

FOR A HEALTHY G

a guide to
fun fundraising.



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INTRODUCTION.

God has called Christians to go and make disciples of all nations, preaching the good news, and teaching people how to show Christ's love to others (Matt 28; Mark 16). God has called us to spread the good news of his love to all people through our actions and words! To this end, Next Step Ministries is dedicated to helping your church be able to raise the necessary funds to attend one of our many possible causes. Within this packet you will find a sample of some of our favorite fundraisers, but please don't stop here. Go online where you can find more information on raising money and talk to leaders in your church who are already involved in successful fundraising. Look for partnerships in your church with groups that have good ideas and connections but need worker bees... youth have a lot of energy!

Build relationships with local businesses. Find people in your church who own or work for local businesses and ask them for support and guidance in your fundraising. When contacting a business for the first time, ask to "speak to someone who is able to make charitable contributions". Ask for specific contributions, i.e. 10 dozen hot dog buns. Be prepared to tell them all about the missions trip you'll be taking, many people are looking for a cause to be part of and will be excited to receive your call. Often businesses need to be contacted 6 weeks prior to the event in order to help.

For all fundraising events have a clear jar, marked for donations present and visible. Put a \$5 or \$10 dollar bill in the jar at the beginning of the event to start things off.

Cover all of your fundraising activities in prayer... let God be the chair of your fundraising committee. Keep church members well-informed through your church newsletters, and your fundraising activities well advertised.

And,
always remember to
keep the **FUN** in fundraising!

section one

CLASSIC SALES

■ student yard sales

■ bake sales

■ 50s dinner

■ dogs and scoops

■ chili cook off

student yard sales

This event is best done through your local church. Everyone in your church congregation has at least some second-hand items that they would love to get rid of, if only they had the chance. Well, here is their chance! You will be delighted to find that most people in your congregation would be more than willing to donate the proceeds of the material goods they no longer have use for to your student mission's effort. While there is a lot of planning that goes into this fundraiser, it can prove to be a great money maker in the end.

PLANNING

Make a date for the yard sale at least 4 months in advance.

Find a site for the yard sale 3 months in advance and then make a back up site just in case something goes astray from your original plan (e.g. rain).

Obtain necessary city permits and volunteers to help run the event 2 months in advance.

Ask your congregation to donate items 1 month before event and drop off items at a given location or garage of your choosing 1-2 days before the actual event date. Make sure you have enough volunteers and space to set up a nice display of the items up for sale. Remember, presentation is 25% of the sale.

Make sure you have a place for all goods if they do not sell (e.g. Goodwill or Salvation Army, these organizations may pick-up un-sold items if you call ahead). It is also important to know if any of the donating families would like any of their material goods back in case their items do not sell; give them a pick-up time or deadline.

Write Thank-You notes or cards to those families who donated to your sale.

bake sale

Here is a traditional fundraiser that depending on the size of your church is can raise a few hundred to a few thousand dollars. There are many variations of bake sales, I will discuss a Christmas Cookie Sale, but please don't feel pigeon-holed into one sort of theme.

PLANNING

Make a date for the Christmas Bake Sale at least 4 months in advance.

Recruit bakers 2 months before the event. Ask students and parents of students going on the mission trip as well as other church members who are interested to bake. Ask one parent to make phone calls and coordinate the sale.

Youth Groups should break out into small groups and at homes, baking several cookies 1-2 nights before the event itself. Not only does make good business sense, but it also makes for great fun!

Drop off cookies 1 day before, and the morning of the event in the church kitchen, or any place you may find it easy for the congregation to make the drop off. Label all cookies, Youth Missions (If you don't label these cookies, they have been known, according to some folks passing by, to be free for taste-testing... mmm!)

Pricing is the key to this fundraiser: It's best to go by weight, e.g., \$8.00 lb. (50 cents an ounce) works very well.

