



# At the Banquet Table







# At the Banquet Table

**Recommended Size:** 25-100+ guests

**Recommended Age:** 8 years and older

**Objective:** What better way to bring people together than with food? The At the Banquet Table event equips you to use food, fellowship, and the new Operation Christmas Child Fiji Video to host a fantastic event. Whether you do a potluck meal or supply the food, we suggest an island theme to fit with the Fiji focus. By kicking off your Operation Christmas Child packing season with this event, you can give your guests a taste of what God is doing around the world.

**Agenda:**

70 – 90 minutes

- Greet guests as they arrive.
- 10 minutes: Welcome Script with Fun Facts about Operation Christmas Child
- 40 minutes: Fiji-inspired dinner—Use conversation cards to navigate conversation.
- 10 minutes: Country Presentation and video Worth the Walk
- 10 minutes: Wrap-Up Script, time of prayer and send off

**Location:**

- Volunteer's home
- School or church gym
- Church Fellowship Hall
- Community Center

**Food and Décor:**

- Recipe suggestions (below)
- Island-inspired décor
- Music





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## Set up:

- To show the downloadable video, set up a TV/projector, laptop, and speakers.
- Your 'banquet' can be served buffet style, so set up an appropriate number of tables, chairs, and serving tables. Provide plates, cutlery, napkins, cups, and drinks.
- Print copies of *Welcome Script*, *Country Presentation*, and *Wrap-Up Script*
- Provide a pen and paper at each table for trivia time.
- Print out conversation cards.

## Invitation, Bulletin Insert, or Web Announcement Sample Text:

Come fill your seat at the banquet table as we enjoy a taste of the islands. Hear how God is using Operation Christmas Child in Fiji to reach children and communities with the hope and joy of Jesus.

Join us on *(day)* at *(time)* for a special night focusing on Operation Christmas Child in Fiji.

Please RSVP to *(name)* at *(email or phone #)* to learn more and reserve your seat At the Banquet Table.

## Poster Sample Text:

Want to hear how God is using Operation Christmas Child in Fiji?

Join us At the Banquet Table

*(Date)*

For More Information *(Contact info)*

**From the Pulpit:** How far would you be willing to walk to share the Gospel with someone? Would you walk 10 miles? On *(date)* we will be hosting a special dinner where we will share with you what happened when one pastor in Fiji walked 10 miles to share the Gospel with unreached children. For more information or to reserve your spot for this special night, contact *(name)*.





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## Welcome Script:

Good evening, and welcome to this special night. In just a moment we will pray and get started with the food, but first I want to thank you all for coming and let you know that my prayer is that God uses this night to encourage your hearts and to inspire you with what He is doing around the world.

Tonight, we are going to specifically focus on one country, the islands of Fiji. The order of events tonight will be food, a short video presentation, and then a time of prayer. At your tables there are discussion questions. Someone at each table can take the cards and act as table host to lead the conversation (or pre-assign hosts).

Just before we pray, I have a few trivia questions. The winning table gets to go through the banquet line first! There is a pen and paper and at your table. We will accept one answer sheet per table. And we will move through the questions quickly!

1. How many countries have received Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts since 1993? *150*
2. For what age group and gender does Operation Christmas Child receive the least amount of shoebox gifts? *Boys 2-4*
3. For what age group and gender does Operation Christmas Child receive the most amount of shoebox gifts? *Girls 5-9*
4. What is the suggested shipping donation for each shoebox? *\$7.00*
5. How many red and green shoeboxes fit into a carton? *24*
6. How many drop-off locations are there across the U.S.?  
*More than 5,000*
7. How many year-round volunteers does OCC have? *More than 9,000*
8. How many languages has The Greatest Journey discipleship program been taught in? *85 languages, and 35 in translation*







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9. How much does it cost to put one child through The Greatest Journey's 12-week program? **\$6.00**
10. How many steps are there in getting a shoebox gift from the hands of the packer to the hands of the child? **9 steps - (Explain):**  
*1. Pack a shoebox > 2. Local drop-off (Relay Center) > 3. Sent to Collection Center > 4. Sent to 1 of 8 Processing Centers > 5. Sent to domestic port > 6. Arrives at international port > 7. National Leadership Team receives and puts shoeboxes in warehouse > 8. Delivered to local churches across country > 9. Church distributes to the children!*

Congratulate winners and pray over the food.

## Table Conversation Cards:

Operation Christmas Child is stepping into some of the hardest to reach communities, impacted by war, famine, poverty, and false religions. Think back to a time when you stepped into a community that has faced hardship. Perhaps it was a mission trip to the slums of India, or just blocks away in an at-risk community in your city. What was your experience and biggest take away? How did you see the Gospel impact people with no hope?

