

# SMILE BAGS

## Priority Level: HIGH

After receiving surgery, each child receives a Smile Bag, the perfect gift to cheer up a healing child. Smile Bags are filled with small personal care items as well as toys, stickers and a mirror to see their new smile. We need clubwomen to collect personal care items and sew cloth Smile Bags.

**Operation Smile is in need of the following items to include in a patient's Smile Bag. Please send only the items included in this list:**

- Small shampoo (.85 to 1.4 oz hotel/travel size, screw-on top preferred)
- Small comb (no rat tailed combs, please)
- Wash cloth, new & unused
- Bar of soap (small hotel/travel size)
- Travel-sized toothpaste (must be at least 6 months from expiration date)
- Individually packaged Child-sized toothbrush
- Small stuffed animal
- 8 or 10 pack box of crayons
- Thin 8.5" x 11" coloring book

**Update:** We have enough mirrors to last through 2018! Please do not send additional mirrors at this time.

**Please Note: We do not send Conditioner, Body Wash, or Lotion on any of our medical missions.** Beginning September 1, 2017, we will no longer be accepting these items in supply donations. Please help us to keep our process flowing smoothly by sorting these items out of your boxes before shipping to Operation Smile. Thank you!

Additionally, we will not accept large personal hygiene items considering the volume of items we will need to ship to a medical mission site. We cannot accept any type of food product, like candy or chewing gum; shipping regulations prohibit sending food items across international borders.

## How to Make Smile Bags

Smile Bags are 14"H by 12"W, made of sturdy cotton fabric and are closed by a drawstring at the top. The bag is sized to hold a thin, 8.5" x 11" coloring book.

### Materials

- Sewing machine
- Iron and ironing board
- Shears or scissors
- Sewing pins
- Brightly colored, sturdy cotton fabric
- Cotton cording or sturdy ribbon for the drawstring
- Thread
- Tacky Glue® or Stop Fray®

## Smile Bag Instructions

1. Cut your fabric to the desired size. Since your finished Smile Bag will be 14"H x 12"W, you want fabric that is at least 28" + 3" x 12" + 1" (31"x13".)
2. Lay your fabric finished side down on the ironing board. Fold one of the shorter edges of your fabric up  $\frac{1}{4}$ " and press. Then fold again 1" and press again. This fold will create your casing for the drawstring. Repeat on the other short edge.
3. Sew close to the top of the fold to secure the casing for the drawstring. Be sure to overstitch at the beginning and end by reversing your stitches in order to secure them. This is especially important as the seam will be stressed by pulling the drawstring through it.
4. Turn your bag inside out and press seams flat.
5. Fold your bag in half, finished sides together. Pin up the sides, stopping where your casing begins. Sew the sides using a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam, stopping right where your casing begins.
6. Cut 2 pieces of ribbon or cording to desired length. We recommend a length that is double the width of your bag, with an additional 8" for knotting. Put a safety pin through the ribbon or cord. If it is something that frays easily, wrap it with a little tape before inserting the safety pin. To make it easy to pass through the casing, use the biggest safety pin that will fit through your casing easily.
7. Using the safety pin to hold on to, thread your drawstring into the casing, passing it along inch by inch. Go in one side, through to the other side, and come out where you started.



8. Do the same with the other ribbon, but start on the opposite side this time. When you are done, you'll have the picture to the right.
9. Tie a simple knot to secure your drawstring by holding the two ends of one string even, forming a loop in the ribbon and pulling the end through. You can make the knot quite close to the bag. Repeat on the other side.
10. Cut the ends of your ribbon off even, an inch from your knot – or closer/further depending on what you want. If your drawstring ribbon or cord might fray, dab it with a little craft glue (like Tacky Glue®) or fray stopping liquid (such as Stop Fray®) and let it dry.



Please Note: This bag will have exposed, unfinished seams on the inside. You are welcome to finish the inside seams with a zig-zag stitch or serger to make the bag sturdier, but this is not required.

**Smile Bags must be empty when shipped.**

We have a group of volunteers at Operation Smile Headquarters that will pack them when they arrive. If you are also collecting supplies, please place like items in separate plastic grocery or zip top bags to be properly sorted upon arrival. For example, place all shampoo in one plastic bag, all soap in another, and so on.



**If you have any questions about the Smile Bag supply list or instructions, please contact Operation Smile at [communityrelations@operationsmile.org](mailto:communityrelations@operationsmile.org), or 1-888-677-6453.**