ffen
Foundation For Essential Needs

**Foundation for Essential Needs (FFEN) is a non-profit providing operations support and resources to food shelves.**
For more information, visit www.ffen.org.

# Food Drive Themes

Themes can be used to drive the kinds of donations that you are seeking for your food shelf. You can choose an **Overall Theme** and then have special donation targets for specific organizations or communications/messages focusing on **sub-themes** to stimulate ideas for donors. See ideas below, and be creative with your own ideas!

**Overall Theme: All for the Children**
**Sub-themes:**

- Baby blow-out: Diapers and wipes, baby food
- Toddler time: Toddler finger-food snacks, fruit cups, juice boxes
- School days: Granola bars, dried fruit, fruit cups, Goldfish Crackers

**Overall Theme: Memorable Mealtime**
**Sub-themes:**

- Breakfast: Pancake mix, oatmeal, cereal, dried milk, coffee
- Lunch: Canned fruits, crackers, hearty canned soups
- Supper: Canned chili or stew, canned fruits, corn bread mix

**Overall Theme: Stocking Up on Staples**
**Sub-themes:**

- Spices: Cinnamon, salt, pepper, chili powder, onion powder, garlic powder, taco seasoning, Italian seasoning
- Baking items: Oils, sugar, flour, baking soda, baking powder, cooking spray
- Condiments: Ketchup, salsa, mustard, mayonnaise, barbeque sauce, soy sauce, jelly, fish sauce

**Overall Theme: Celebrating the Seasons**
**Sub-themes:**

- Spring/Summer: Lemonade mix, salad dressings
- Fall: Canned pumpkin, canned chili, canned beans, boxed cornbread
- Winter: Hearty soups, canned meats, canned stews, rice
- Holidays: Stuffing, green beans, cream of mushroom soup, dried onions, gravy mixes, canned cranberries, instant potatoes

*Resources are developed and reviewed regularly with input and insights from food shelf leaders and sector partners. Additional feedback on tools can be shared with programs@ffen.org. (Last updated: 11/4/2025)*

**Overall Theme: Filling the Food Groups**
**Sub-themes:**

- Grains: Rice, pasta, dry cereals, oatmeal, quinoa, wild rice, barley
- Fruits: Applesauce, canned fruit, dried fruit, 100% juices
- Vegetables: Canned vegetables, vegetable juice
- Proteins: Peanut butter or other nut butter, canned tuna, chicken, salmon, canned or dried beans
  Dairy: Dry milk, shelf stable milk, evaporated milk

**Overall Theme: Challenge of the Classrooms**
**Sub-Themes:**

- Kindergarten: Spices
- 1st Grade: Cold Cereal
- 2nd Grade: Peanut Butter
- 3rd Grade: Rice
- 4th Grade: Pasta
- 5th Grade: Dish Soap
- Go up to however many grades you want - make it your own!

**Overall Theme: A month at a time**
**Sub Themes:** Host a monthly Food Drive, For example:

- January: Peanut Butter
- February: Condiments-Ketchup-Mustard-Jelly-BBQ sauce-salsa-pickles
- March: Tuna
- List all the months of the year with specific items.