

2019 NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE HANDBOOK



READ
to me

INSPIRE ME TO LEARN
OCTOBER 21-27, 2019



NATIONAL CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY.
WHERE LOVE LEADS TO ACTION

National Christ Child Society 2019 National Day of Service Handbook

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Introduction

November 2, 2016 marked the 150th birthday of our foundress, Mary Virginia Merrick. To honor her, National Christ Child Society invited all chapters to participate in a national day of service. Working together nationally to make a difference locally seemed the perfect opportunity to honor our founder's legacy. In 2016 and 2017 we joined the Points of Light organization and participated in their annual Make a Difference Day (MDDAY) campaign for our National Day of Service. In 2018, the Points of Light Foundation discontinued MDDAY and NCCS decided to continue our own National Day of Service (NDS) recognizing that there is value in telling our story on a National level while continuing to honor Mary Virginia Merrick's birthday.

Our previous themes have been:

2016 – "Layettes of Love"

2017 – "Make a Difference: Read to Me"

2018 – "Make a Difference: Read to Me"

This year's theme will be: "Read to Me: Inspire Me to Learn". We have extended the National Day of Service participation dates from Monday, October 21 to Sunday, October 27, 2019. Feel free to use the date(s) that work best for your chapter.

We hope all chapters will come together to participate this year to show our strength as a national organization, engage our membership, tell our story and make a difference locally while showing our impact nationally!

Purpose

A national day of service provides chapters with an opportunity to tell the Christ Child Society story on a national and local level. Our first three years saw many Christ Child Society chapters featured in local newspapers and Church bulletins before and after their participation in NDS. We hope to expand press coverage into more media markets each year. Not only is this a great way to tell your chapter's story, it is a great opportunity for member recruitment, community engagement and fundraising. It also provides a way to energize and recommit current volunteers.

The National Christ Child Society has been making a difference in the lives of children in need for over 130 years. It is time to make our presence known by raising awareness of the national organization as a federation of chapters with local impact in 45 communities.

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How to Participate

Our theme for 2019 will be ***Read to Me: Inspire Me to Learn***. We encourage chapters to focus on an existing literacy program or to test the waters by adding a literacy component to an existing program or project. According to a 2012 report by the Brookings Institution, less than half of poor children show up to school prepared with the early math and reading skills, emotional and behavioral control, and physical well-being needed to be ready to learn, and that disadvantage persists into adulthood. The report continues, “children with higher levels of school readiness at age five are generally more successful in grade school, less likely to drop out of high school, and earn more as adults, even after adjusting for differences in family background.”

Much of this disadvantage has been attributed to what researchers call the “word gap.” Higher-income parents spend nearly a half hour more per day engaged in direct, face-to-face, *reading* time with their children than low-income parents do, and by the time these children are 5 years old, they will have heard 30 million fewer words than their more “read to” peers.

Because the word gap first appears during periods of critical neurological and cognitive development, its effects cannot be easily remedied by later interventions. Teachers, standards, technology, even those hallowed halls of ivy—none of this matters as much to a child’s educational and economic future than informed and empowered parents, guardians, and care givers. NCCS has developed and provided chapters with the *Read to Me* card in order to help start each child we serve on the road to literacy and learning.

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To help you promote your chapter's involvement in our National Day of Service initiative, we are providing a promotion kit including a number of resources:

1. Graphics for print, social media and website use
2. Social media tips, sample posts and graphics (optimally sized for the platform)
 - Facebook (cover, posts and event page)
 - Instagram
 - Twitter
3. Constant contact/email graphic
4. Bulletin/web announcements
5. Email invitation
6. Customizable flyer for local chapters
7. Press release (national; local chapters can insert their own details)
8. Guidance for speaking with the press, including Q&A
9. Day-of promotion suggestions
10. Photo release forms

The [NCCS Read to Me: Inspire Me to Learn 2019 Promotion Kit](#) can be downloaded from our website on the National Day of Service Page under the "News and Events" tab.

We are excited to announce that all chapters participating in the 2019 National Day of Service will be **eligible for a \$500 award**. The winning chapter must use the award to promote literacy by purchasing books or adding an interactive learning component to an existing program. All chapters participating in the National Day of Service will be required to submit a National Day of Service Participation Report to NCCS prior to the established deadline to be eligible for the award.

