

# TREE OF HOPE FAQs

Hope for Christmas (HFC) has changed the donation process for toys and gifts for our guest families and has implemented a new system called "Tree of Hope." Many of you have been part of HFC for years and have questioned why we have changed the process and how things will be different. Hopefully, the information below will help provide answers to your questions and encourage you to participate in the new Tree of Hope.

**1. Why is West Ridge Church making this change in the way we donate toys?**

West Ridge staff asked the HFC leadership team to develop a way for church families to connect more with guest families we are serving. One way discussed was to have families sponsor specific kids so that you are purchasing for an individual child who you can pray for throughout the year. The previous system did not offer that personal connection.

**2. As the donor, will my information be confidential?**

Yes, your information will be completely confidential. Neither your child nor his/her parents will receive any information about you.

**3. What information will I receive about the child(ren) that I'm sponsoring?**

Just like we are maintaining your confidentiality, we are also committed to maintain the confidentiality of the child(ren) you are sponsoring; however, you will receive the child's first name, gender, age, and three requested gift categories.

**4. Can I sponsor a family and not just an individual child?**

For 2023, we are unable to connect all children associated with an individual family on the Tree of Hope; however, in 2024, we hope to have the option to sponsor an entire family.

**5. Can I buy more than two gifts?**

We ask that you purchase two new gifts per child with a value of \$25-\$40 each so that each child is receiving an equal number of gifts from HFC. However, if you would like to do more, you can sponsor another child or you can add smaller, lesser priced "stocking stuffers" to the two gifts you have purchased.

**6. Can I purchase items not on my sponsored child's wish list?**

Just like your child or grandchild has specific items he/she has requested for Christmas, these kids also have requested specific gifts or categories of gifts so we want to honor their requests and give gifts that match their interests.

**7. Since this new system targets specific gifts to individual children, why is HFC still collecting "general" toy donations that are not child-specific?**

We are continuing to collect "general" toy donations that are not associated with a particular child in collection bins at West Ridge Church and in local business, just like we have in past years. We will use these gifts to fulfill requests of kids who are not sponsored in the Tree of Hope.

**8. How many children can I sponsor?**

You can sponsor as many children as you can afford, and that God leads you to sponsor. West Ridge will be serving over 4,700 children in 2023. That is a huge God-sized task. While we are so thankful for those who can sponsor one child, we are praying for generous individuals who have the resources to sponsor many children and can help us meet this huge need in our community.

**9. Do I wrap my gifts?**

No, please return all purchased gifts unwrapped. Although we are the ones purchasing the gifts, our approach with HFC has always been that the gifts are intended to come from the parents, whether that be the parent's name on the package or "Santa." Many parents ask for our help because they have hit a rough patch, and we want to help maintain their dignity and sense of pride.

**10. How, where and when do I return my gifts?**

All gifts should be returned by Sunday 11/26, if possible, to West Ridge Church. You can take them to the Tree of Hope table in the atrium on Sunday mornings or drop them off at the West Ridge receptionist's desk Monday-Thursday between 9 a.m.– 5 p.m. Please bag the two toys for your child together and include a printed copy of the confirmation that you received when sponsoring the child so that we can match the toys to the child.

## **11. What if I don't have time to shop?**

If you don't have time to shop for HFC gifts, you have two options to help us meet the needs of HFC's more than 4,700 children this year: a) You can make a financial donation online at [www.hopeforchristmas.com](http://www.hopeforchristmas.com) and we will shop for unsponsored children on your behalf. b) You can still sponsor a child(ren) and then shop on Amazon through a link we provide to you of dozens of gifts that our team has pre-selected that match many of the gift categories that the children have selected. If you use this link, the gifts will then be mailed directly to our team with your sponsoring information.

## **12. Why are we praying for the child(ren) that we sponsor?**

Providing gifts for a child at Christmas is a wonderful thing and will bring many smiles; however, as with our own kids, most gifts will be forgotten by next Christmas. With Hope for Christmas, we strive to provide for the Christmas needs of a family in a wonderful Christmas party setting; however, the root of what we do has always been on the eternal significance of Christmas. Christmas is much more than gifts and sparkling lights; it is about the **One** who brought **hope** to a dark world. And nothing of eternal significance happens without prayer. So, we ask that you commit to pray for your sponsored child (and his/her family) through Christmas and the next year. Pray for the things that God brings to your mind . . . for their health, protection, a good school year, God's blessings, and most importantly, that they will come to see Christ as not only their **Hope for Christmas**, but for every aspect of their lives.