



STL FUNDRAISING/DONATION IDEAS

OFFERING

One of the all-time best ways to raise funds for STL is by receiving an offering. Many churches receive special STL offerings throughout the year. Some pastors even mention STL every time they receive the tithe and offering. Clearly, this communicates to the congregation that missions is a huge part of the vision of the church.

STL GOAL-SETTING SERVICE

- In the Adult Service – Have a Sunday morning or evening STL emphasis service near the first part of the year where STL is presented to your entire congregation. The best way to do this is to take a full service to inform and inspire the church to be a part of giving to STL. You don't have to take the whole service, but that does seem to work best. Take some time to explain what STL does for missionaries around the world, present the current needs, and pass out a STL Individual Goal-Setting Card where each family can set a goal for the entire year. Sometimes this can make more of an impact if you select a specific need from the STL Needs List and present that one need to your congregation as your project for the year. This works especially well if the need is related to a missionary that your congregation is familiar with.
- In the Youth Service – Have a youth service where STL is presented to the youth in a way they can understand and respond to. Again, this doesn't have to take the entire service. Students love to be challenged, so ask them to shoot for the stars, and they will. Present the needs of STL, and explain what STL does for Missionaries around the world and why you think the youth needs to help missionaries. Having students set individual goals for STL for a short period of time like 8 weeks or for the whole year works great.

STL-GIVING UPDATE FOR YOUTH

In your monthly newsletter, email, or on your bulletin board in your youth room, keep a running tally of students' goals for the year and what they have given to date. This will help keep STL in front of the students all year long and serve as a great weekly reminder of their commitment.

8 OR 4-WEEK SPEED THE LIGHT EMPHASIS IN YOUTH AND/OR ADULT SERVICE

Have a special STL service where you present the needs of STL and set goals for 8 or 4 weeks. During the selected time period, put articles in the bulletin regarding STL and what it is doing. Also, show videos, etc. to keep the needs in front of the congregation and to help keep momentum until the deadline.

YOUTH GIVING CONTEST

One cool thing that some youth pastors have done is to have a contest among the youth to see who can *raise the most* and who can *give the most personally* to STL. Get local businesses to donate prizes that

can be given to the top givers. If you can't get donations for the prizes, use the money you were planning to give to STL to purchase prizes for the top givers. In most cases, contests do help raise the total amount given.

13TH CAR PAYMENT GIVING CARDS

Present the STL Needs to your congregation, and ask each family to commit to an offering that equals the cost of their monthly car payments. This would be a great 8 or 4-week STL emphasis. "13th Car Payment" cards are available free of charge from Gospel Publishing House at www.gospelpublishing.com or 800.641.4310. See Free Promotional Items in Promotional Items Section.

TOP IT OFF GIVING CARDS

Present the STL Needs to your congregation and ask them to commit to an offering that equals the cost of one tank of gas for all the vehicles in their household. "Top it off" cards are also a free item that can be ordered through Gospel Publishing House at www.gospelpublishing.com or 800.641.4310. See Free Promotional Items in Promotional Items Section.

STL CAN COVER

Order some STL can covers from GPH, and wrap them around potato chip cans, i.e. Pringles or Lays Chips that you purchase from the grocery store. Give these to students and adults alike to take to school or work to collect funds. STL can covers are a free item that can be ordered from Gospel Publishing House at www.gospelpublishing.com or 800.641.4310. See Free Promotional Items in Promotional Items Section.

T-SHIRT SALE

Have some T-shirts made to sell at your church and in the community. Most T-shirts can be made for \$5 to \$8 each and can be sold for \$15.

DINNER THEATER

This is a great event to do especially if you have students participating in Fine Arts. The week or so before your District Fine Arts competition, schedule a dinner theatre at the church or at a location of your choice. Have your students perform their Fine Arts events for the attendees as you serve them dinner. This actually helps the students prepare for the Fine Arts competition beforehand. Most all parents, family members, friends, and church members would love to come, especially those that can't attend the competition. Tickets can easily be sold for \$20 or more if you serve a nice dinner. If you have a good relationship with a local restaurant, you can possibly get the dinner donated or at least purchase it at minimal cost. Announce that all proceeds from the dinner theatre will enable the students to help missionaries. You may even want to receive an offering at the event.

THONS – WALK, BIKE, ETC.

Set a date for the youth to have a THON of your choice. Have pledge forms made up for students to get pledges. You can get local companies to sponsor. Have t-shirts made for the event and add the sponsoring companies' logos on the back of them. Give the event shirt to all participants to wear the day of the event. The amount raised from the sponsors should more than cover the cost of the shirts and any other expenses of the event.

AFTER-CHURCH DINNERS

It appears that most church people go out to eat after service. Why not provide them with a meal and raise money at the same time! Schedule a time at your church facility when an after-service meal could be provided either for a pre-determined price or for a donation. What this means is that you don't charge for the meal but do ask for those eating to make a donation to STL. Get a group of volunteers (youth and youth staff) to help prepare and serve the meal. If you are asking for donations, make sure to have something to receive the donations in. If you choose to charge for the meal, make sure to charge a fair price that will more than cover your cost and make a good profit. A lot of times you make more money on a donation basis since some people will contribute large amounts to a worthy cause. Give a presentation about STL during the dinner, and challenge the attendees to help. A lot of local businesses like to donate items for tax benefits. Have your church secretary type a letter on church letterhead explaining the event and requesting donations. After collecting donated items, you will then need to have the church secretary mail the business a tax letter for their records.

RENT A TEEN

This is a fundraiser that will cost you very little if anything. It is really pretty simple how it works. Have someone act as an auctioneer and auction off the teens to work in pairs for a specified amount of time doing certain jobs, like babysitting, yard work, etc. An after-service fellowship would be a great time to do this.

AUCTIONS

Organize an auction in your church fellowship hall or gym. Ask your church and community for items to be donated for the auction. Be sure to offer pick-up service. If possible, ask a professional auctioneer to volunteer his services. Be sure to put an ad in the local newspaper. Some churches have found pie auctions, etc. to be a great success.