Judging criteria will be based in part on:

- Participation during the designated time period and relation of activity to the theme
- Submission of quality photos and/or video
- The number of children and families served along with the impact you made
- Community involvement and support
- Testimonials received from volunteers and clients served
- Thorough completion of the National Day of Service Report prior to the established deadline - you will need to track certain items to complete the report so make sure you review the report prior to your event to ensure you are prepared such as number of volunteers, volunteer hours, number of children served, donations received, etc.

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Ideas for *Read to Me: Inspire me to Learn* Activities

Below are a number of ideas for activities that chapters could do—but it is by no means an exhaustive list and should not limit your creativity! The most important thing is to make sure whatever you choose to do WORKS for YOUR CHAPTER. Our chapters vary in size, and locality, so what activity (or activities) works for one chapter may not work for another.

1. Add a literacy component to an existing program

At the **Pittsburgh, PA Chapter's** annual coat closet distribution, they set up a "Book Nook" where the children could read books while they waited to be fitted for their coats. They were allowed to pick one book and a bookmark to take home with them. The moms and dads accompanying them helped choose the books most suited to their reading level.

The Tucson, AZ Chapter worked with the Diamond Children's Cancer Research Hospital in Tucson. Because they support the Neonatal Unit with Layette's, they have a great community relationship with them. Members went to the hospital with Halloween Goodie Bags of Reading and Activity Books, Crayons, Pencils and Puzzles. They also gave out more books during the day. The members, some dressed in costumes, read to the children, talked with them and their families, and did small puppet shows.

The Annapolis, MD Chapter partnered with their Backpack Buddies program to include a book in every backpack that went home over the weekend of one weekend in October.

The Cleveland, OH Chapter's enthusiastic volunteers created 60 activity folders to enhance their literacy program at Parkview Head Start School. These folders featured character flash cards, coloring pages, and a bear puppet made from a brown paper bag. The activity folder will serve to supplement their reading program which consists of reading two books, "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?" and "We're Going on a Bear Hunt." In addition to the activity folder, students received their own copy of both books and a box of crayons.

Also consider:

- Take children you serve on a "Reading Field Trip" to an animal shelter, an assisted living home, a special needs facility. The children have an opportunity to use their reading skills – or story telling skills - and share their time with people (or dogs!) who will appreciate it. Give the readers a copy of the book they read.

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- Create posters, flyers, and/or bookmarks about the value of reading to children and share them with partner parishes, schools, child care centers or layette partners.
- Host a Book Club for older children you serve. Pick a day in conjunction with the teacher, give each child a book and then meet to discuss the book.

2. Find a new partner – a parish, a library, a children’s hospital ward

The Central Illinois Chapter had three different activities: The Peoria circle gave out free books to children attending a fundraiser at St. Monica parish in East Peoria. The Bloomington-El Paso circle went to the library and made book marks, read books, and served cookies to the children. The Pontiac circle went to St. Mary’s third grade, each volunteer reading to a class.

The Albany, NY Chapter visited the Children's Hospital at the Albany Medical Center. The hospital is very strict as to who can offer programs and when they can be offered given how sick the children are. In the play room, CCS members read a story about Winnie the Pooh with the theme of friendship. They had a friendship tree that the children added hearts to with their ideas of friendship. They also donated a box of books for all ages.

The Akron, OH Chapter held a literacy themed indoor “Trunk or Treat” for underserved children at the First United Methodist Church of Akron in downtown Akron. Their church members donated cookies and helped to pass out candy. CCS members dressed up and gave away candy, apples, pencils and notepads at 12 different hallway stations. A volunteer from Children and Books donated a book to each child and featured a story circle. The local library donated book marks which encouraged children to visit and to read. CCS members sponsored a toddler room where they gave away little books and helped parents to sign up for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. There was also had a game and craft area. Parents and children were treated to cookies and lemonade, donated by a restaurant and members. The event was advertised through Facebook. Some local schools were also contacted and they informed their students and parents.

