Holiday shop planning kit

A head start for your PTO or PTA board. Take what's useful and change the rest.

Timeline

12 weeks out

- [ ] Choose dates with the school
  Before winter break, and clear of concerts and testing.
- [ ] Choose a holiday shop company, or decide to stock it yourselves
  Ask about price points, delivery, and what happens to unsold items.

10 to 8 weeks out

- [ ] Reserve the room
- [ ] Decide on price points and whether it's a fundraiser
- [ ] Decide how students without money can shop
  Some groups set aside funds, or run a free gift table, so every child goes home with something.

6 weeks out

- [ ] Share the volunteer signup link
- [ ] Add the dates to the school newsletter

4 to 5 weeks out

- [ ] Build the class shopping schedule
- [ ] Decide how students will pay
  Envelopes with cash, prepaid credit, or a mix. Your company may offer options.

2 to 3 weeks out

- [ ] Send the shopping envelopes or online link home
  Families can list who their child is shopping for and how much to spend on each.
- [ ] Follow up on empty volunteer spots
- [ ] Order gift bags and wrapping supplies
- [ ] Share the schedule with teachers
- [ ] Confirm delivery and pickup times

The final week

- [ ] Send a reminder to families
- [ ] Buy everything on the shopping list
- [ ] Print signs and price tags
- [ ] Get change and set up cash boxes
- [ ] Unpack and set up the shop

The first day

- [ ] Walk volunteers through checkout

After the shop

- [ ] Pack up unsold items for return
- [ ] Count the money and match it to sales
- [ ] Thank volunteers, teachers, and families
- [ ] Write down what to change next year
  A few quick notes while it's fresh can save next year's board a lot of time.

Volunteer spots

A sample to adapt. Add, cut, or rename spots to suit your school.

Spot	When	People
Setup Crew Unpack items, price them, and set up the tables.	Day before 2:30 PM to 4:30 PM	4
Shopping Helpers: Morning Help students find gifts within their budget.	8:30 AM to 11:45 AM	4
Shopping Helpers: Afternoon Help students find gifts within their budget.	11:45 AM to 3:00 PM	4
Cashier Ring up purchases and count change with students.	8:30 AM to 3:00 PM	2
Gift Wrapping Bag or wrap each gift and label who it's for.	9:00 AM to 3:00 PM	3
Pack-Up Crew Pack unsold items and get them ready for pickup.	Last day 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM	4

Sample budget

Placeholder amounts to help you get started, not real prices. Swap in your own numbers.

Item	Example	Our budget
Free gift table	$100	
Gift bags and tissue	$80	
Decorations	$50	
Wrapping supplies and tape	$40	
Volunteer snacks	$40	
Signs and price tags	$25	
Total	**$335**	

Shopping list

Party or dollar store

- [ ] Gift bags
- [ ] Tissue paper
- [ ] Holiday decorations
- [ ] Tablecloths

Office supply store

- [ ] Cash box
- [ ] Calculators
- [ ] Price tag stickers
- [ ] Pens and envelopes
- [ ] Tape and scissors
- [ ] Name tags for volunteers

Grocery store

- [ ] Snacks and water for volunteers

Easy things to overlook

Shopping lists from home
A list of who to shop for, and how much for each, makes choosing much easier for younger students.

Students without money
Some schools set aside funds or a free gift table so no one leaves empty-handed. It may be worth deciding early.

Patient helpers
Adding up a budget is part of the fun. Helpers who can slow down and count with a child make the shop work.

The wrapping table
Wrapping can back up the line. A separate table, with its own helpers, keeps classes moving.

Return deadlines
If your company takes back unsold items, it helps to know the pickup time before the last day.

Want it all in one place?
PineBoard can hold your tasks, volunteers, shopping, and budget together, and copies the plan to next year. Try it free for 60 days at pineboard.app.