



HOW ANGEL TREE WORKS

Every year thousands of churches* participate in Angel Tree, bringing the joy of Christmas, sharing the Good News of God's love, and strengthening families with an incarcerated parent. Angel Tree is for all kinds of churches: large and small, urban and rural. Some churches can sponsor a few children, and others can sponsor many. Each church's Angel Tree outreach can reflect its unique strengths and character. Angel Tree is a tangible expression of Christ's love to hurting families in your own community, often opening the door to continued relationships. We honor requests to match the same children with your church each year that the children remain eligible for Angel Tree.

OUR ROLE

Over the summer, we provide Angel Tree applications to prison chaplains. The chaplains pass these out to prisoners who have children. (Some restrictions apply: The children must be 18 or younger; they must be children or stepchildren of the prisoner; and there must be no court order barring the prisoner from contacting his/her children. The children must live in the United States.)

Chaplains send completed applications to our processing center. We screen out invalid or ineligible applications, and then we assign children to churches, like yours, who have registered to participate in Angel Tree.

We strive to match children with a church in their own local area. Sometimes, needs are greater in areas where fewer churches participate. In these cases, partnerships between suburban and urban (or rural) churches, where one church purchases gifts and another is responsible for distributing them, have proven effective.

YOUR ROLE

Your church designates an Angel Tree coordinator to recruit additional volunteers and direct the program. The church coordinator and their team use an Angel Tree Church Resource Kit from Prison Fellowship as a guide for reaching prisoners' families.

Each child receives one gift with a suggested value of \$20. When filling out the application, incarcerated parents have an opportunity to suggest a gift type for their child, and this information is listed on the application. After the church coordinator receives a list from us with information about your assigned Angel Tree children, volunteers reach out to prisoners' families to confirm that they want to participate. Volunteers also check to see if the gift the incarcerated parent suggested is appropriate. Finally, volunteers write each child's name, age, and gift wish on a large Angel Tree tag that gets placed on a Christmas tree at the church. Church members select tags from the tree and purchase and wrap the gifts.

Shortly before Christmas, volunteers deliver the gifts to children's homes or distribute them during an Angel Tree party or open house at the church. Volunteers present each gift in the name of the child's incarcerated parent, along with a short message of love transcribed onto the tag (parents write these messages on their applications). Volunteers also share the Gospel during deliveries. We encourage you to be creative about how you share the meaning of Christmas, and Prison Fellowship provides free, age-appropriate Gospel materials upon request.

Each Angel Tree household is also given access to a free children's Bible.

For more information, call **1-800-55-ANGEL (2-6435)** or visit **angeltree.org**.

*Many community organizations or businesses also participate in Angel Tree, following the same model as churches. Contact Prison Fellowship with any questions.



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