BABYSITTING SERVICE

Advertise special nights as "Parents Date Nights," "Mom's Night Out," etc. On these advertised nights, using the church nursery and facilities with permission, provide well-planned and staffed childcare for posted times. Remember to charge a set amount per child, and have plenty of activities prepared for the children – Bible lessons, snacks, games, etc. Be sure you are properly staffed with volunteers so parents know you are prepared!

COMMUNITY CRAFT SALE

Organize a craft sale in your church parking lot on a designated Saturday. Then, rent spaces or "booths" for a set donation price, i.e. \$50. Vendors are allowed to sell whatever they want (with obvious restrictions). Be sure to put an advertisement in the local newspaper as well as make posters to hang up at local businesses. You could also sell snacks, drinks, hot dogs, etc. during the event. After it is over, clean up the parking lot, and take any leftover items that people do not want to a charitable organization. Be sure the vendors know that their booth-space donation includes a free advertisement in the local newspaper, and all the proceeds go to STL.

CLEANING JOBS

Set up appointments with families in your church for the youth to come to their homes and clean their houses, cars, dogs, etc. Provide 2-hour sessions with 4-5 students per group at a \$30 minimum donation. You can split into multiple groups if needed. Get parents to serve as volunteer drivers and chaperone students from house to house. This works great on a Saturday and just before holidays when people are expecting guests.

LOCAL BUSINESS SPONSORS

Go to local businesses and ask them to either donate items that can be sold or just write a check to STL. In return for their cash contribution or merchandise, print their logo and information on promotional materials. Make sure they know that all donations are tax deductible.

FIREWORKS STAND

Many youth groups have taken on the challenge of running a fireworks stand to raise funds for STL. This works great if you have a good size group of people who will commit to help for about 10 days around July 4th and/or December 31st. This may one of the best ways to raise larger amounts of money, but it does require a lot of hours.

FLOWERS FOR VALENTINE'S & MOTHER'S DAY

During these times of the year individuals are looking to purchase flowers for their loved ones. You can set up a table in the church foyer to take orders in advance for flowers to be delivered. You can also sell some arrangements in the foyer on these days. If your church is in a highly visible location, you can set up a booth outside close to the street and sell flowers. You can either purchase the flowers from a local wholesaler/florist, Sam's Wholesale Club, or Wal-Mart.

ONLINE AUCTION (EBAY SALE)

This is a fresh twist on the old yard sale, and it can generate some new income. Simply ask the members of your church to donate one item of value that can be auctioned off. Auction the items on an online auction such as EBay.

BAKE SALE

Host a bake sale before or after church on a Sunday or Wednesday to raise money for STL. This can be done by selling items individually and/or by having a silent auction for specialty items like a pie made by the pastor.

\$100 CONTEST

This is a good way to raise some quick money for STL, especially if all you have to work with are some good, motivated students. How it works is really pretty simple. You announce that you are having a STL contest, and then divide the students that want to participate into teams of 4 people. One of the students should be a safe, proven, licensed driver or better yet, arrange for a parent to drive them. The object is for each student to go to 10 people he/she knows and get a \$10 donation for STL. Each person will earn \$100, with each team earning \$400. Arrange for all your teams to come to the church early on a Saturday morning. Pray with the students, and remind them why they are doing this and who they are doing it for. Then, send them out. The first team to return with every member collecting their \$100 wins the contest. Give them a really good reward. As with all fundraisers like this, try to not spend more than 10% of the income on the promotion and rewards.

THRIFT STORE

Hit up the Goodwill up for cheap stuff and resale for missions.

WOODEN PRAYER BOARDS FOR LOCKERS

Less than \$7 to make and they also go well with YA campus missionaries. Students pin prayer requests to the board.

STL GOLF TOURNAMENT

\$1 A WEEK PUSH

LEAD THE POWER OF 10

Challenging every leader and every student to commit to giving \$10/month. The goal here is establishing in our students a regular, consistent giving habit.

TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME

The parents of our youth group work a concession stand for Aramark, Inc. during the Astros' baseball season. Aramark pays nonprofit organizations 10 percent of the inventory that Aramark sells at the games. We have a crew of about 20 adults, who sign up for two to three games for a total of six to eight games monthly. During a successful Astros' season, our volunteers raised over \$43,000. *Nancy B. - Texas*

COMMUNITY AUCTION

Check with your local teams. We raised \$1,500 in an afternoon by auctioning off items that community businesses were glad to give us. Our youth went around to the businesses with fliers explaining what the fundraiser was all about. Businesses were so generous! They donated things like a weekend stay at a bed-and-breakfast, yards of bark mulch were delivered—many businesses donated. It was great.

We advertised the auction, held it in the town hall, and people had fun bidding! We got two adults who everyone in the community knows to be the auctioneers, and the kids were runners with the items. Worked great! *Tom W. - Maine*

CHURCH GARAGE SALE

Church members (or their family and friends) donate their items, and the sale is advertised in the local paper and open to the general public. We set up the items inside the church in a large lobby and multipurpose worship/meeting area, but we don't price anything—the items are all sold through a freewill offering. Rarely do we have any conflict over price. Some people give too much, others give too little, but in the end, it all works out. Any items leftover at the end of the sale are donated to local organizations like the Salvation Army or homeless agencies. We set the sale up Friday and run the sale Saturday. The youth help with the whole thing. Sales range from \$3,000 to \$4,500. *Bill L. & Rick G. Simon F. - Maryland Dan B. - Texas*

HOLIDAY SHOPPING BAZAAR

We invite 15 to 20 home businesses (like The Pampered ChefTM, Tupperware[®], Discovery Toys[®], PartyLite, and Mary Kay[®]) to set up booths and sell their products. They give us a portion of their profits (10 percent to 25 percent), plus some corporate headquarters match what their representatives give. The Bazaar is advertised in the local paper and we do this on a Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in our fellowship hall (or you could use a local community center). The youth provide brunch-type food (casseroles, muffins, fruit) and offer the food with a freewill donation basket. We offer door prizes (that the home businesspeople donate) and sell raffle tickets to distribute them. We also have our praise band sing and play music to add to the shopping experience! It's one-stop Christmas shopping with food, music, and fun! *Eva D. - Kansas*