The Pasadena, CA Chapter partnered with a local Parish’s Religious Education program. They read two Halloween themed books to all of the lower grade classes, did a craft based on the books read and shared a snack. The children were able to take a copy of the two books read as well as at least three other books that were donated through an Amazon virtual book drive.

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The older kids were invited to share in the snack as well as the book give away. Local high school students were recruited to help along with members of the chapter.

Also consider:

- Does an inner-city parish have a nursery or Bible classes for young children – or do they need one? Find a topic-appropriate book and have members read to the children and give the children a book.
- Partner with your local zoo or a children’s museum to feature a story time using a book related to the venue. Advertise the event and have a CCS reader (or two or three), with copies of the book to give away – and maybe a bookmark that shares information about your chapter.
- Prepare backpacks with a book, a craft activity and a note to parents about reading to their children. Distribute at a child care center, a church, a local health or social services fair.

3. Conduct a book drive for an existing partner, or a new one

The South Bend, IN Chapter chose to grow their relationship with the students and families of Our Lady of Hungary Catholic School through a book drive for their school and classroom libraries. The school is an under resourced school located about 1.5 miles from the CCS Clothing Center in a declining neighborhood. Their families have been CCS clients for many years and the school has reached out in the past for literacy and educational support services.

The Texas Capital Chapter conducted a book drive for the Head Start programs of Georgetown and Round Rock, Texas.

The Detroit, MI Chapter partnered with The Book Beat of Oak Park, Michigan to collect books for the chapter literacy program at Whitman Elementary School in Pontiac, MI and the literacy effort for the boys of the Christ Child House. The teachers at Whitman gave a suggested book list and the educational coordinator at CCH gave a list of the boys reading interests. The store also gave 20% of the day’s sales to CCS for the reading effort.

The Washington, DC Chapter conducted a month-long book drive (including a virtual option) and collected over 1,400 books. They then held two Book Bunch sessions (their family literacy program). They held a bi-lingual Book Bunch at Family Place (a layette partner) and a Book Bunch at the Merrick Center with community members from the Washington Highlands

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neighborhood in Southeast. Both Book Bunch sessions were Halloween themed and, in both cases, the children "trick or treated" for books and left with bags of beautiful children's books from the book drive.

Also consider:

- Stocking the library of a children's hospital or the Ronald McDonald House family room.
- Work with teachers to update the offerings in an underserved school's library.
- Ask your local Head Start if they could use new books in their library or for children to take home.
- Involve local parishes in your book drive; have bins in the vestibule for book collection.

Involve local bookstores or create an Amazon wish list (and encourage use of the Amazon Smile charitable donations for your chapter).

Throughout your planning process, remember that NDS offers a great opportunity to recruit new members and educate the public on the mission of the Christ Child Society.

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Guidelines

- ✓ KEEP IT SIMPLE
- ✓ We recognize that it was hard in prior years for a few chapters to hold their activities on a Saturday due to limitations of members and partners, therefore, we have extended NDS to a week. This allows each Chapter to choose a date and time that best fits their needs.
- ✓ Your activity **MUST** be related to the theme set by NCCS
- ✓ Take and circulate quality photos and video on the day of service
- ✓ Also, please share your plans and activities – including photos - on our National Christ Child Society Facebook page: @nationalchristchild
- ✓ Submit National Day of Service Participation Report to NCCS prior to the deadline
- ✓ All participating chapters will be considered for a \$500 award

How-To Suggestions

- KEEP IT SIMPLE (We really mean that!) but aim to develop a hands-on reading opportunity that can benefit your partner agencies or community as well as your members.
- This is a great one-time volunteer opportunity for those members that cannot commit to weekly or monthly hours.
- Try to encourage participation and involve as many of your members as you can while thinking of ways to invite others in the community to join you. Invite your spouse, grandchildren, friends, or neighbors to come with you. Don't forget ministries at your church, other club affiliates, or agencies your chapter works with. Again, think **RECRUITING** and **NEW DONORS!**
- When selecting your event location, keep in mind that the location should be accessible to not only members, but also to those in the community who want to volunteer with you.
- Take the opportunity to show all the work your chapter does by telling your story. Include displays and posters.
- Have plenty for your volunteers to do.
- Provide donation opportunities for members and the community at large.
- Remember to have release forms for children you are including in photos—and get them signed by their parents/guardians.
- Invite your most senior members with a special invitation. What a nice way to HONOR them.

