

Christmas Mission Project Opportunities

Looking for a Christmas mission project for your family or small group? Here is a [list of suggestions](#) prepared for First Baptist Church of Huntersville, NC, arranged in various project categories. We traditionally do well focusing on mission offerings and meeting the immediate needs in our communities, but some have begun thinking in terms of the impact their purchases can make in the Fair Trade marketplace, helping those dependent upon Mom and Pop microenterprises, surviving on daily incomes of less than US\$2.00. To that end, these opportunities include seed monies for microenterprises among those who lack access to bank loans, as well as development projects and the opportunities with which we are more familiar.

Note: The online document links to more information at the end of each section.

—Microfinance Loans for Microenterprise Startup/Expansion

Help someone with a small investment that greatly impacts the life and family of another. Rather than offering handouts to patch the immediate needs of the poor, microfinance offers long term solutions allowing the poor to provide for their own needs. So many lack the recourse to capital and opportunity we take for granted. Such loans are normally offered along with business training, health/life insurance, and access to other resources we often take for granted. [Opportunities for Microfinance involvement](#).

—Fair Trade Gifts

A gift that does good, even before you give it away? We may focus on our Christmas giving, but in reality we should consider how our year-long purchases impact the lives of millions. Fair Trade is an issue we can too easily ignore as we try to extend our limited resources. The longer we ignore it, however, the worse the plight of millions around the world becomes and the harder for us to address our own financial needs. [Opportunities for Fair Trade involvement](#).

—Community Development Projects

There are many solid organizations working to alleviate poverty through various means of community development. These projects often include providing clean water, health and nutrition education, community garden production, and other means of creating sustainable communities in which children can go to school, parents can earn incomes with dignity, and medical/dental care can be provided for the sick. Would your class or family be interested in helping support development projects that alleviate poverty and provide dignity for the poor who need opportunity? [Opportunities for Community Development involvement](#).

—Providing Farm Animals to Families in Need:

Heifer International and other groups work to alleviate poverty by enabling families to rise from poverty by caring for animals, using milk products of goats or raising rabbits at one's home. Providing

a pair of animals to a needy family can result in children half-way around the world being able to afford school for the first time. [Opportunities Farm Animal involvement](#).

—Operation Christmas Child:

Many people know about the Samaritan's Purse project of packing shoeboxes with gifts for needy children around the world. What many don't know is that Samaritan's Purse is also involved in community development projects that bring water and sanitation to communities who receive those same boxes. Others might not know that shoebox gifts can be sent to Samaritan's Purse outside of the Thanksgiving push for Christmas gifts. [Opportunities for Operation Christmas Child involvement](#).

—Clothing Closet Needs (Lydia's Loft):

Winter coats, socks, blankets, feminine toiletry articles, shampoos and bars of soaps are always in need at Lydia's Loft. Do you like to knit socks or blankets? How about purchasing socks and underwear or put hotel toiletries to good use? [Opportunities for Clothing Ministry involvement](#).

—Serving the Needy:

Beyond the giving of financial gifts, many people are interested in volunteering some of their time to serving the needy around them. In the Huntersville and Charlotte area, there are plenty of opportunities to lend a hand at our community garden, local food pantries, soup kitchens, rescue missions, and Habitat for Humanity. How about taking a group to serve the needy, hopefully interacting with those we are already serving through our financial gifts and missions budget support. [Opportunities for food service projects](#).

—Adopting Families in Need for Gifts/Food:

Every year, folks at First Baptist Church of Huntersville adopt needy families in the community to supply with Christmas gifts, clothing, and grocery gift cards. Through our partnerships with Ada Jenkins, Lydia's Loft personnel, and the Angel Tree program, individuals and families are vetted to identify those with needs. Would you be interested in adopting a needy family in our church or community? [Opportunities for adopting families in the community](#).

—That "Other" Category

Then there are those resources that defy a specific category, even if they might find inclusion in some of the above. [Other Opportunities for community ministry](#).

—Christopher B. Harbin