Don't forget that presentation of the cookies is important. For example, many families have Christmas plates they can offer for the day of the sale to set the cookies on, and your church should have table clothes, etc. Make it look festive... even playing Christmas music in the background.

Have disposable latex or plastic gloves available to handle the cookies. People buying cookies will put gloves on first, and then fill their own container with cookies they choose from those you have displayed on trays on the tables. Students will then weigh the cookies and the cashier will collect the money.

Obtain through donations from food stores, or buy in bulk, salad containers for people to place their cookies in. It only cost around \$7.00 for around 300 containers.

Be sure to have more than one food scale for weighing and extra change for the cashier.

50s dinner

Theme dinners are great fundraisers for everyone! There are so many themes to choose from (e.g. 50's, Italian, Mexican, Hawaiian, etc.), but remember, if you want to make this dinner a memorable experience for your congregation, as well as have this be an annual fundraiser for you, your presentation is very important! This event requires many volunteers and a lot of work to get it all set up, however, it can be very profitable and tons of fun!

ACCESSORIES AND DECORATIONS

Poodle Skirts, Sweaters, Letter jackets, etc. Watch a Happy Days episode and you'll get the idea. You can make the skirts or go to a local costume store for the costumes.

Roller Skates

Giant record replicas, and pictures or posters of the 50's

Juke Box or 50's music for playing in the background.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

If you have a youth band you could have them learn a little 50's music.

Have a Sock Hop

Hula-hoop Contest

Best 50's Costume Contest

Find a place for a dance doing 50's dances like the twist, etc.

You could have Grease or a Happy Days video playing in the background . I would suggest no volume for the movies, this way you will have the aesthetic without the disturbance of all the other activities going on around them (e.g. games, contests, etc.)

50s dinner continued

DINNER MENU

Maid-Rites or Sloppy Joes

Potato Chips

Pickles

Beverages (McDonald's many donate orange drink)

Brownies

PLANNING

Make a date for the SO's Dinner at least 5 months in advance.

Obtain a Volunteer list of e-mails for all students and parents attending the mission trip 4 months before the event. It would also be well advised to obtain a list of e-mails of all those who like to cook or help decorate for the day of the event.

Contacts local businesses who might be willing to donate chips, soda, or brownies 6 weeks ahead of time.

Decide who will prepare the food , set up the room, wash dishes, and clean up afterwards at least 1 month ahead of time.

Make sure you get permission before putting any of your youth on roller skates in your church 1 month ahead of time.

Sell tickets 1 month in advance, but have enough food available for walk-ins.

For jobs that are less fun like cleanup, consider rotating shifts of workers so that no one gets stuck doing only the dirty work. Work out a schedule 1 week ahead of time.

Drop off Sloppy Joes or Maid Rights and other food and drink items the afternoon of the event in the church kitchen, or any place you may find it easy for the congregation to make the drop off. Label all food, Youth Missions.

dogs and scoops

This is an easy fundraiser and can actually generate a good deal of money. This event is best done on a warm day after a church services let out. To make your initial cost low remember to look for donations from your local grocery stores several months ahead of time to keep cost down. You may be truly amazed at the generosity of store managers when it comes to helping those in need (e.g. disaster relief for hurricane victims in New Orleans & Mississippi).

MENU

Hot Dogs/Hot Dog Buns

Chopped Onions, Relish, Ketchup and Mustard

Napkins

Paper Plates

2 Flavors of Ice Cream

Ice Cream Cones

PLANNING

Make a date for the Dogs and Scoops at least 4 months in advance.

Obtain a Volunteer list of e-mails for all students and parents attending the mission's trip 3 months before the event. It would also be well advised to obtain a list of e-mails of all those who like to cook or help with setup for the day of the event.

Decide who will prepare the food, set up the tables, and clean up afterwards at least 2 months ahead of time.

To keep cleanup at a minimal this would be a great event to run outside the church.

Using paper plates is also an awesome way to keep the event simple.