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- If you choose to have refreshments, consider a birthday cake to celebrate the anniversary of Mary Virginia Merrick's birthday, which is November 2nd.
- Use social media before, on, and after your event. Think about your web page, Facebook page or any other social media outlets that we have provided you information on. Think PR! PROMOTE WHAT YOU DO!

Timeline

9 months before the event:

- SAVE THE DATE – ensure your chapter calendar reflects this event that your membership is aware of the date.

6 months before the event:

- Designate a chairperson and committee to oversee the event. Some chapters have asked their past chapter presidents to chair the event – a great way to keep them involved.
- The chapter planning committee should meet to discuss the theme, determine the activity (activities), explore location options, and assign committee responsibilities.
- Promote internally to members and externally to parishes, schools, clubs and other community groups to engage individuals in supporting your event, and determine who your partners may be.
- Inform NCCS as to your participation plans

3-6 months before the event:

- Firm up activity plans and finalize location. Order any supplies needed and/or ask for donations.
- Plan your press and publicity using the promotion kit provided by NCCS. Develop (with the support of NCCS) releases to local press and church bulletins.
- Promote your event to your members, community of supporters, and other local volunteers (i.e. evite, sign-up sheet, etc.) in newsletters and on your website, and Facebook page

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2-12 weeks before the event:

- Volunteer sign ups should be posted at least 6 weeks prior to the event. Utilize SignUp Genius or a similar program to facilitate volunteer participation.
- Bulletin notices should go out at least 3-4 weeks in advance and then re-release them the week of your event as a reminder. Remember, content for a Sunday bulletin is often locked down well in advance, so check with the parish office regarding timing.
- Start your social media campaign, using Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, etc. Post event updates, pictures, videos, etc. to keep interest of those who plan to attend.
- Comment on the NCCS Facebook posts about your planned activities, momentum and/or literacy and share NCCS posts with your chapter's Facebook friends.
- Encourage members to share their Facebook posts so you reach more potential volunteers.
- Reach out to local press with your press release and a few photos to create interest. Make sure your event is featured, with plenty of lead time with your diocese newspaper or online news. (They will love to cover this type of event!)
- Line up a photographer and/or videographer to document day-of activities. Create a list of the types of photos you would like to have taken. Close-in shots are best to show emotion and help tell a story.

Day of Event:

- HAVE FUN and encourage volunteers to enjoy the service too.
- Take good quality pictures and send to the NCCS contact person. Note – if taking pictures inside and/or for print materials, a camera should be used. If taking pictures for social media, mobile phone photos and video are acceptable.
- All adults and children in photos must have photo releases – forms provided in this handbook.
- Post on social media as day progresses – especially any anecdotes or testimonials.
- Check out NCCS' and other Chapters' social media posts and like, comment, and share their posts on your own pages. (This is a great activity for someone to do who perhaps can't attend, but could be online).
- Lead volunteers in a reflective discussion to get your volunteers to think about what they did, what they learned and how it affected them. This is a great opportunity to get testimonials about personal service experiences.

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Post-Event:

- Thank all volunteers, partners and donors, with pictures and stories.
- Share project accomplishments, highlights and impact
- Follow up with potential new members and invite them to participate in future chapter activities
- Add the names of new volunteers to your mailing lists
- Distribute evaluation surveys to participants and partners to help you learn what was successful and what you should change for future projects
- Fill out NCCS National Day of Service Participation Report

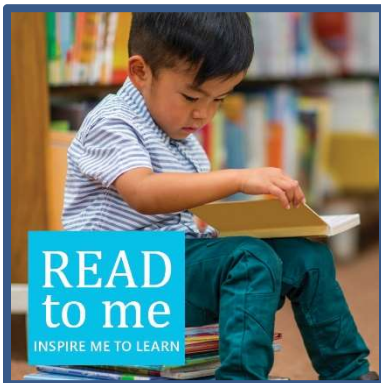
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Promotion Kit

Please visit NationalChristChild.org and go to the "National Day of Service" page under the News and Events tab to access the promotion kit resources available to all chapters.

