

Frequently Asked Questions about Donations of Books or Other Items to the Library

1. Can I get my donations back at some point in the future if the Library is not using them?

Sorry, no. We do not track donations in a way that would make that possible, and many items are given to other non-profit organizations in the parish or sold through Friends of the Library book sales to support Library activities and the purchase of new books.

Once an item is accepted as a donation, we cannot give it back. Please do not donate anything you think you may want back in the future.

2. Do you add donated encyclopedias to the collection?

Not unless they are less than three years old and in excellent condition and there is space in the library collection to hold them. However, we welcome them for sale through the Friends of the Library book sale in the fall.

3. Do you add donated textbooks to the collection?

No, but we sometimes donate them to other organizations. We also put them in our Friends book sales.

4. Are there items you cannot use, either in sales or in the collection?

We cannot use books with heavily yellowed pages, mold, cigarette burns, water damage, cockroach evidence, mice droppings, missing or torn pages, or pages marked over with drawings, obscenities, etc. We examine donations for these problems and discard these items promptly.

We also cannot use proof copies, tapes or DVD's taped at home, or other items that would violate copyright laws.

In terms of DVD's and VHS tapes, we typically add nothing with a more severe rating than "R" and we limit the "R" items selected.

5. If I donate a group of books together, will they stay together?

This will depend on the needs of the Library. Some of the books may be put in sales, some may be added to the collection at the main library, and some put in other branches. We have a main library and five branches.

6. Can I get a valuation of my donated items for tax purposes?

We cannot put a value on them. **However, if when you donate them, you ask for a receipt for the number of items and types of items donated, we will be happy to supply it.** You may then assign a valuation based on the number and type of items. Please note that we can ONLY give this receipt at the time of actual donation, not later.

7. When do you put donation name plates on books?

We do this when the item is in memory or in honor of someone and has been bought new especially for this purpose. We may also do this with corporate donations where the Library selects the books and the corporation or other organization provides the nameplates.

8. How long do the items that are added typically stay in the collection?

It's hard to say, but probably an average of five years. Some items get lost or damaged in the first year, while others such as legal or medical items are withdrawn automatically after five years. Other items may stay in reference for 15 years or more.

9. Are all items that are added to the collection cataloged where their status can be seen in the catalog?

No. Many paperbacks are not cataloged.

10. Can I see in the online catalog which specific items I donated that were added to the collection?

Our cataloging software is not set up for that. We hope someday to have more advanced software that will allow the cataloger to put in more information and to make donor name a searchable field.

11. What is the most important thing you believe about donated items?

They are very much appreciated and useful to the Library, regardless of whether the items become part of the Library collection or not. We are deeply grateful that people care about their Library and are willing to donate to help it.