Drop off Hot Dogs the afternoon before the event in the church kitchen, or any place you may find it easy for the congregation to make the drop off. Label all food, Youth Missions.

chili cook-off

During those cold winter months, a chili cook off is a wonderful way to warm up. This is another great event to do right after church on a Sunday. With this event your dollar investment is low and your profit margin is high.

SUPPLIES

You will only need to supply crackers, drinks, desserts, and maybe chili toppings like cheese and chopped onions (Look for donations at your local grocery stores).

Table cloths, spoons, bowls, etc.

Remember, presentation (aesthetically and verbally) is worth 25% of the profits earned.

Get ribbons (1st , 2nd & 3rd place) and or certificates for the winners.

PLANNING

Make a date for the Chili Cook-Off at least 4 months in advance.

Obtain a volunteer list of e-mails for all students and parents attending the mission's trip 3 months before the event. It would also be well advised to obtain a list of e-mails of all those who like to cook or help with setup for the day of the event.

Decide who will prepare the food , set up the tables , and clean up afterwards at least 2 months ahead of time.

Create a line of volunteer judges and decide on your categories, e.g. , Spiciest Chili, Best All Around, Most likely to please your pastor, etc. Just be creative 1 month ahead of time.

On your computer you can make a winning certificate and/or buy some 1st place ribbons for the event (very cheap).

Drop off chili the afternoon of the event in the church kitchen, or any place you may find it easy for the congregation to make the drop off. Label all food, Youth Missions.

section two



car wash

rent-a-youth

singing telegram

dog wash

car wash

Have a car wash , but with a twist. Advertise that the car wash will be free, that is, no set fee will be charged for the service, but you will accept donations. Ok, so some people may take advantage of this, but more people will probably pay more through donation than you would have gotten by charging them at a set price. Remember, that in case of rain, it is always good to advertise a back up date for your car wash. Have fun!

SUPPLIES

Water, water hoses, rags, tire brushes, detergent, towels, buckets, sponges, glass cleaner, etc.

Have two vacuum cleaners, so that two people can vacuum the inside of the car at the same time (one on each side). Make sure you vacuum cars away from the wash area.

If electrical outlets are not conveniently located, take extra-long extension cords.

Make signs for advertising (Poster Board, Markers, etc.)

PLANNING

Make a date for the Car Wash at least 4 months in advance.

Select a place where an abundance of water is available.

Obtain a volunteer list of e-mails for all students and parents attending the mission trip 3 months before the event.

Make sure you have many volunteers so that you can get through as many cars as fast as possible.

Advertise you car wash in your bulletins, newsletter, via skit in service, etc.

rent-a-youth

This event can be a great deal of fun, as well as a great opportunity to help out those in your congregation who are in need of help with physical labor around their homes. This event would be great to be coupled with one of the dinners, and another way to draw in your needed audience. The key to this fundraiser will truly rely on your volunteer base, especially that of the auctioneer's ability to work the crowd.

PLANNING

Make dates for the Rent a Youth at least 4 months in advance.

Obtain a Volunteer list of e-mails for all students attending the mission's trip 3 months before the event.

Advertise this fundraiser in your bulletins, newsletter, via a skit in service, etc.... continued

Find a volunteer auctioneer to auction off the youth 1 month before the event. If you can get a professional auctioneer it makes the event even more exiting.

Make a list of examples that the youth would be able and willing to do 1 month before the event.

The keys to this event are getting your congregation to this event in the first place, and the other is having a good auctioneer be able to work the crowd.

Make sure you have Rent-a-Youth contracts ready to be signed at the event. Both the renter and the worker are to sign the forms and agree on the type of services to be performed, the date for the services to be performed, and the amount of time required.

singing telegram

Does your youth group have some talented singers in it? If yes, you could start an ongoing singing telegram service! You could sing over the telephone, deliver the singing telegrams in person, place of work, or at your local church. This fundraiser will rely heavily on your singing team's ability and availability.