PARENTS' DAY OUT AT CHRISTMAS

Our youth spent a Saturday in December babysitting while parents went Christmas shopping for their children. We allowed enough time (9 a.m. to 4 p.m.) for them to shop and then go home and hide or wrap the gifts. It was a fun day. We had games, crafts, movies, and music for the children. Plus the kids and the youth had a great time. Their relationships grew, and parents received a heads-up on who likes to baby-sit. *Holly T. - Kentucky*

TIP: *This is a great idea to advertise in the local paper or free ad flyer. Highlight that the adult chaperones are background checked (if you do that for your volunteer staff).*

CAR WASH WITH A PERK

As car washes are a staple among fund-raisers and can get a bit old and overused, all it takes is a little extra effort to make them super effective. We used a local business to host the car wash (a local discount store let us use their parking lot). It attracted a lot of drive by business and didn't just draw from our congregation. *Jason L. - Ohio*

RESTAURANT HOSTS

Our church is small, so raising money for a big trip each year would be difficult if we didn't go outside the church walls. Along with the usual car washes, yard sales, and spaghetti lunches, we go out into the community and solicit sponsors from local businesses. We have found several family-owned restaurants very willing to let us "host" an evening shift or a Saturday morning breakfast shift. They get additional customers, and we get all the tips plus a portion of the profits. As an extra bonus, our church gets lots of visibility from patrons. We have a wonderful Christian radio station that gives away free airtime for churches to advertise fund-raisers and special events, so we make a commercial before our scheduled "shift" to let the community know. *Jennyfer N. – Florida*

GO GREEK

This year our group is enlisting the aid of local sororities and fraternities to help us raise money. They get the service hours—we get money for our trip, and the teenagers get to see a part of campus life that's making a positive impact on the community. *Jennyfer N. – Florida*

GROCERY STORE DISCOUNTS

Grocery stores have programs for discounts on products for their customers. These discounts will either go back to the store or can be given to charities or schools. Set up an account for your youth group. You'll need your church's tax identification number. After setting up the account, let everyone know about it! (community bulletin boards, local paper, etc.) Hand out detailed directions about how people can get their card number linked to the account. (The best way to give detailed directions is to do it yourself and take detailed notes as you link your card to the account.) Some stores require a minimum number of people who have their cards linked to the account in order for your group to be able to obtain funds. *Brian S. – Virginia*

RECYCLING CELL PHONES AND INK CARTRIDGES

Some businesses give money for recycled items. Aluminum cans were once popular to recycle. Now the craze is used cell phones and ink cartridges. Some businesses will send fliers and boxes with free shipping for you to return recycled items. This is an easy way to raise money and help the environment. However, watch for a required minimum. Some businesses won't take your items for recycling unless you send 200 to 300 items.

Brian S. - Virginia

PIE SALE

The weekend before Thanksgiving, our youth group takes orders for pies (pumpkin, pecan, creamy peanut butter, rhubarb). We get donations for the ingredients and spend two days making homemade crusts and baking pies. Since the ingredients are all donated, this event is 100 percent profit. We have a large grocery chain reclaim center in our town that generally donates several hundred pounds of flour, sugar, spices, and other ingredients. For any other ingredients we need, we ask for donations.

Jacky D. - Wisconsin

HOAGIE SALE

Our youth group takes orders for hoagie sandwiches. After the ingredients have been purchased, the youth gather to help put the sandwiches together and then collect the donations. Our group makes about \$5 a hoagie, and the amount of effort is small. *Robert G. - Illinois*

PIZZA SALE

A pizza fundraising business in our area brings us all the ingredients for making pizzas. We take orders, call them in to the company, and spend a day making pizzas. *Jacky D. - Wisconsin*

“DOUGH”-NUT SALE

Krispy Kreme sells the donuts to our youth group for \$3 a dozen—we sell them for \$6 a dozen (which is the store price). The company lets us do this once every 60 days, and we easily sell 100 dozen at our Sunday services. It's the easiest \$300 you'll ever make. *Jim A. - Illinois*

AUCTION

Our group of 10 youth raised \$9,000 at our auction. Each youth submitted at least one idea as his or her gift to be auctioned. We auctioned off babysitting hours, car washing, handmade baby blankets, buckets of Blockbuster essentials, and other items and services. Each young person approached at least five businesses they frequent and asked for either a donation or service that we could auction, and most of the businesses agreed. We also solicited our congregation through letters. We received wonderful gifts and talents from our congregation: weekend and weeklong donations of summer homes, baskets of all types, cake decorating, ice cream cakes, dinner for two, tours, entertainment gift cards, and so on. This event brought our young people together as a team. They learned how to fund-raise, and they were partners with parents and Christian Ed leaders. It was very successful and we had so much fun.

Nancy S. - Connecticut

PIE AUCTION

Every spring we bring in a volunteer auctioneer from a local service organization. Initially, we started with only pies, baked by the family of our youth. But the auction has quickly expanded to include other baked goods, quilts, crafts, and personal services (such as lawn mowing and home-cooked meals). We raised just over \$2,000 for the mission trip, and we only had 55 bidders! Competition can be a wonderful thing! *Daniel S. - Iowa Sherry and Howard H. - Ontario, Canada*

DESSERT AUCTION

Members and friends donate desserts. We get a variety of cakes, pies, cheesecakes, and desserts. Some of the items even have a theme. The day of the auction, which is right after church, we offer walking tacos for lunch, and the members have time to look over all the items. We raised over \$1,900.

Kate Anderson - Iowa

FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD

We participate in several grocery store fund-raisers—the best we've found in our area is Kroger. Church members buy gift cards for \$5 and then reload them to buy their groceries. Five percent of their purchases go to our youth group. We make about \$500 each month doing this.

Amy E. - Ohio

TAKING STOCK IN YOUTH

We sell "stocks" to members of our congregation. Congregation members invest in the future of our youth because we are building the leaders of tomorrow. Stocks sell for the following prices: Gold—\$72, Silver—\$42, and Bronze—\$15. In addition to their investment in the youths' future, stockholders receive "dividends" throughout the year. These include sub sandwiches, a car wash, an ice cream social, a pancake breakfast, youth labor, May Basket delivery, and a stockholders' dinner (where stockholders hear about our mission trip for that year). Dividends vary depending on the level of stock purchases. People who are not stockholders are allowed to participate in all the dividends (except the dinner) for a donation. While there's still a lot of work involved in doing these fund-raisers, we already know upfront how much money we have, and there's no pressure to make a certain amount of money on any event. Our congregation loves our stock sale because they don't feel like they're being hit up each month with a different youth fund-raising project.

