

College Care Packages

We do this twice a year – before Christmas break and before summer break. Be sure to mail them out early enough that they are received before students leave campus. Find out when your students have finals and try to arrange for them to receive their packages right before then.

What you will need:

A small, Flat Rate USPS shipping boxes. You will need one for each college student you are sending packages to.

Card Stock cut in 1/2

Markers

Craft Supplies

Half sheet shipping labels to print the labels

Clear Shipping Tape

Prepare:

Collect names and addresses of college students in your parish. I put a blurb in the church bulletin and send an email to previous youth group students in that age range. I set up a Google form that they can easily fill out so I have all the information (Name, School, Address, allergies, last day of school for Christmas break and Summer break)

Get Flat Rate shipping boxes from local post office. If you need more than a handful, order them on USPS.com for free. Allow a few weeks to get these in.

A day or 2 before this youth night, go to USPS.com and create the Flat Rate labels and pre-pay, then print. Trust me, your local post office will be thrilled if they do not have to scan and create labels for all of your packages! I didn't know this my first year and the lady working had to scan over 80 boxes. She was not happy.

Let your youth group families know what supplies you would like donated for these care packages. Here is a list of some of the items we ask for:

Chapstick	Granola Bars	Gum	Candy
Hot chocolate Mix	Small Snacks	Band aides	Fruit snacks
Mug Cake Mix	Oatmeal Packs	Gas Cards	Hand Lotion
YMCA Day Passes	Nail Kits	Phone chargers	

Create some samples of cards or encouragement for the students to use for inspiration

Decide on a handmade gift that the students can make to add to the packages and purchase needed supplies for it. Make a prototype beforehand. Some suggestions:

[Lanyard](#)

[1st Aid Kit](#)

[Bedside Caddy](#)

[Friendship Bracelet](#)

[Rosary Keychain](#)

[Knotted Rosary](#)

[Rosary Bracelet](#)

[Necklace](#)

[Bookmarks](#)

College Care Packages Agenda

Prayer: Lord, We pray that, while they are away, our college friends will have eyes to see You and ears to hear You as they navigates big decisions about their majors, internships, relationships and futures. Please bring clarity to their decisions and bring peace as they make those decisions. Help them to seek Your will above their own. Help them to know the purpose You have for them. Help them to be patient as You reveal Your perfect will for them and help them to lean not on their own understanding but to trust in You with all of their hearts. Help them to discern when others are speaking wisdom from You. Open doors widely and close them loudly as You lead them. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Announcements: Let your youth group know of any upcoming events, youth nights, or other activities they should be aware of

SAY: Today, we are going to make a care package for our college age parishioners. We will be sending these out to them to remind them that their Church Community is thinking about them. The goal is to send them some items that will help ease any homesickness and let them know we care about them.

Divide the Youth Group into smaller groups to work. I let them choose their groups as much as possible. Sometimes they need to be moved around for a better fit. I also play some youth friendly music while they work.

Card Making: This group will need ½ sheets of cardstock folded in half (so they have a ¼ sheet card), markers, and the samples.

Box Makers: This group will fold up the boxes to get them ready to fill. Have them tape all of the sides to make sure they stay together, but tell them not to seal anything.

Crafters: This group will make the handmade item to go into the box. They will need all the supplies for the craft.

Box fillers: This group will divide up the donated items and add them to the boxes. Be sure to have an adult supervise. I found this group to pocket some of the snacks on occasion.

Inspectors/Sealers: This can be the same group as the box makers. They will inspect the boxes to make sure they have the donated items, a card, and a homemade gift, then tape them up. They should also add a shipping label. This group is also responsible for making sure any college student with allergies does not get anything containing the allergen.

Depending on the number of boxes needing done and the number of students I have working on them, we will sometimes take 2 youth nights to work on these. However, if you are done early, find a quick game idea [here](#).