PLANNING

Create a period of time that will work for you, or you may even want this event to keep going throughout the year.

Create a cost for the telegrams (e.g. 20 dollars each).

Create songs or use already written songs for Birthdays , I Love You, I'm Sorry, Have a Good Day, Feel Better, I'm glad you're my friend, etc. Make the songs fun, and if your church is willing, give them a sample of their possible telegrams in service.

One volunteer person should be in charge of taking all the calls for the telegrams. This same person must also find out where the recipient lives, or where the gram should be given. They must also find out what times are available to send your team of singers. In many cases the main contact person should be the Youth Leader.

dog wash

Here is a unique fundraiser for your youth group. This fundraiser is best done in collaboration with a dog grooming service, but can be done without as well. Everyone needs their dogs groomed and pampered once and a while, so why not pamper them and have their money given to a worthy cause at the same time. For one day or weekend, a church congregation and their friends bring in their pets for grooming at a groomer's shop. If the dog owners are pleased with the groomer's services, the groomer may have just acquired a lot of new business! It's a win-win.

SUPPLIES

Water, water hose, rags, brushes, shampoo, towels, buckets sponges, etc.

The groomer will provide the professional equipment and supplies.

Make signs for advertising (Poster Board, Markers, etc.)

PLANNING

Make a date or dates for the Dog Wash at least 4 months in advance.

Obtain a Volunteer list of e-mails for all students and parents attending the mission's trip.

3 months before the event. It would also be well advised to obtain a list of e-mails of all those who like to help with setup for the day of the event. If you can get a real dog groomer to volunteer their time for this fundraiser you will be in even better shape (students wash & the groomer grooms the pets).

Create advertisement 2 months before the event for your church bulletin, newsletter, and skit during the service if the church will allow it. Remember, if you are allowed to do a skit, make sure it is done well (Presentation is key)!

Have sign-ups ready for the congregation 2 months before the event so that you have plenty of time to fill up the allotted time slots available to you (this holds especially true if you are working with a grooming service).

section three

CREATIVE APPROACH

pastor bobblehead

community carnival

purchase miles

kidnap your pastor

easter egg sponsor

outback steak dinner

company sales partnership

pastor bobblehead

This one's a little outside the box but if done at the right time can be a huge fundraiser. The concept is simple: create a bobblehead of your pastor or a prominent staff member. The key is to do the right person at the right time. A great time to do this is if you have someone retiring, a new hire, a birthday or a special event. We used this fundraiser when our pastor retired and made thousands. There are many companies that you can find online that create bobbleheads. In the past we have used The Bobble Factory and have been very happy. (www.bobblefactory.com)

PLANNING

Determine which pastor or staff member you want to turn into a bobble head 3 months before date of sale.

Take a picture of your selection (we recommend a picture of the person in recognizable clothes, i.e. pastoral robe, collar, favorite shirt, staff shirt, etc)

Determine how many bobbleheads you think you will be able to sell and select a company online to produce the bobbleheads. (Again, we recommend the Bobble Factory)

Send the picture in and order your bobbleheads 2 months before planned date of sale.

Promote, Promote, Promote... make the arrival of the bobblehead much anticipated!

Have a big opening sale date (after service, at a picnic, special event, etc) and continue to sell for 3-4 weeks.

Have fun with it! (have the pastor sign one and raffle it, take pictures with the pastor make videos, etc.)

community carnival

This is a fun event for the congregation and the community. It's a great outreach opportunity which can generate a lot of interest in your mission trip. A carnival event takes a little bit of set up effort but can definitely raise some dollars. For this fundraiser; plan a day of fun, games, food and music at a local park.

PLANNING

Pick a date for the community carnival 3 months in advance.

Select a local park, church or lot where you can host the event 3 months in advance.

Get a park permit if necessary so you can use shelter and have access to electricity.

Select a student planning committee to run the event (5-10 students) 3 months in advance.

