



Children often come into foster care with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Journey Bags are backpacks filled with personal items for them to use when they are abruptly taken out of their homes. The goal of Journey Bags is to bless these kids and let them know that they are loved, prayed for, and remembered!

**Before you begin, please consider:**

- **Only Brand New Backpacks/Bags and Items**
- **No items with Business Logos**
- **Toiletry items should be sealed in Zip-lock bags**
- **Perishable food items are not recommended**
- **To maintain consistency for all children receiving bags, please fill bags fully**
- **Mark CLOTHING SIZES and SEASON (fall/winter/etc.) on tag**

~Here is an **example** of how one church organized this project. **Customize as needed.**~

1. Announcement was made to the church body about upcoming Journey Bag project
2. Every age bracket was broken down into five categories
  - Ages 0-2 **\*\*Note: Diaper Bags are recommended for this age group**
  - Ages 3-4
  - Ages 5-7
  - Ages 8-12
  - Ages 13+
3. 80 Eastport Mesh Backpacks were purchased from Walmart.com for \$9.00 each. 40 pink (girls), 20 brown & gray (for boys)

**4. Every bag was labeled with laminated color-coordinated labels and then attached to each bag.**

- For example: white Avery #8160 label typed with “Girl 0-2 years,” attached to PINK construction paper, or “Boys 5-7 years,” attached to BLUE construction paper, laminated, hole punched, attached ring and put a tag on each bag.



**TFI STRONGLY RECOMMENDS LAMINATING/ATTACHING ALL LABELS**

It makes it very convenient for an agency worker to grab the needed bag.

Other types of labels often fall apart or off the bags.

**5. Instructions and age-appropriate list of items were placed in front pocket of each bag.**

**Sample Letter/List A: Filling Bags Individually**

*We are going to be filling Journey Bags, which provides personal belongings and comforting items for children entering foster care or being transitioned into new foster homes. Often these children must leave everything they called their own behind.*

*Thank you for filling this bag for a child in foster care. Please return filled bag to (this location) by (this date).*

*The most important “item” of all is your prayers. Please pray for these children that they will feel loved by Jesus and comforted in their time of great difficulty.*



## Sample Letter/List B: Filling Bags as a Group

**Another (more cost-effective) option is to work together to fill bags (Sunday school classes, small groups, etc.) where each person brings only one or two items.**

We are going to be filling Journey Bags, which will provide personal belongings and comforting items for children entering foster care or being transitioned into new foster homes. Often these children must leave everything they called their own behind.

Thank you for bringing \_\_\_\_\_ (ex. Shampoo/ body wash) \_\_\_\_\_ for a \_\_\_\_\_ (ex. Boy) \_\_\_\_\_ age \_\_\_\_\_ (ex. 13+) \_\_\_\_\_ to Sunday School by CERTAIN DATE. May God bless your kindness!

The most important "item" of all is your prayers. Please pray for these children that they will feel loved by Jesus and comforted in their time of great difficulty.

## Share your Story

*"Last night at midnight three precious little beauties showed up on my doorstep. They each had with them a blanket, a stuffed animal, and a book bag....their Journey Bags. I kept waiting for more, anything more, but nothing came. The investigator told me this was all they had. Our 5 year old had come with shoes which were so bad they had to be thrown away, one of our two year olds had no shoes, the other two year old had two left shoes. When I asked about getting anything out of the home the investigator said it just wasn't going to be possible. The kids had nothing. Their worldly possessions consisted of Journey Bags. As I stared at those bags I began to cry. What if no one took the time to fill those bags and deliver them? What would our children have then? Absolutely nothing. Nothing to claim as their own, nothing to protect or cherish. Thank you for all you do. Thank you for my kiddos' Journey Bags."*

*Heather, Foster mom*

Thank you for being a part of more stories like Heather's! Let us know if you are filling Journey Bags so we can pray for you and celebrate with you!

## To share your story:

**BY WEB:** [www.theforgotteninitiative.org](http://www.theforgotteninitiative.org) & click Share your Story

or

**BY EMAIL:** [info@theforgotteninitiative.org](mailto:info@theforgotteninitiative.org)



## LIST OF POSSIBLE ITEMS TO INCLUDE IN JOURNEY BAGS

<b>Age 0 - 2</b>	<b>Ages 3 - 4</b>	<b>Ages 5 - 7</b>	<b>Ages 8 - 12</b>
<b>**Note: Diaper Bags instead of Back Packs</b>			
Baby Wash	Baby Wash	Shampoo/Body Wash	Shampoo/Body Wash
Desitin	Tooth Paste & Tooth Brush	Tooth Paste & Tooth Brush	Tooth Paste & Tooth Brush
Socks	Socks	Socks	Socks
Sleepers	Pajamas	Pajamas	Pajamas
Onesies	Tee Shirt (s)	Tee Shirt (s)	Tee Shirt(s)
Cuddly Baby Blanket	Cuddly Blanket or Pillow	Underwear	Underwear
Bottles	Sippy Cup	Hair Brush/Comb/Barrettes	Hair Brush/Comb/Barrettes
Baby Wipes	Baby Wipes	Coloring Book/Crayons	Game/Activity
Stuffed Toy	Stuffed Animal	Stuffed Animal	Disposable Camera
Sweat Shirt/Sweat Pants	Sweat Shirt/Sweat Pants	Sweat Shirt/Sweat Pants	Deodorant
Lotion	Lotion	Lotion	Lotion
Rattles	Small toy	Notebook/Pens	Notebook/Pens
Books	Books	Books	Books
Outlet Covers	Outlet Covers	Small toy	Small toy
Cabinet Locks	Cabinet Locks	Card Game	Card Game
Teethers	Coloring Books/Crayons	Lip Gloss/Chap stick	Lip Gloss/Chap stick
Hair Ties/Barrettes	Hair Ties/Barrettes		Hats/Gloves
Hats/Gloves	Hats/Gloves	Hats/Gloves	Snacks
Snacks	Snacks	Snacks	Small Photo Album
Small Photo Album	Small Photo Album	Small Photo Album	Flip Flops
	Flip Flops	Flip Flops	
<b>Ages 13+</b>			
Shampoo/Body Wash	Lotion		
Tooth Paste & Tooth Brush	Folders		
Socks	Books		
Pajamas	Nerf toy/ball		
Tee Shirt (s)	Card Games		
Underwear	Lip Gloss/Chap stick		
Hair Brush/Comb/Barrettes	Hats/Gloves		
Journal/Pens	Snacks		
Disposable Camera	Small Photo Album		
Deodorant	Flip Flops		