

Practical issues

We've been doing 'Church in a Bag' throughout lockdown. We've done weekly deliveries to people's homes in paper bags. (We've found these bags worked well: www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B01H2T81CA)

Here's what we've learnt along the way;

Order in Advance

We've had to make sure we order items well in advance.

- Obviously this means we need to decide on what crafts we're doing about 3 weeks ahead of time, to give chance to order online, and be delivered with the slower delivery times. (This is getting easier now that shops are opening)

Quarantine

We leave the bags to 'quarantine' for 72hours.

- We put the bags together in the week before a Sunday AM delivery. We aim to have everything in the bags by Thursday lunchtime so that they are left for 72hours, as a precaution against Covid-19.
- When we weren't using our cars much we used to leave them in the car, but that is becoming harder now.

At the doorstep

When we deliver we drop the bag on the doorstep, knock on the door (trying to use a part of the door others won't have touched) or ring the bell with our elbow, and then stand well back to allow them to open the door whilst maintaining distance.

Face-to-Face

As this is the only face-to-face interaction we have with these families (the rest is online) we really try to make the most of this encounter.

- Take the opportunity to ask how they're doing how the week is. Offer to pray about the challenges they are facing – and make sure you do. (Maybe you could have a small group of people who commit to confidentially praying for your families?)
- Make sure you write down the prayer requests so that you and the team can pray. (Make sure you have a pen & paper with you!)
- Then follow up the week after on how it's been.

If they're out

Make sure you have a plan for if they're out

- We usually leave the bag in a safe place, and text them to let them know where we've put it
- To do this your delivery drivers need the phone numbers. You need to be careful with data protection – e.g. not leaving the list on the dashboard when you park!

Personalise

It's worth thinking about how much you want to personalise the bags.

- We try to tailor the bags depending on how many children are in the family and how old they are.
- Sometimes we put in extra simple sensory activities for younger siblings. This is particularly aimed at children who have recently been baptised, but are too young for the main activities.
- We have 4 categories: Normal, XL, XL with toddler, Toddler only.
- We attach coloured tags to the handles of the bags to show which bag is which.
- Our delivery sheets tell the drivers which type of bag each family is getting, and then they can easily identify it from the coloured tags.

Admin

We've mainly signed people up through personal invitation.

- We've also created an online sign-up form. This allows us to get GDPR info from those who've requested a bag.
- It also allows us to post the invitation on our social media for other people to sign-up.
- We used Planning Centre Online software to create a sign-up form, which looks like this: <https://bit.ly/ChurchinaBagSign-up>)
- You could also use Google Forms (<https://www.google.com/forms/about/>) or Eventbrite (<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk>) to create an online sign-up