Brainstorm and plan plenty of events, games, activities and food for the event (cookout, volleyball, bounce castle, face painting, dunk tank, paper fishing, ring toss, Frisbee games, clowns, music, raffles, prizes etc)

Start collecting donations and items for activities 2 months in advance.

Create signs, posters and flyers and advertise the event to the congregation and community 1 month in advance.

Sell tickets at church starting 3 weeks in advance.

Day of the event: be sure to have plenty of student helpers and containers for donations.

purchase miles

Most churches going on a mission trip have quite a few miles to drive in order to get to their desired mission field. So here is a very visible and fun way for your congregation to help their youth arrive at their destination.

PLANNING

Create out of poster board a large mileage scale (bar graph) showing clearly how many miles it takes to reach your mission field. Be creative and make this colorful and easy to read. For example, you can make it long and wrap it around the ceiling of the narthex or entry way above the sanctuary.

Decide on the price it will cost you to travel to your destination. Divide the total cost of the trip by the number of miles it takes to get there to find the cost per mile that you're trying to raise (e.g. $\$10,000.00 / 500\text{mi.} = \20.00 per mile).

Sell miles! People can give \$10 to buy a half mile, \$20 for a whole mile. Keep track of your progress by updating your mileage chart each week showing miles purchased.

Make sure within your poster board scale you are able to color in mile markings and also key mile markings (e.g., every 50 mi. change color).

See if your church would allow you to keep this poster board very visible to your congregation during the entire fundraiser... it's important to keep them updated on your progress and people often get caught up in the spirit of this event and donate several times in order to get to the destination!

kidnap your pastor

Here is a fundraiser that is a blast for your congregation. This Ransom will take 3 weeks to work out. Remember that there are different variations of this, e.g., bail your pastor out of jail, etc. Here is how it works. Work out a time with your pastor for when he will be taking vacation or be at a conference, etc., and plan the event around this time.

You will need to write out a script for 3 videos and you can shoot the videos in one afternoon so it shouldn't take too much time to do. If you do not have video capabilities you may also just go before your congregation on Sunday mornings. Obviously you will need a video camera and someone who can do introductory video editing.

Here's how it works, your pastor, after their sermon, and while they have just finished the benediction is captured by 2 or 3 youth and their youth leader (you should be recognizable so no one calls 911), but still dress the part of a burglar type. After you grab your pastor you then run out of the church with him. At this point if you have video capabilities in your church you can go directly to the big screen, or you can just have your youth pastor stay in front of the congregation in costume and announce to the congregation that their pastor has just been kidnapped and in order to get him/her back they must pay a ransom of 3,000.00 dollars to the kidnappers for the mission trip.

The pastor then leaves for vacation and the kidnappers for the next 2 weeks stand in the fellowship hall or narthex area dressed in their outfits with a briefcase open waiting to accept the ransom from any congregation member. After the 2-3 weeks your pastor comes back to your congregation because the ransom was paid. This fundraiser is usually a real crowd pleaser.

easter egg sponsor

The Easter egg fundraiser is a fairly simple fundraiser, and has been known to raise thousands of dollars.

PLANNING

3 months before the fundraiser begins you must contact all students attending the mission trip to fill out a profile, which should include: their picture, full name, school, grade, hobbies, their favorite Bible passage and why, etc. Print this student information up on an 8x11 piece of paper.

Also make a 1/4 sheet of paper with each individual student's name, requesting the following information.

You may copy students profiles and 1/4 sheets for the number of eggs you plan on distributing. (i.e. for a congregation of 500 make approximately 250 eggs) You will have to duplicate students profiles.

Start this fundraiser 3 Sundays before Easter Sunday after services and ending on Easter Morning as the last day to grab their eggs.

The eggs can be handed out by students as the congregation leaves out the doors of the sanctuary.

The profiles give options of financial donations or prayer donations they just need to check one and return the egg with profile and possible donation.