Barb M. - Kansas Donna D. - Illinois Ray V. - North Carolina Amy E. - Ohio

MOM'S SALE

We rent table-space for people to sell children's articles and mother-to-be stuff. It's like a big garage sale within our church; only those who rent a table sell their stuff and keep the money. We rent 8-foot tables for \$30 and 6-foot tables for \$25, plus we have a large-item room where we charge 10 percent. For admission, we charge \$1 for people 13 years old and older. We start advertising 3 months prior to the sale. *Linda H. - Michigan*

STEAK FRY, EGG ROLLS, AND CRAB RANGOON

We put on a steak fry for the congregation and community. Tickets are mostly pre-sold, but we allow for some walk-ins. We also sell homemade egg rolls and Crab Rangoon. We pre-sold 100 dozen Crab Rangoon and 80 dozen egg rolls! *Nancy B. - Iowa*

CHRISTMAS COOKIE TIN SALE

Everyone has old Christmas tins lying around the house they're dying to get rid of. Ask people to drop their unwanted tins off at church. Then, the last Saturday before Christmas, have all the youth congregate in your church kitchen with four dozen of their favorite Christmas sweets. Divide up the cookies among the different tins, and cover them tightly with saran wrap. Close the tins and mark them with a price. We usually charge \$3 for small tins, \$6 for medium tins, and \$9 for large tins (depending on how large). On Sunday morning (the last one before Christmas), take the lids off each tin so people can see the goodies in them. Sell the tins throughout the morning. Many people are sick of making baked goods by this time of the season and are looking for last-minute gifts. It's an easy fund-raiser and generates about \$200 for us.

Brenda C. - New York

MOTHER'S DAY FLOWER SALE

We have an arrangement with a local nursery to provide us with potted flowers at cost for Mother's Day. The nursery offers us a variety of colors of geraniums, petunias, and fuchsias in pots or hanging

baskets. Flowers are brought in the two weeks before Mother's Day to allow people to see them and pre-order the ones they want. Then the Friday afternoon before Mother's Day, the flowers arrive and we label each plant with the buyer's name. Flowers may be picked up after the labeling is finished (it usually takes an hour), or they can be picked up after worship on Sunday. The remaining flowers are placed in the sanctuary to decorate for Mother's Day. The church bulletin notes whether flowers were given in honor or in memory of a loved mother, grand-mother, aunt, sister, and so on. People may donate flowers to the church, which then get delivered to shut-ins who appreciate these lovely flowers. (Note: The Saturday before Mother's Day is a very busy day for nurseries, hence the Friday delivery date. We wanted to accommodate our gracious nursery owners.) *Desiree A. - New York Simon F. - Maryland Simon F. - Maryland*

DRIVE-THROUGH BARBECUE

Our group has a drive-through chicken barbecue. Menu: 1/2 chicken, baked potatoes, coleslaw, roll, and brownie. Purchasers don't have to get out of their car! We set up large pits and barbecue the chicken ourselves to save money. The congregation donates potatoes, cabbage, and other food items. The young people make brownies for dessert.

Teresa B. - New York

BAKED POTATO SALE

Our group baked potatoes during worship, and afterward the congregation could buy a hot baked potato on a cold winter day. Toppings of butter, sour cream, cheese, bacon bits, broccoli, and chili were available. We also sold bowls of chili. Hint: It's best to scrub the potatoes the day before if you have an early worship service.

Desiree A. - New York

YOUTH FOR HIRE

Our church advertises for odd jobs and yard work, and a coordinator has a list of young people to call for jobs. We earn \$3,000 to \$4,000 a year. One year we moved a used bookstore to a new location. *Simon F. - Maryland*

WORK FOR WORK?

Beginning in January, we spent almost every Saturday at the homes of church members and friends performing a variety of jobs. We cleaned inside and outside houses, picked up sticks, cleaned out garages, prepared flowerbeds for summer, and did minor construction projects. We raised over \$3,500. How did we get jobs? By announcing in church (using newsletters, e-mail, presentations, and announcements from the pulpit) that our group wanted to earn money for a mission trip by doing work projects. (We also did "S.O.S."—Someone Special—projects for senior citizens who couldn't afford to pay.) We kept a scheduling calendar handy at church on Sundays to schedule our Saturday projects. An unexpected benefit from doing this fund-raiser was the positive relationships that were created between our youth group and adults in our church who don't usually "hang out" with students. Church members were pleased that the youth were *earning* money for their mission trip—not just *asking* for it. Also, working alongside the students provided great relationship building and discipleship time.

John W. - Alabama

IT'S IN THE BAG

This tradition is a combination of fund-raiser and service project. Each year, the week-end before Thanksgiving, our youth spend the day raking and cleaning yards for shut-ins and disabled persons, who are recommended by members of our congregation, church staff, and the local agency on aging.

Depending on the situation, we may or may not notify them that they've been selected. By not notifying everyone, you're able to leave some people off the list if you run short on time. (This was a major mistake we made our first year because we notified everyone of our intent and it took us several weekends to finish.) We don't charge for this service because our fundraising has already been conducted beforehand. Before the event, all participants recruit sponsors. Sponsors pledge an amount of money for every bag the group fills. The average number of bags we fill for the day with 15 to 20 people working is between 300 and 400 bags. If a person sponsors a penny per bag, then we collect \$3 to \$4. Since most people sponsor a nickel or a dime per bag, the money begins to add up quickly. All of the bags are then taken back to the church and placed in a spot where everyone in the congregation (as well as those driving by) will notice and be reminded of their pledges. The following Sunday, we announce that the leaves are for sale. Typically all the bags are sold in a short period of time.