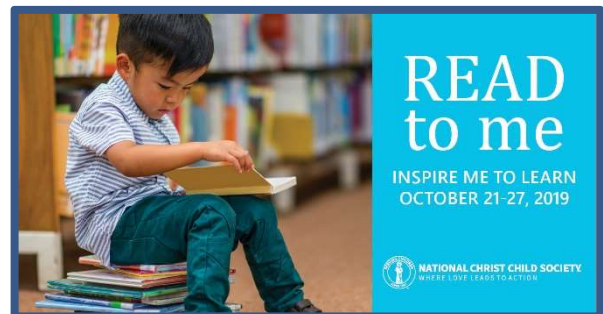
Graphics for Print and Digital Media Platforms

The graphics shown below are examples of items included in the promotion kit to help you promote your **Read to Me: Inspire Me to Learn** event. You can use the graphics on print materials to build awareness and support for your project or on digital media platforms such as Constant Contact, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter.



In certain promotions, you may want to include your chapter logo in the image. We have created graphics including the NCCS logo for each of the graphics. An example is shown to the right.

If you would like for us to substitute your chapter logo for the NCCS logo and use one of the graphics like the one shown here, please email your request to office@nationalchristchild.org and we would be happy to ask our consultant to do that for you at no charge to your chapter.



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Customizable Event Flyer

We have created three different flyer templates that can be easily customized for your local chapter and event specifics.



The flyer is a fillable PDF:

- ✓ Replace the sample date, time, place, contact information and event details in the flyer
- ✓ Save the flyer
- ✓ Share it with friends & parishes
- ✓ Post flyer in neighborhood shop windows/on a coffee shop board, etc.

If you are not able to work with the flyer provided because of technical difficulties or because the format simply doesn't work with your planned event, please contact the national office for assistance:

*office@nationalchristchild.org
301-881-2490*

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Email Invitation Template

TIP: If you use Constant Contact or similar email marketing application, use one of the email graphics provided in the Promotion Kit. Below is sample text to invite your members and volunteers to join in:



“Read to Me: Inspire Me to Learn” is Saturday, October 26th!

Join the Christ Child Society of XX in making a difference for low-income kids in our community on October 26th. We are making a difference with *Read to Me: Inspire Me to Learn*, a Christ Child Society national day of service initiative including 45 chapters across the country who are coming together to make a difference in children’s lives by inspiring children to read and learn in an interactive, positive way!

How you can help

- Volunteer with us and read books to local children
- Donate new and gently used books for low income children in our community to help them build personal libraries
- Bring your family
- Learn techniques for reading to your kids
- Help make bookmarks

[Insert date, time, place]

To register or for information, contact [name, phone, email, website].

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Bulletin/Web Announcements

TIPS:

- Send to parishes at least 2-3 weeks before preferred bulletin date. You might also contact the diocesan parish life or family life office one month in advance to see if the diocese has an e-letter for parishes in which your announcement could be included.
- These short announcements also can be adapted for event listings on local Catholic and other media, websites such as Patch.com, blogs and e-blasts. Include a photo, if possible, to generate interest; for example, include the Christ Child Society logo or a photo of children's books, children reading or one of your chapter's layettes containing a book. (Samsung or iPhone 6 or above are recommended, if possible, for image quality).
- Announcements should be 100 words maximum. The shorter, the more likely they will be used.

SAMPLES:

The sample announcements below can be updated with your own information (chapter name, address, etc.) – or used as inspiration for you to write one specifically for your event.

Keep announcements short and include the date, times, location, event details, how people can participate and the event contact information.

Read to Me: Inspire Me to Learn

Literacy helps children succeed! Join the Christ Child Society of XX for *Read to Me: Inspire Me to Learn* on Oct. 26th, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at St. XXX, Address, City, ST. Donate new and gently used children's books to our book drive and bring your kids for a Reading Fun Fair! This is part of a National Christ Child Society initiative including 45 chapters across the country who work together to make a difference in children's lives. Contact NAME at xxx-xxx-xxxx or name@email.com or visit www.website.org for details.

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Help us Make a Difference

Join the Christ Child Society of XX for our National Day of Service. Donate new and used children's books for low-income children in our community and bring your kids (and grandkids) to our Reading Fun Fair on Saturday, Oct. 26, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Contact NAME at xxx-xxx-xxxx or name@email.com or visit www.website.org for details or to let us know you are coming.