Make sure there are baskets and/or designated places to return the eggs. It would also be good to give a deadline for the sponsorship.

I, _____ will sponsor (student's name)
with a donation of...

___ \$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 ___ Other ___ Prayer
(check one or all that apply)

Contact Information
Mailing Address

Thank you so much for your support! Please return this slip to _____ in the main office at your earliest convenience.

outback steak dinner

This is a great fundraiser to pair up with a silent auction, concert or conduct on its own. This is also a fundraiser that does a good job of raising money from people outside of your congregation. Local restaurants such as Outback Steakhouse and Chili's are excited to be involved in supporting their community and offer an incredible deal. Participating restaurants will provide a free steak dinner to a nonprofit group (e.g. your church) if you can sell 100 dinner tickets. This means your church can make a 100% profit on the tickets you sell! In the past, we have paired this event with a concert and advertised throughout the city. We have charged up to \$30 per plate (a guaranteed \$3,000.) (Because Outback provides a very high quality meal we suggest marketing this one as a "classy" dinner or "black tie" event.)

PLANNING

Verify that your local Outback Steakhouse or Chili's participates in this community donation.

Select a date for the dinner 4 months in advance.

Select a location and theme for the dinner 3 months in advance.

Order the steak dinners from the restaurant manager 2 months in advance.

Promote the dinner event with flyers, posters, radio ads, and word of mouth 2 months in advance.

Recruit your youth to act as hosts, wait staff, servers and cooks.

Decorate location as a "black tie" event using table cloths, flowers, glassware etc. Businesses that offer tuxedo rentals will often donate black ties and cummerbunds for wait staff to wear the night of the event.

company sales partnership

Pizza Hut and Krispy Kreme both offer fantastic fundraising programs. They are perfect for raising money in your congregation or local community.

PIZZA HUT

Pizza hut has a fundraising program for you to sell coupon booklets. They send you coupon sheets to print yourself, and then you sell the coupon sheets for \$10 and reimburse Pizza Hut \$5 for each one you sell. Each coupon sheet has many discount deals and money off as well as a card for a free medium pizza so they basically pay for themselves.

They cost you nothing and are easy to sell being worth the one coupon for the free medium pizza in itself.

KRISPY KREME

Krispy Kreme provides an easy way to organize a fundraiser to sell donuts. All you have to do is visit their website or call to begin the process. After you pre-sell boxes of donuts, you arrange to pick up fresh donuts from your nearest Krispy Kreme location. Then it is simple delivery and good eating from there on!

section four

SUCCESS STORIES

- no church required ideas
- sales
- services
- special events
- sundries and other stuff

no church required ideas

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 ACTION

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 mission trip 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

EXPLOSIVE SALES

Our youth group operates a fireworks stand. Laws vary greatly around the country who can sell fireworks, but in our area we make around \$5,000 in a week.

BARB M.
kansas

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

HOLIDAY SHOPPING SAZAAR

We invite 15 to 20 home businesses (like The Pampered Chef, 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

no church required ideas

PARENT'S DAY OUT AT CHRISTMAS

Our youth spent a Saturday in December babysitting while parents went Christmas shopping for their children. We allowed enough time (9a.m. to 4p.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

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

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

sales

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

sales

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 A.
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.

RAY V.
north carolina

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

sales

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 fundraiser 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, grandmother, 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

NEWSPAPER SALE

Our church is somewhat rural. The nearest store that sells the Sunday paper is a bit of a drive, so we sell the Sunday paper at church. The local paper drops off the inserts on Friday and the news sections on Sunday. I schedule youth, two months at a time, to sell papers. On Sunday morning, a young person arrives to put the newspapers together, and then another youth sells them throughout the morning. The company charges us \$.25 per paper and doesn't charge us for any papers we don't sell. Most businesses around the area charge \$1.50 per paper, but we charge only \$1.25. Many people in our congregation have stopped having the paper delivered to their house and buy through us instead. We make about \$30 a week selling 25 to 35 papers. Any unsold papers get picked up on Monday morning; along with the money we owe the newspaper company. This is a very easy fundraiser that doesn't take much work once you get it going.

