

Andersons Wholesale's guide to organising a Santa's grotto

Our pre-wrapped Santa's Grotto gifts are on our shelves ready to go and are supplied wrapped and labelled, both with age and gender suitability. We have gifts for every budget - with an average price point of only **£1.40** each ex VAT! Our buying power allows us to buy quality books, toys, games and craft items at great prices.

We have numerous quality ready wrapped items ideal for babies right through to children aged 9 years and over. They are ideal for Santa's grottos, Breakfast or Supper with Santa, student gifts and lucky dips. We also stock a range of filled Christmas party bags, Santa sacks, Christmas hats and elf hats and much more.

We also have ready made boxed assortments and many gifts suitable across several age ranges - ideal for if you aren't taking bookings and/or may have children turn up on the day, whose ages you don't know.

We hope the tips below will help with choosing your gifts and planning your event!

Choosing your wrapped gifts

We've had years of experience and are the leading supplier of pre-wrapped gifts. We supply the largest shopping centres and garden centres as well as pubs, PTAs, schools, nurseries, Lions and Rotary clubs, individual fundraisers and the largest and smallest charity events - and all our customers are equally as important to us. You can order easily online, or we're happy to advise you and take your order by phone on **01842 824505**.

We have no minimum order and stock a wide range of ready-wrapped grotto gifts from birth upwards, which you can buy in any quantity you require.

All our gifts are wrapped and labelled by our experienced teams of wrappers here in our UK warehouse and we use good quality, thick wrapping paper. This means the quality of the gift-wrapping is assured and the gift will look great right up until it is handed over by Father Christmas to the excited child.

As we wrap the gifts here in our warehouse, our gifts are therefore on our shelves in large numbers, ready to be sent to you when you need them. This means we can usually deliver the next working day - even when you've run out unexpectedly or order at short notice!

We have 4 age categories for our pre-wrapped grotto gifts - under 3s, age 3-5, age 6-8 and age 9+. Within these age groups we have lots of ready-wrapped gifts for girls and boys and a range of unisex gifts too.

Nearly all our gifts are unisex, meaning you don't have to worry about finding out the number of boys and girls coming, or worrying about not having enough gifts for either gender.

As a rough guide, if your grotto is open to the public and you're not sure of the percentage in each age range, from experience we find that the split of ages tends to be roughly **15%** under 3, **35%** age 3-5, **35%** age 6-8 and **15%** in age 9+ - older children don't necessarily want to see Father Christmas, but really *don't* like to be left out of receiving a gift when their siblings do!

If you're not taking bookings for children by age, then of course, you won't know the exact number of gifts you need in each age group. We also have some great gifts which are suitable in multiple age groups for children aged over 3 - they will be labelled as age 3+, or age 6+ and you'll find them in other categories too - for example our colour in Christmas mugs and Christmas puzzle cubes.

And our exclusive **'I've seen Santa'** stickers both add to the child's experience and allow Santa and his helpers to easily see which child has had their gift.



Advice and help

Ask our advice - call us on **01842 824505** or email info@andersonswholesale.co.uk . We have a wealth of experience and we are really happy to advise you by phone. We can advise you about running a Santa's Grotto, Breakfast with Santa or Christmas event. Feel free to ask away - there are no silly questions!

Ask for local advice - if you've joined a PTA or are taking over an event from someone else, find out what worked and what didn't work for their event in previous years. Read feedback on Facebook pages and forums.

Club together with others - if you're a small charity or school, could you pair up with another group or charity to organise a grotto or Christmas fayre and share costs, expertise and man (and woman and elf!) power?

If your Christmas grotto is being held in your town or village, see if your event can be made part of the Christmas lights switch on, Santa run, Christmas Fayre, Christmas market or other festive occasion and therefore publicised alongside it too. Your event will then have both publicity and visitors! Similarly, if another event is happening which would clash with the date of your Santa's grotto, a rethink of your chosen date may be needed.

Planning your Santa's grotto or Breakfast with Santa

Plan ahead and plan well - set your date as early as you can in the year so you can publicise it as early as possible - some event websites and publications need event details several months in advance, so the sooner you let them know, the longer they'll have to promote it for you.

Share the work and delegate tasks - instead of someone taking all the responsibility for planning, then no-one feels they are having to do too much. Have regular discussions about the event planning and preparation, so any glitches can be overcome before the big day.

Make sure you charge enough to cover all your costs and make a profit - but not so much that it's too expensive and people won't come - look at what other similar organisations charge.

Ensure you have enough helpers on the day and that you've planned cover for lull and lunch breaks. Have people on standby you can call on if anyone (including Santa!) is ill or unable to help.

Have as many people as possible attend the event. Some grottos only take advanced ticket bookings, but you can miss out on valuable income this way - if you can, choose a venue where there's people passing so they can come and visit Father Christmas too. Choosing unisex gifts and gifts for all ages means you're not limited to having gifts just for the children who have booked, and can accommodate extra children on the day.

Design eye catching posters so the event date and venue can be seen from a distance - it's no good if the details are too small to be seen! Charities may be able to send you a template poster if you're raising money for them.

Distribute posters and flyers well in advance and ask all your friends and family, local shops, schools and community centre to put up posters for your Santa's grotto or Breakfast with Santa.

Ticketing or just turning up? There are pros and cons for both - though of course, more people you allow to come, the more profit you will make. See above regarding the choice of gifts, age breakdowns and gifts which are suitable across the age groups, allowing for maximum flexibility.

Publicity: without it, no-one will know your event is on!

As soon as you have your Santa's grotto date set, tell everyone, and ask them to tell everyone!

Set up a Facebook event page and send a link to it to everyone you know, asking them to share it on their Facebook page too. Keep posting regular updates and reminders. Do a date countdown nearer the day.

Email all your friends and family and ask them to share the date and details with all their friends and family.

Keep sending out tweets and ask everyone to retweet them for you.

On all posters, flyers, emails and messages you send out, ensure people know how and where to buy tickets. Ensure people whose contact numbers and email addresses are quoted are able to respond to queries quickly.

Print posters flyers and give them to everyone you know and ask them to display them and give them out. Put posters up (with permission!) anywhere you can. This might include community centres, supermarket noticeboards, shops in your town, libraries, schools, sports centres, workplace noticeboards and tourist information centres.

Send information about your Santa's grotto or Christmas event to the local newspapers, websites, Tourist Information Board and local independent and BBC Radio stations - do this initially several weeks or even months ahead to get your event listed in their events directory, and again nearer the time to get the event publicised.

Your local radio station may do a short radio piece for you about your event - they love to interview people about events happening locally. Getting someone lively and bubbly to talk on the radio about your Santa's grotto or Breakfast with Santa for a few minutes can really help to publicise it.

Send photos to the local paper nearer the time with a short piece about the date, timing, venue and cost and if it's a charity event, information about how the money raised will help the charity.

Keep reviewing how publicity and planning is going and keep sending out tweets, emails and updates on your Facebook page.

After the event

It's important whilst it's fresh in your minds to review and make notes as soon as you can after holding your event so you can improve on it future years - this may include dates by which you need to do certain things.

- Did you send out information early enough to websites, newspapers and radio stations?
- What could you improve on publicity-wise?
- Did you have enough gifts for each age range and enough 'I've seen Santa' stickers?
- Did you have enough people helping organise and publicise the event?
- Did you hold the event for long enough?
- Did you have enough helpers on the day?

Could we improve on this information? Contact us if so and we'll include your tips too!

www.andersonswholesale.co.uk and www.wrappedgrottotoys.co.uk



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