Make a Difference – Read to Me: Inspire Me to Learn!

Join the Christ Child Society of XX for our National Day of Service, Oct. 26, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at XXX, Address, City, ST. Bring new and used children's books for low-income families in our community, join us in reading to local children, and bring your kids to help make bookmarks for kids in need. Contact NAME at xxx-xxx-xxxx or name@email.com or visit www.website.org for details or to let us know you are coming.

Make a Difference – Read to Me: Inspire Me to Learn!

Donate new baby board books to our Christ Child Society of XX book drive for newborn babies in our community. Books will be collected at XX, Address, City, ST from October 21-27th. You may also go to our virtual book drive on Amazon and purchase books from our wish list (insert link here). Contact NAME at xxx-xxx-xxxx or name@email.com or visit www.website.org for details or to let us know you are coming.

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Social Media Tips and Sample Posts

This is a great event to share on social media, in advance to get people interested and engaged, and on the day of to share the great work you are doing and to support our national initiative.

TIPS:

- Like the National Christ Child Society Facebook page @nationalchristchild
- Share the NCCS' Facebook event page for our National Day of Service
- Include the hashtags #earlyliteracy and #readtome in your social media posts and, on Facebook, include @nationalchristchild in the text of your posts
- Post updates and information about your event starting now and through event day (see the section on "day-of promotion")
- Include a photo or graphic with each post to increase shares and likes (examples: volunteers, children reading or being read to, sample layettes with books, items ready to put together, materials for your volunteer day, pre-event gathering)

SAMPLES:



Use one of the downloadable event graphics provided by the National Christ Child Society on all social media. The graphics are already sized to work on the indicated social media platforms.

- Post your own tweets and posts. Here are some samples that are tweetable (the best tweet length is about 100 characters; the best Facebook post has about 40 characters and an image (longer is ok; just not too long!))
 - Volunteer with the Christ Child Society Read to Me: Inspire Me to Learn on Oct. 26 #readtome #earlyliteracy @nationalchristchild
 - Getting ready to address literacy for low-income kids at Read to Me: Inspire Me to Learn Oct. 26 #readtome #earlyliteracy @nationalchristchild
 - Join us for our National Day of Service and make a difference #readtome #earlyliteracy @nationalchristchild
 - Getting ready for Christ Child's National Day of Service – learn more [insert link] #readtome #earlyliteracy @nationalchristchild

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Sample Press Release/Media

A sample press release that will be released nationally is included on the next page (so please let us know what your chapter is doing on our Facebook event page!). It can be adapted to invite your local Catholic and secular media to your Oct. 26 activity.

TIPS:

- Share the release at least 2-3 weeks in advance and then re-release a few days before your event to remind journalists
- Identify one person to serve as your primary media contact
- Have information ready – it's a good rule of thumb to have in mind 2-3 key messages for an interview: the purpose of the Christ Child Society, why you are participating (joining chapters across the US in celebrating the 153rd birthday of the Christ Child Society's founder, Mary Virginia Merrick) and how you hope to make a difference in the lives of children by participating in this national day of service.

DAY-OF PROMOTION

TIPS:

- Make sure people know if a reporter shows up to point him/her to the identified media contact
- Ask a couple of volunteers who are good social media users to take the lead in sharing your day on social media – Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, especially
- Post Facebook Live videos (2 minute videos work best) of volunteers working together. Interview the event coordinator or chapter president about what your chapter is doing.
- Post images of items stacked up, volunteers arriving, group photo, finished layettes, etc..
- Use these hashtags: #earlyliteracy and #readtome and for Facebook, use @nationalchristchild

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NATIONAL CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY
WHERE LOVE LEADS TO ACTION

For Immediate Release: September 28, 2019

Contact: Name, email, mobile number

“Read to Me: Inspire Me to Learn” National Day of Service Focuses on Improving Childhood Literacy

Christ Child Society chapters are holding events nationwide as part of our National Day of Service.

Children from low-income families are less likely to have access to books and more likely to start school academically behind middle-class children.