BRENDA C.
new york

services

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 fundraiser 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

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 fundraiser with a congregation of about 150 (about 3 people to every car).

BRENDA C.
new york

special events

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

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.
maryland

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

special events

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

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 item, 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.
ohio

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 heartshaped 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

special events

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 fundraiser 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, 2006," 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/ mailing list size, this event could net your group thousands of dollars with very little work!

VANESSA S.
maryland

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

REPORTING SUNDAY

Reporting Sunday is a Sunday where youth talk about their mission experiences. We have a great slide show; youth lead worship, and present great information in the church bulletin about the present year's mission trip. As the pastor, I emcee the worship time, filling in gaps. The theme of the worship is "thank you for making a mission trip possible." We "sell stock" or ask for donations of support for the mission team. Reporting Sunday allows members of the congregation to feel as if they're a part of the team, support youth, and directly affect the lives of the youth.

DAN S.
minnesota

special events

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.

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. 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

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

special events

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

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, fundraiser.

DOUG P.
virginia

sundries and other stuff

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 fundraiser.

BRIAN S.
virginia

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 is what happened. Our church has four picnics during the summer. At one of them, we decided to rent a dunking booth as a fundraiser 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 fundraiser 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 FLAMINGO

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.

DAN S.
minnesota

sundries and other stuff

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 fundraiser. All you need to do is buy the soft drinks beforehand (make sure you have different kinds, because even though it's a fundraiser, 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

MISSION BULLETIN BOARD

We put up a bulletin board with pictures of each of the mission team members, along with a map of where we're going. We create coupons for baked goods, cases of water, soda, sport drinks, and differing quantities of gas (figuring from 2 to 300 gallons). Congregation members take the coupons and offered a donation or in-kind gift.

BARRY G.
maryland

LETTER CAMPAIGN

Our campaign began with an overnight lock-in. During the lock-in, we photographed each youth member with a digital camera, printed and signed letters, addressed envelopes, and then had fun the rest of the evening. At the lock-in, we took the church directory, divided the members into groups of 10, and gave each youth group member a list of 10 people. We created a form letter. Each young person attached their photograph to letters addressed to 10 church members, asking for a monthly donation of at least \$10.

Some members sent in one sum of money, others sent in monthly checks, and some did not respond at all. Midyear, we sent another letter to the church members thanking them and letting them know we were close to our targeted amount. We were also able to communicate with members who did not come to church often or who had retired and moved but still were a part of our church body. This kept us from taxing our weekly church members; many of who were youth group parents. We raised all the money we needed, plus some seed money to start this year's fundraising.

WEEZIE H.
new jersey

LOOSE CHANGE COLLECTION

About two months before our mission trip, we put out a large vase and a "thermometer" drawn on a piece of poster board. We tell the congregation our goal is to collect \$800 in loose change to pay for gas. Members dump change in each week, and we take it to the bank, marking the thermometer so people can see how close we are to the goal. This is an incredibly easy no overhead fundraiser that gets everyone involved.

VALERIE V.
iowa

sundries and other stuff

NAILS FOR SERVICE

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 fundraiser 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?”

TOOL LADDER

About six weeks before our mission trip, we compile a list of tools we need. We then make tool tags (similar to tags on a Christmas tree for gifts for the less fortunate) and put them on a stepladder. We make the tags colorful, and each tag asks for an item—it could be a roller cover, a hammer, or even a 12-foot ladder—and we include information on when the item needs to be brought to the church. In addition, we make “prayer tags” for each mission trip participant, requesting prayer for that person. And, on the back of the tag, we provide information on how to send a greeting to that person during the mission trip.

MARCIA F.
connecticut