Paul F. - Arkansas

RENT-A-YOUTH

Our youth group invited the congregation to sign up to "rent a youth" for any "reasonable" job and at a time that suited them. We indicated that youth should be hired at \$5 to \$10 per hour depending on the job and asked for funds to be paid directly to the youth leader. Youth were matched to jobs, parents were asked to drive them to the work site, and those hiring were asked to drive the youth home when the job was done. If a job lasted for several hours, we instructed the young people to bring their own drinks and snacks; hirers were asked to provide any equipment needed. Jobs included babysitting, lawn mowing, all kinds of yard work, window cleaning, gutter cleaning, filing, painting, dog walking, and so on. The program lasted for eight weeks, and work was done after school and on the weekends. We were overwhelmed by the generosity of the congregation and their pride in our youth, who were actually working instead of expecting a handout. We saw some wonderful friendships formed between youth and older members in the congregation and noticed the sense of pride the youth took in being able to be helpful, as well as earn their mission trip fees.

Janet C. - Kansas

NOT YOUR USUAL CAR WASH

It's sometimes difficult to get people to stop and have their car washed when you're waving signs in the air. So, we had ours on a Sunday morning at church. Youth were placed at the entrances to the church. Each youth had a clipboard, key collector box, and labels to mark the keys. As people entered the church, youth asked them if they would like to have their car washed while they were in church. Donations only—no specific amount. If they said yes, we would get their keys, tag them (we had a local garage donate the little tags they use when people drop their car off for maintenance), and write their names down on a clipboard, noting where they're parked as well as the color and type of car. Adult volunteers drove cars around and have them washed—and then returned them to their parking spot. It's important that your youth and volunteers attend a church service that day; otherwise your youth get a message that raising money is more important than attending church. After the church service was over, people received their keys as they exited the building. Each exit had a donation box. We raised about \$300 from this fund-raiser with a congregation of about 150 (about 3 people to every car). *Brenda C. - New York*

ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE

Our group did several fund-raisers—a car wash being the most successful. However, I have noticed time and time again with fund-raisers that when we set a specific price or fee for a service, we make *less* than if we just *ask* for a donation. You can always give a suggested donation amount, but in general, the "overly generous" donations make up for the "less than fair" ones that you receive. *Amy H. - Michigan*

DINNER AND DESSERT AUCTION

Our group makes a delicious and inexpensive meal of entrees such as beef tips and chicken cordon bleu with salad, vegetables and bread— a complete meal without dessert. We sell tickets for \$5 each, with a goal of breaking even on the meal. After everyone is finished with the meal, we have a dessert auction. Desserts are displayed on a center table with a description next to them. People at each table pool their resources and bid on the desserts they wish to eat. Desserts are introduced along with the dessert maker. Desserts are donated by people in the congregation, so the competition becomes intense at times as spouses and others begin to bid on desserts made by their loved ones! *Jacky D. - Wisconsin Brenda C. – New York*

CHILI COOK-OFF

We had a Chili Cook-Off at our church. It was easy to do because the congregation did all the work. We announced the cook-off to the congregation, and asked them either to bring a pot of their own chili to be judged or just come to taste everyone else's chili. We chose different categories like spiciest, most original, best vegetarian, and so on. We charged \$5 to come and taste all the different types of chili and vote for their favorites. The youth group provided cornbread, drinks, and toppings (like cheese and sour cream). Awards were given to the winners (we chose to give out certificates). We also bought some disposable Tupperware and sold containers of leftover chili to go. The Cook-Off concluded with a Dessert Auction. People brought their homemade cakes, pies, and cookies, and we auctioned them. *Sara S. - North Carolina*

TALENT SHOW/AUCTION

Our youth group has an annual Talent Show/Auction. The youth and any interested people from our congregation sing, dance, perform skits, and so on for the program portion of the evening. Afterwards, we auction off bake sale items and services. Examples of auctioned items include casseroles, cakes, pies, and special desserts. Examples of services include yard work, pressure washing of homes, dinners for four, and a fondue dinner for six. The Talent Show is a big attraction, and over 80 percent of the congregation comes and brings friends and extended family. Our youth group has made \$4,000 during the auction. *June C. Rick B. - Maryland*

TIME AND TALENT AUCTION

We solicited offerings of time and talent from our congregation. People offered things like "a child's birthday party for 10," "aerating and raking your yard," "a weekend at our cabin," "a blueberry pie," "a welcome baby gift basket"...you get the idea. Gifts were then auctioned via either a silent auction or live auction. The event was held on a Friday night, and to make it a little glamorous for adults, it was "black tie optional". Two of the girls going on the mission trip were auctioneers, and they dressed in evening gowns. The girls had been coached on how to be an auctioneer, as well as some clever ways to "sell" each item. The doors opened at 7 p.m. We served beverages and hors d'oeuvres. The decor was black tablecloths with black top hats, overflowing with silver confetti. From 7 p.m. to 8 p.m., the guests ate, drank, mingled, and bid on the silent auction items placed around the room. At 8 p.m. the live auction started. Each item was listed on a flip chart, so the girls didn't need notes. They flipped the chart, noted the item (which often had a funny picture of it drawn on the page), and started the bidding (the starting bid was at the bottom of the page to prompt them). The silent auction items were on the flip chart, too, and the winners were announced as the girls got to each particular item. After about an hour, we had an intermission. We ended between 9:30 p.m. and 10 p.m...we wanted people to wish it would go on longer, not hope it would be over soon. The response was overwhelming. People loved buying each

other's items and services. The auctioneers were fun, and everyone had a great time. Aside from the money that was raised, the congregation got to know one another better as they exchanged goods and services! *Buddy H. - Idaho*

DINNER AND SILENT AUCTION/LIVE AUCTION

Our young people prepared a dinner (Italian/Mexican/shrimp feast) and charged a flat fee for individuals and for families. We got a local distributor to donate most of the food and ingredients, so the only costs were decorations and drinks. During the dinner, we ran a video slideshow of the previous summer's mission trip so people could see what they're supporting. In conjunction with the dinner, we held a silent auction. Members of the church and people in the community donated items of value (not rummage-sale items, quality stuff). We had artwork, a week at a summer cottage, cleaning services, computer services, furniture, jewelry, time-share weeks, sports memorabilia, and so on. We found that if you get the right items, you can get some great bids going! *Mike P.*