The National Christ Child Society and its volunteers are working to change that with local and national events with activities based on the theme “Read to Me: Inspire Me to Learn” held October 21-27, 2019.

Christ Child chapters across the US are participating in a National Day of Service for the fourth consecutive year. This national service initiative enables more than a thousand volunteers to come together and demonstrate the impact volunteers can have on their communities by inspiring children to read and learn in an interactive, positive way. The events also highlight the many programs and services Christ Child chapters are involved in within their local communities.

Christ Child Society events will include book drives, book giveaways, reading sit-ins, fun fairs and more, sponsored by the 45 Christ Child Society chapters in communities nationwide.

LOCAL INSERT: [chapter name] is sponsoring a book fair/other project:

Event title

Saturday, October 26, __ a.m.- __ p.m.

Location name

Location address

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"One of the best things we can do for children is give them the gift of reading," said Carol Pickle, National President.

"We are excited about this initiative," she said, "Our mission is to make a difference in the lives of children in need. The ability to read opens up an entire world of possibilities for a child, but sadly, too many low-income children don't have books to spark their imagination and learning. We are committed to changing that."

About the National Christ Child Society (nationalchristchild.org and [@nationalchristchild](https://www.instagram.com/nationalchristchild))

The National Christ Child Society is a volunteer organization with 6,000 members in 45 chapters across the country who are dedicated to helping low-income children in their communities succeed. Inspired by their founder's motto, "Find a need and fill it," Christ Child chapters run literacy programs, coat drives, create new-baby kits and do much more. The founder, Mary Virginia Merrick, is in the process for sainthood in the Catholic Church.

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Guidance for Speaking with the Press

Your chapter's National Day of Service event is a feel-good story and should be fun and easy to tell.

- Designate a primary spokesperson who is prepared.
- Have releases/parent permissions for minors in the media.
- Review the Q&A below to get ready, along with your [Brand Values Matrix](#) (see the Marketing & Communications page under the Member Resources tab at www.nationalchristchild.org if you need a copy of the matrix), to be ready to showcase the event and your chapter's local impact.

When giving an interview,

- Have 2-3 key points in mind that you want people to know and work them into your responses.
- If on TV, smile and keep your responses relatively short. (They may use as little as 10 seconds of an interview!)
- If you feel nervous, take a deep breath, treat this as a conversation with the journalist and an opportunity to help kids and your chapter by raising awareness.
- Guide a journalist to good visuals and articulate participants – explain how the day is working and give concrete numbers if you can (e.g., 300 books are being provided).
- Offer them links for social media and online stories: FB: @nationalchristchild and hashtags #ReadtoMe and #earlyliteracy. Websites: nationalchristchild.org and maryvirginiamerrick.org

Key points (examples)

1. Our volunteers are here today to make a difference for kids in our community.
2. We are holding [insert your event information, such as a read-in, making bookmarks for low income kids, collecting 500 books to go to X shelter].
3. Our National Day of Service has become a way for Christ Child Society chapters nationwide to have an impact locally while joining Christ Child volunteers nationally for a significant collective impact.

Possible questions you may get

What is Read to Me: Inspire Me to Learn all about?

This is a way of giving back to our local community.

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1. The Christ Child members and other volunteers here today are part of a national day of service to reach out in love to low-income children, who too often start school with poor literacy skills.
2. The average middle-class child enters 1st grade with 1,000 – 1,700 hours of one-on-one picture book reading, but for low-income children, it is just 25 hours. We believe every child deserves an equal chance for success.
3. We are raising awareness and everything we collect today will be given to low-income families/organizations right here in our community.
4. Our founder, Mary Virginia Merrick, always said, "Nothing is ever too much for a child." She is now in the process to become a Catholic saint and her love for children in need guides our work every day.

Tell me about Mary Virginia Merrick

1. Born in Washington, DC in 1866, Miss Mary was paralyzed following a fall as a teenager.
2. Despite great pain and being in a wheelchair from that point on, she dedicated her life to helping children because of her love for the Christ Child.
3. Miss Mary started making layettes for low-income families in 1887, which led to the founding of the National Christ Child Society, and continued to add services to fill a need in the local community.
4. Today, 45 Christ Child chapters nationwide continue that tradition.

