

Christmas-at-Sea

Would your congregation like to bring joy to seafarers who will not be home with their families for Christmas? Our port chaplains deliver satchels filled with gifts to the seafarers they meet in port in the weeks prior to Christmas. Later, on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, when the ship is in the middle of the ocean, the captain will hold a celebration, and all the crew will open their satchels, each containing:

- One sweatshirt — hooded or unhooded (size L-XL),
- Three pairs of socks — thermal or white gym,
- One casual pullover T-shirt (size M-L),
- One knit winter cap,
- One can of nuts or bar of chocolate, and
- A Christmas card from you.

(You pick the colors, styles and brands you wish, but please, no substitutions from the list. The Christmas-at-Sea satchels should be comparable for each member of the ship's crew.)

What might otherwise have been another lonely night at sea becomes instead a joyous occasion, not only because of the beautiful gifts, but because strangers ashore have taken the time to share the spirit of Christmas with these seafarers. It's awesome!



Throughout the year, there are sales on most of the gift items above. Members in your congregation may want to get a jump start on purchasing some of these items to take advantage of the sales.

Your congregation may want to assemble complete Christmas-at-Sea satchels for an entire ship. Generally, a ship's crew consists of 25 seafarers. Of course, we're grateful for any number of satchels your congregation can fill. If it is more convenient, you can supply one or more gift items and arrange for us to purchase the balance of the gifts for your congregation to make a complete satchel. Typically, a completed satchel costs less than \$25.

Our port chaplains start to distribute the Christmas-at-Sea satchels after Thanksgiving. We have local drop-off locations for your gifts. Generally, we start gathering these satchels from the drop-off location in mid-November, but we continue to collect them until December 15, 2011. Call one of the following persons to order your satchels or to ask for more information. Remember to include a Christmas card from your congregation for each satchel, because occasionally, the ship's crew will be able to send a personal note of appreciation at their next port of call, and these notes are priceless.

Blessings to your congregation for its outreach to seafarers.

Noreen Fleming
212-677-4800 (ext. 1218)
nfleming@sihnyc.org

Chris Roehrer
212-677-4800 (ext. 1203)
cvr@sihnyc.org

Ruth Setaro
203-687-2177
ruthsetaro@snet.net