SPAGHETTI DINNER

Our group had an All-U-Can-Eat Spaghetti Dinner, which was open to the public and advertised in the paper. All of our dinner supplies were donated by local businesses— sauce, meatballs, noodles, bread, and dessert—so our only cost was the ad and the paper products. We set up in our fellowship hall using long tables with fabric table-cloths, fresh flowers, and candles for family-style dining, and some small tables for couples. The youth group served, and some of our talented youth played dinner music on the piano. We asked for a \$10 donation per person, \$5 per child under 12. *Vanessa S.*

MONTHLY LUNCHEON

Our youth group has monthly luncheons following our church service. As the youth leader, I provide drinks (lemonade, water, and coffee) and dessert (one large cake and cookies), and the parents of the youth take turns hosting the monthly lunches. They usually work in groups of two and provide a variety of food each month. In the past, we've had potato bars, pizza, baked ham, and hot dogs and hamburgers (to name a few). We ask for a freewill offering and usually raise around \$200 to \$300 a month. It's a great fellowship opportunity, and the regularly scheduled event practically runs itself. *Jennie T. – Indiana*

WEDNESDAY FELLOWSHIP DINNER

Youth group meets every Wednesday from 6:30 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. But, before our youth group meeting, we prepare a home-style meal for our congregation members and their friends. The dinner is open to anyone who wants a good meal for a good price. We charge \$5 for adults, \$2.50 for children under 11, and no charge for children under 2. We serve dinner from 5:30 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. Our menus vary—baked chicken, spaghetti, meatloaf, soups, chili—basically good, old-fashioned, home-style meals. The dinners have become an opportunity for the youth to raise money, and for our congregation to enjoy fellowship and food. We have families and individuals ranging in age from 2 years old to 90 years old. For each dinner, we average about 50 to 60 persons and earn about \$75. *Vickie L. – Missouri*

FRIENDSHIP TEA

Mothers of the youth participating in the mission trip put on a Friendship (English) Tea. Members of our congregation and community are invited to attend. The young people help bake and prepare the sandwiches, cookies, and small finger foods. They also set up the tables, fill the teapots, serve the food and tea, perform worship songs, and then clean up afterward.

Three courses of food are served: Scones with jam and clotted cream Cucumber, salmon, and egg salad sandwiches Pretty iced cookies, tiny fairy (cup) cakes, strawberry shortcakes, and heart-shaped puffed

pastries with raspberries. The young people/servers dress in white shirts and dark dress pants. We also have a silent auction. *Desiree A. - New York*

LET'S NOT AND SAY WE DID!

Do you cringe when you receive an invitation to a high-priced charity dress-up event? Well, here is an easy fund-raiser geared for the busy folks who don't have the time (or desire) for another fancy event...We had a "pretend" gala event where tickets and tables were sold to a formal dinner dance that did not exist. Fancy invitations and tickets were printed (a local printer donated them), and sent to church members. The invitations looked very real, but we made it very evident that this was not a real event by using wording such as "You are cordially invited NOT to attend this gala event NOT located at the _____ and NOT held on July 12, 2017," and so on.

People loved being "off the hook" for another event and happily sent in their checks. We charged \$50 per person or \$200 for a table of eight. The "event" was also advertised in the local paper. We set up a free Web page to use as an RSVP site. On the Web page, we provided information about our mission project, goals, photos, and so on and also made it very evident that this is NOT a real event! Depending on your congregation/mailling list size, this event could net your group thousands of dollars with very little work! *Vanessa S. - Maryland*

DANCE MARATHON

Our group put on a 12-hour dance marathon. Each youth group member brought a maximum of five friends. Each individual raised \$40 to attend. We had about 50 youth, with the limit being 100. Every hour we had a different theme. The dance included a stage with live bands from the youth's friends, downloaded music, a break dance demo, an hour of line dancing with callers and instruction, different themes for different time periods, and disco to contemporary Christian music.

We went into the community for donations of food and door prizes to be given away each hour. There was also a food theme every hour. We decorated the church hall with disco lights, laser lights, mirror balls, and so on. We also had a crash room for Those who wanted to take a nap or quiet break. All the youth from our church had at least one parent or guardian as a chaperone for the entire period from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. Before the dance, we provided contact forms, release forms, and parent consent forms, which had to be filled out and signed. Also, we had nametags for everyone. Everyone in attendance won at least one door prize, which ranged from an MP3 player to a Cold Stone Creamery cake coupon. The dance took four months to plan and raised around \$3,800. *Anonymous*

COFFEE HOUSE

Our group has an annual Coffee House. People come and donate money to hear music and have snacks. *June C.*

50'S NIGHT

The first Wednesday in September, we turned the church parking lot into a '50s drive-in. Our youth were dressed in '50s attire (some with roller skates!) and served as the waiters and waitresses. Parents grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, and "customers" were given menus to check off what they wanted. A local radio station set up shop on the premises and played '50s music during the evening.

We also had hula-hoop and bubble-gum blowing contests, and we gave away inexpensive door prizes (a local Christian bookstore gave us freebie promotional stuff they'd received during the year). In case of bad weather, we'd have moved the event into the church basement and used a boom box and CDs. The only overhead was buying the little plastic "baskets" which can be reused. Members of the congregation and youth group donated most of the food.

Valerie V. - Iowa

THE FAMILY JEWELS ARE MISSING

We wrote an interactive, audience participation mystery titled “The Family Jewels Are Missing.” The event was inexpensive and also provided a way for the congregation to get involved. We asked for donations of sandwiches and goodies and also incorporated “actors” from the congregation. The youth served the food and cleaned up. The play was held on a regular Friday youth night, and there was no cost to attend. We put a jar near the front door and asked for donations to our mission trip. There was no pressure and no plate was passed. The play was in three acts. Food was served between the acts while the actors mingled with the crowd and asked questions and looked at the clues. The evening lasted between two and three hours, and we raised over \$700. *Sherry and Howard H. - Ontario, Canada*

BIBLE TRIVIA NIGHT

We enlisted a supreme "collector" of Bible trivia who made up about 45 questions. Then we recruited teams for a Bible trivia night. The more teams the better. Our church's council had a team, the boys' club had a couple of teams, parents had a team. . . we ended up with 15 to 20 teams. Each team paid a \$25 fee to enter.

