according to age) with wrapped gift inside
- Basic toiletries for each child – toothbrush, etc. added to their gifts
- Stockings for each child filled with small items
- A small table tree w/ decorations (some are handmade by children)
- A "Family Gift" of a book of the Christmas story, a small crèche or small tree
- Wrapped gifts placed in lidded storage containers for later use as storage – Should be small enough to fit into a car.
- Something "personal" for Mom, Dad or Grandma...they never ask for anything. Possibilities: Watch, shirt, sweater, blanket or throw
- Crock pot with basic cookbook for working parents
- A "Family Box" towel, soap, toiletries for each family member
- A "Family Box" with TP, diapers, or laundry and cleaning supplies
- A "Family Box" with board games, balls or art supplies or books
- A "Family Box" with blankets, throws or sheets if size is known (often they have few)
- A "Family Envelope" with gift cards to the movies, McDonald's or other (They seldom have anything for a special family night out)



If you have a family listed as *Significant Need*, you might consider:

Shopping List: Household & Family

Not every family will need household supplies, but you may want to include some of the following items as *food stamps cannot be used for cleaning supplies and paper products*. The lists below can be used as a guide if you are struggling for ideas.

Basic Toiletries – for each member of the family

- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Deodorant
- Soap
- Shampoo
- Towels
- Diapers
- Toilet paper

Basic Cleaning Supplies

- Surface cleaner
- Window/glass cleaner
- Floor cleaner
- Toilet cleaner
- Laundry detergent (keep in mind, this may need to be carried to a community laundry facility)

Gift Ideas for the family as a whole

- Blankets, sheets, towels
- Books (age-appropriate for kids in household)
- Board games (age-appropriate for kids in household)
- Gift cards for Walmart, Target, Old Navy, etc for doing their own Christmas shopping
- McDonalds, Burger King, Wendy's, etc gift cards
- Gift cards to drug or grocery store for cold/flu medicines
- Gift cards to grocery store for additional food beyond Christmas dinner

The above items are mentioned as possible suggestions to help their budget.

NOTE: Combine all wrapped gifts into a box or container which will easily fit into a car. This is very important to facilitate drop-off and pick-up.



Ways to make it special and other great ideas...

- **If you have children, let them get involved.**
 - Shopping list: They can help decide what other children might need or enjoy. This can be a wonderful teaching tool.
 - Wrapping: Spend a family evening wrapping and tagging your purchases
 - Cards & decorations: Encourage them to make special cards, drawings, or simple decorations to include with your gifts. *Please ensure they do not sign their name.*
 - Delivering: Children can help deliver the gifts...what a wonderful example you are setting of giving.
- You can be Angels with your extended family, friends, neighbors or co-workers. Make this a fun time while **encouraging others to open their hearts**. We know one group that meets for lunch and each member brings a gift from the family's list. Another has family members bring a gift to Thanksgiving dinner.
- Some of our families even **involve extended family** outside our area who arrive early for the holidays and help shop and wrap...or, they send a check so you can shop for them...let them be a part of the Christmas Angel spirit.
- **To save money**, shop using coupons, ads, and sales. You may even be able to get an extra-special deal by contacting stores who may be willing to donate all or part of your purchase.
- **Create a budget and a list and stick to them.** Creating a budget and a list BEFORE you go shopping will help you not overspend AND make sure you're getting what your family/individual really needs.
- **Remember to save receipts and other documentation for tax purposes!** Your gifts are tax-deductible (see your tax advisor for specifics pertaining to your situation), but you need to ensure you have the right documentation to support it.
- **Be Christmas Angels every day** throughout the season by giving God's best gifts to those you meet...a smile or hug, a prayer or a kind word, a helping hand, a listening ear or a caring heart for someone God puts in your path.
- Finally, **pray for your special assignment.** They are in a difficult period of their lives. What could you do for them that is more important? Some of our Angels pray daily (from Christmas to Christmas) for their assignments.

E-mail us with special things you have done so we can share them with other Angels and expand the possibilities!

Still have questions....review the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on our web page. Go to <http://www.ignatiusloyola.org/>, select **Outreach** then **Christmas Angels** ministry.