Operation Christmas Child uses a shoebox as a tool to present the Gospel to children. Think about what would happen if one was delivered without the other - the shoebox without the Gospel, or the Gospel without the shoebox. Why is it so important for this tangible expression to go hand in hand?

In 2015, 8,765,637 shoeboxes were packed from the U.S. and delivered to children around the world. Each of these shoeboxes were packed with love and prayer, and filled with all sorts of fun items. Why is it so important that shoeboxes are packed with quality items and stuffed full?

Think back to a person in your life who has strengthened you in your faith journey. Where would you be today without them? After children receive a shoebox, they are invited to attend The Greatest Journey, a 12-lesson discipleship program taught by trained local teachers who become mentors for the children. Why is this discipleship program so important?





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## Country Presentation:

Long beautiful beaches stretch like ribbons in the South Pacific. Tourists sip from coconuts, and enjoy the relaxing island life at dozens of five-star resorts along the island's shoreline. Fiji is beautiful in every season and a popular destination for the world's vacationing elite.

The people that inhabit the 333 Fijian Islands are some of the friendliest people in the world.

With a large amount agricultural resources and a thriving tourism industry, Fiji has one of the most developed economies in the Pacific Islands.

Just behind the façade of perfectly maintained tourist locations, however, poverty is a reality for many. The farther you go from the main islands and towns, the more people struggle to survive.

Along with various social classes of indigenous Fijians, there is a large population that traces their roots to India, making cultural and religious divides strong. Many Fijians belong to various Christian denominations but there are deep divisions between these churches. Add to that the deeply rooted Hindu and Muslim influences and tensions can run high.

Since 2005, 430,901 Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes have been sent to the children of Fiji. These shoeboxes come wrapped in the hope and love of Jesus. Through this project of Samaritan's Purse, Christians in Fiji have crossed cultural and denominational divides in a united effort to reach the next generation for Christ.

Like a stone thrown in the water, each shoebox has a ripple effect, spreading from one child, to their family, to the whole church, and finally their communities.

After the shoebox comes The Greatest Journey discipleship program, deepening children's understanding and commitment to the Gospel.

Through the efforts of faithful Operation Christmas Child and The Greatest Journey volunteers, the Gospel is growing in Fiji. Pastor Waisea (*pronounced 'Wise'*) is one of these volunteers who followed God's call and saw Him accomplish great things.





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## Wrap-Up Script:

I hope that you have had fun this evening as we have gathered together At The Banquet Table. I pray that you have enjoyed a small taste of one of more than 100 countries where Operation Christmas Child is working. These stories would not be possible without a shoebox gift. Shoeboxes are the seeds that plant truth and love in the heart of a child, and are often the beginning of their faith journey. I am excited to one day see the fruit that has grown from that seed.

Just as Pastor Waisea was willing to go the extra miles to reach a new community, it is my prayer that we as a church will go the extra mile to provide pastors like Pastor Waisea the seeds they need to spread the Gospel to the unreached people groups of the world.

Before we leave I want to briefly share with you how to pack a shoebox gift and what our goal is as a church.

- Provide information on how to pack a shoebox. Bring a packed shoebox with you and show the items that can be packed. Give examples of other quality items, as well as inappropriate items. Take a moment to mention the value of quality shoeboxes and including a “wow” item.
- Explain the importance of the suggested \$7 shipping donation.
- Share your shoebox goal.
- Share the importance of getting others involved in your efforts.
- Thank guests for coming and close the evening with prayer.







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## Menu Suggestions

### **Main Entree:**

**Fiji-Indian Chicken Curry:** Traditional curry with an island twist.

**Fijian Meatballs:** Move over Sweden, Fiji's meatballs have a hint of curry.

**Baked Fish with Plantains:** Cooked with onions, tomatoes, green chilies, and coconut milk, this dish is sure to please!

**Pork & Pineapple Curry:** A red curry base with pineapple and cashews.

**Fijian Fish Lolo:** Halibut or cod in coconut milk, served over cassava taro root or rice.

### **Sides:**

**Roti:** Unleavened bread similar to pita bread.

**Lolo Buns:** Fijian coconut rolls.

**Coconut Chutney:** Coconut, chili, ginger, onion, and mint in lemon juice.

**Chicken and Squash Soup:** Chicken and pumpkin in a coconut milk broth.

**Pineapple Sweet Potato Bake:** Sweet and savory mixed with coconut, onions, and cheese.

### **Dessert:**

**Fijian Honey Cake:** A sweet taste of honey, spice, and almonds.

**Banana Cake:** A signature dish at Fijian parties.

**Cassava Cake:** A Fijian favorite made with coconut milk and sweetened condensed milk.

**Fijian-Style Fruit Pizza:** Pita bread topped with apple butter and kiwis, strawberries, apples, and pears.