TIP: While a Bible Trivia Night sounds like a lot of fun to us, we'd suggest your pastor or youth leader take a few moments to share how the Bible isn't trivial but a vital love letter to us from God. That way you get the fun game plus a brief message.

Teams could have as many people as they liked, but only four people could play at a time (we let people switch in and out about every five questions). The moderator read the question, and each team had a small dry-erase board or chalkboard slate to write down its answer. After about 15 seconds, the moderator called "Time," read the correct answer, and then the teams with the correct answer held their slates in the air until the scorekeeper recorded them. We gave away small gift certificates to the winning team. One thing we learned: Be sure your answers aren't vague, and have a Bible reference ready for the correct answer—people will quibble over the smallest details! Appoint your pastor or a similar authority to be the final judge.

Valerie V. – Iowa

LENTEN DINNERS

We provided Lenten dinners, prepared and served by our young people.

Barry G. – Maryland

LENTEN FISH AND CRAB CAKE FRY

Each Friday during Lent our young people (and their parents) fry up fish and crab cakes (baked servings are also offered). They also prepare fries with coleslaw or macaroni and cheese. In addition we offer a children's menu including peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, macaroni and cheese, and fish sticks. The cost is usually \$8 for the fish and \$12 for the crab cakes, and the kids' menu is \$5. *Bob S. - Maryland*

LUNCH WITH SANTA

On the second Saturday and Sunday in December, our mission trip participants made a lunch of smiley fries (yes, round fries with a smile on them—available at most grocery stores), hot dogs, macaroni and cheese, and ice cream. The lunch also included a picture with Santa, and a Santa's Workshop for kids to purchase items for mom and dad. In addition, we offered face painting—anything fun for children. *Bob S. – Maryland*

MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH

About a month before Mother's Day, our mission trip participants began to sell tickets for a Mother's Day Brunch. We set up a portion of our church hall as a formal dining room complete with tablecloths, napkins, silverware, and so on. The young people served as waiters, and we offered a full service buffet brunch including made-to-order omelets prepared by the young people (with adult supervision of course). We charged \$20 per person for this event.

Bob S. - Maryland

TIP: Resist the urge to schedule too many fund-raisers during holidays. As you well know, it takes you and your students away from your families during these times.

TIP: If you advertise Christmas-time events like this for children as a chance for parents to get out and do some Christmas shopping, you increase the value.

VALENTINE SWEETHEART DINNER DANCE

Every February we host a dinner for the congregation and friends. The youth decorate the fellowship hall in a Valentine theme. A photographer takes a picture of each couple and gives it to them as a memento. Each couple is greeted at the door by a hostess and seated at their table. Dinner is served by the youth (with a lot of help from other church members, as far as planning and preparing food). After the meal is music and dancing. We have a set ticket price, but a lot of people give over and above what we ask. This event has always been a big hit, and the youth love to do it.

Les L. - Tennessee

WINTER WONDERLAND DANCE

Our youth hosted an adult prom in February and titled it "Winter Wonderland Dance." We advertised it as an opportunity to return to your high school days and to invite your sweetheart" to the prom. The youth served as DJs, playing music from the 1940s to the 1980s. They decorated the fellowship hall with all kinds of winter decorations. We chose the theme because we were able to get all kinds of winter decorations on sale in the Christmas clearances. We hung snowflake ornaments from the ceiling and decorated tables with blue and silver. We had lots of candles too. Tickets were sold in advance. We also provided a snack buffet with food such as chips, cheese and crackers, little hot dogs, small sub sandwiches, and drinks. In addition to the dancing, guests had the opportunity to have their prom picture taken. We set up a backdrop and had an amateur photographer take "prom" couple pictures. Guests ordered the pictures they wanted, and we delivered them the following Sunday. We also had ballots for everyone to vote on the prom "king and queen." We tried to stay as true as possible to an actual high school prom with one exception—we provided childcare at no extra cost. The adults enjoyed the dancing, the fellowship, and dressing up. (Some even came in tuxes and long dresses, but most came casually dressed.) This event was such a hit that we have been requested to repeat it again this year. *Vickie L. - Missouri*

FOOTBALL RIVALRY COMPETITION

Our Football Rivalry Competition is based on the craziness of the Virginia Tech and University of Virginia football rivalry. Though the games are sometimes lopsided, this competition is fierce and raises lots of money for our mission trip experience. Here's how it works:

Several weeks before the big game, we put out plastic containers for each football team. We add a container for "don't care" or "designate your own team" just for equality's sake. Each dollar you put in your team's container counts as one vote (for example, \$300 equals 300 votes). The actual points scored in the game are added to each team's total (if 27 points are scored by your team, and there is 300 points in the container, the total for your team would be 327). The winning fans get a prize: They get to see

the other group of fans put on jerseys, sing fight songs, lead cheers, or put on tattoos of the opposite (winning) team, which, by the way, may not have won the actual football game. We generally get three to five fans from each team willing to commit to being present and performing the necessary task of homage to the other team. Use your imagination to come up with different ideas of how to pay homage to the winning team, but make sure it stays fun and not humiliating. The winning fans are revealed after church (keeping the winning team a secret) so we don't impinge on the dignity of the church service. We take pictures, too. All in great fun! We find that every couple of years works best for us (not every year). We raised \$1,000 (in a church of 350 members) through this simple, but fun, fund-raiser. *Doug P. - Virginia*

FALL SCENES

For \$30 our mission team delivers (and later removes) the following: three bales of straw stacked in a corner design (two bales on the bottom and one across those two on the top to form a corner setting), four pumpkins set around on the straw, and a bunch of cornstalks tied with bright orange ribbon set in the middle of the bales. We deliver these before Halloween and remove them before Thanksgiving. *Nancy B. - Iowa*