She is up for sainthood?

1. Yes! She is a Servant of God, which is the first big step toward possible sainthood. Her writings and life have been researched and her writings are being compiled.
2. Once compilation is completed, they will be sent to the Vatican for review by experts.
3. There are a few more steps – including a requirement of two miracles for canonization.
4. The website is maryvirginiamerrick.org.

What is the Christ Child Society?

1. We're a group of ___ volunteers dedicated to serving children in need right here in our community. We are part of a national network that was founded in 1887. We have been in this community since [DATE].
2. We hold a range of events to help kids and families. We make and deliver ___ layettes every year, serve _____ children through _____ [describe programs and quantifiable impact, such as "clothe 400 children per year", "mentor ___ students at ___ schools each school year", "work with ___ children and

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families in our Second Saturday program, which”] GIVE GREAT EXAMPLES OR TELL QUICK STORY ABOUT IMPACT FROM PROGRAMS

3. We're one of 45 chapters across the nation who work to meet local needs of children and families. The National Christ Child Society, founded in 1887, is one of the longest running charities in the United States.

What are you doing here today?

1. Our volunteers are [insert project].
2. We are joining Christ Child chapters nationwide in participating in our National Day of Service.
3. Get specific about how you're involving volunteers in your project. IF REPORTER IS THERE, TAKE THEM TO TALK TO VOLUNTEERS AND/OR MEMBERS
4. Show the books you are collecting, volunteers reading to kids, bookmark station, etc.
5. Say who you're partnering with and where the books will go and when they will be delivered (estimate is fine)
6. It's incredibly fulfilling and meaningful to do this. It means a lot to us, and to the moms.

Are you a religious organization?

1. The National Christ Child Society was founded in 1887 by Mary Virginia Merrick, who is in the process to become a saint in the Catholic Church because of her love and service for children in poverty. She was motivated by her love for the Christ Child to help children in need regardless of religion, race or creed.
2. We carry on her tradition of service to all children in need, without regard to their backgrounds, inspired by love and charity and the belief that we can make a positive impact in the lives of local children and families.

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Photo Release Form - Child

I, (please print your child's name) _____, give Christ Child Society of _____, the National Christ Child Society, and their affiliates, subsidiaries, licensees, and any successors and assigns (collectively, "Christ Child Society"), the right and my permission to use my child's image, photograph, or likeness in publications, promotional materials, and marketing efforts, without further compensation. I agree to waive any right to inspect or approve the finished product.

I further acknowledge that the Christ Child Society reserves the right to caption and edit the image, photograph, or likeness as determined by the Christ Child Society in their sole discretion. I understand that any such image, photographs, or likeness may be used in publications, print ads, electronic media, or other media now known or hereafter known. I understand that Christ Child Society is under no obligation to use my child's image, photograph, or likeness.

I release and hold harmless Christ Child Society and their licensees, employees, and designees from any and all liability arising from any personal or proprietary right I or my child may have in connection with such uses.

I am 18 years of age or older, and have carefully read this release before signing below. I fully understand the contents, meaning, and effects of this release, and that my child's participation is completely voluntary.

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Date _____

Name of Minor Child _____

Relationship to Minor child _____

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Photo Release - Adult

I, (please print your name) _____, give Christ Child Society of _____, the National Christ Child Society, and their affiliates, subsidiaries, licensees, and any successors and assigns (collectively, "Christ Child Society"), the right and my permission to use my image, photograph, or likeness in publications, promotional materials, and marketing efforts, without further compensation. I agree to waive any right to inspect or approve the finished product.

I further acknowledge that the Christ Child Society reserves the right to caption and edit the image, photograph, or likeness as determined by the Christ Child Society in their sole discretion. I understand that any such image, photographs, or likeness may be used in publications, print ads, electronic media, or other media now known or hereafter known. I understand that Christ Child Society is under no obligation to use my image, photograph, or likeness.

I release and hold harmless Christ Child Society and their licensees, employees, and designees from any and all liability arising from any personal or proprietary right I may have in connection with such uses.

I am 18 years of age or older, and have carefully read this release before signing below. I fully understand the contents, meaning, and effects of this release, and that my participation is completely voluntary.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Date _____