PRINCESS NIGHT

The high school girls of our youth group dreamed up Princess Night. They invited all the little princesses of the congregation ages 4 to 8 to a girl-only sleepover at the church (friends were welcome, too). Each princess was told to bring her favorite dress-up, a friend (doll or stuffed animal), sleeping bag, and so on. Parents signed permission forms and provided emergency contact info. The high school girls brought all the supplies for the activities, which included movies (little princess appropriate, like *Sleeping Beauty* or *The Little Mermaid*), manicures, makeup, dress-ups and fashion show (dolls and animals as audience), dancing, tea party, pillow fight, and pancake breakfast. None of the girls cried or wanted to go home—amazing! We charged only \$10 per girl, but most gave \$20. It was a huge success and parents are bugging us for another one! I recommend advertising this event up to a month in advance so parents can make plans for their night out. We had one teen “queen” for every four girls. Also plan on a few responsible adults spending the night, just in case. *Vanessa S. - Maryland*

MISSIONFAST28

Last year we tried something that is kind of a spin-off of the 30-Hour Famine, but it's focused on our teen missions. We call it MissionFast28. Students received sponsorship envelopes and collected sponsorships for their 28-hour fast to raise awareness of need and poverty, and to support the youth group doing its part to make a difference.

We held the fast the weekend of Palm Sunday, right before Easter. Over the weekend, the students learned about hunger and poverty issues. Our team served the church community as it prepared the church building for Holy Week. And, as it was the start of the Easter season, we had our own time to come together and walk the steps Jesus walked—what a powerful time! The weekend ended by sharing a light meal with parents to break our fast and discuss what we experienced.

Meg H. - Massachusetts

DUNKIN' WILLIE

“Dunkin' Willie” was the name of the dunking machine we rented. But it should have been named “Dunkin' Pastor” because ultimately, that's what happened. Our church has four picnics during the summer. At one of them, we decided to rent a dunking booth as a fund-raiser for the youth mission trip. At first, the idea was to have the youth leaders and some of the youth volunteers sit in the tank and charge \$1 to try and dunk the dunkee. However, our activity director and pastor came up with a better

idea. For \$300 the pastor would get in and allow one dunk. Then, after that, any additional dunks would be allowed for an additional \$50. They passed a bag around to collect money, and over \$700 was collected, just to dunk the pastor! An additional \$200 was collected as donations and for the others who were dunked. It was the first fund-raiser our church has ever done, and it was a huge success! Plus, it was a lot of fun and brought together people of different ages for the afternoon.

Georgia H. - Pennsylvania

THE PINK FLAMINGOS

For one month each year, pink flamingos land in the lawns of church members! The flamingos are made of plastic (available at lawn and garden stores), and about 20 get stuck into a person's yard. Members can purchase flamingo insurance to prevent the flamingos from landing in their yard. Those members who decide not to purchase the insurance are subject to a flamingo landing. When the flamingos land in a church member's yard, they must call the church to have them picked up by a youth. The church member then gets to tell the church office where the flamingos will land next. The youth are responsible for picking the flamingos up and dropping them off.

Dee E. - Minnesota

FILL THE SOFT DRINK CAN

On a Sunday; usually in January or February, the youth give an unopened can of soft drink to each person as they leave the service. We place a sticker on each can that lets people know they may enjoy the beverage. However, they're asked to wash out the can and fill it with change...especially paper money and checks. We ask them to return the can in a couple weeks. This is an easy fund-raiser. All you need to do is buy the soft drinks beforehand (make sure you have different kinds, because even though it's a fund-raiser, people won't take a can unless it's something they like). The youth are more than happy to drink the leftovers. *Mike P. - Wisconsin*

COOKBOOK

Ask church members to submit their favorite recipes by a specified date. Choose a date that will give plenty of time to create, proof, and publish the book. After you compile the recipes, ask several people to proofread the finished product. Then publish the cookbook through a publishing company or at home. *Note:* To help pay for the cost of printing the cookbooks, go to local area businesses and sell ad space in the back of the cookbook. Take a letter on church letterhead, with the pastor's signature, indicating the details of your fund-raiser. *Brian S. - Virginia*

DIRECT REQUEST

Several times during the year our young people speak at our services to update members on the fund-raising progress and to share their reasons for wanting to participate. They directly ask the congregation to contribute that day for a particular portion of the trip (for example, plane fare, van rental, adult chaperone cost).

Bob S. - Maryland

NAILS

We purchase new nails of various sizes and sell each nail for \$5 "in memory of" or "in honor of" someone. We set up a table covered by a paint-stained drop cloth, with "Nails for Service" painted on it. The nails are in boxes, and a small paint or metal bucket sits on the table nearby. Preprinted forms are available to indicate how many nails you wish to purchase and for whom the nails are being purchased in honor or in memory. The buyer also indicates his or her own name.

The money, form, and purchased nails are dropped into the bucket. We run this fund- raiser during Lent, ending on Palm Sunday. "Nails" during Lent have an additional meaning. The names of those honored and remembered are published in our April newsletter and Easter bulletin. A local denominational insurance agency graciously matches collected funds.

Youth serve at the table before and after each Sunday service during Lent. Even though the process may sound simple, it's a very emotionally moving activity. I am forever touched by the response we get from our small congregation contributing to our mission trip. Those participating in the mission trip may be physically doing Jesus' work, but we feel that we have the hearts and hands of our congregation working alongside us. The nails seem to take on a symbol of unity, connecting the giver, those whose name they were given in, the worker, and the family of the service project.

When we explain the nails to the people we serve on our mission trip, it becomes meaningful to them as well. One person commented with watery eyes, "Your church did this for me?"

PASS THE LIGHT

From Sunday October 21st to Thanksgiving Sunday November 18th, we're asking students and leaders all over NY to "Pass The Light". Leaders will be challenging students to choose a dollar amount to give weekly for those 4 weeks. We've connected different dollar amounts to different food items they would find on the Thanksgiving table. ALL the promo materials are in a Dropbox folder (linked below).

You'll find various promo slides, commitment cards (some with dates on them and some without) and you'll find a promo video. Feel free to use and pass on some or all of the materials. We've intentionally kept all the materials and the promo video generic enough to work anywhere. Nothing is specific to NY.

The video isn't great quality but the rest of the materials are pretty decent.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/w6iq1n69kjc58gs/hO6yOfiSbp>

Vimeo link to the video (also in the dropbox folder) explaining the campaign: <https://vimeo.com/49285952>