

FUNdraising with Teens

by Margaret Hinchey

Fundraising: A Mixed Blessing (Or, “We’ve Got to Raise How Much?”)

The scene is the same in churches of different denominations across the country. There’s a special youth trip or activity coming up, and it takes money to make it happen. Where do you begin?

Somehow it would be easier to simply assess each young person going on the trip his or her share of the expenses. But ease *isn’t* the name of the game. In fact, the positives of active and creative fundraising far outweigh the negatives of the time and trouble you might incur. In the following pages, you’ll discover information and tips on how to raise funds with your youth group. You’ll also find out how to create a positive attitude and establish a game plan to help everyone involved become excited about your youth group fund raisers.

Why Bother with Fundraisers?

Fundraisers are usually thought of as having only one purpose: accumulating funds for a specific project. If that’s the case, then you can probably assume there are several other ways to finance a project. For example:

- Your congregation may simply decide to take the needed funds out of the church treasury.
- The youth group may plan far enough in advance so the youth activity can become a part of the church budget for the coming year.
- Each young person or parent who plans to participate in the project may be assessed a portion of the costs for the event.
- Monthly dues may be charged to youth group members and placed in the youth group treasury to finance upcoming events.
- Grants, scholarships, or matching funds from benevolent organizations or companies are possible, especially for service-related projects.
- Direct donations may be solicited from members or friends of the church.

As you can see, fundraising isn’t the only way to meet financial goals. Propose some of the preceding suggestions as alternatives to fundraising or suggest they be used in combination with the fundraising projects.

Criteria for Using Fundraisers

Your youth group members may want to establish some guidelines or criteria for the fundraisers they plan. On the next page is a checklist of possible criteria to consider before you begin fundraising. Duplicate this checklist and have both young people and adults complete it. Hold a meeting to discuss criteria and examine potential fundraisers while using the list. If you publish the checklist ahead of time, in a newsletter or in a bulletin, all of the congregation will have an understanding of the forethought and planning that have gone into your fundraising efforts.

This checklist may only be a beginning, depending on the constitution of your youth group and church. It will, however, open the door to healthy discussions about purposes for fundraisers as well as give ownership to others. It may also assure you that everyone has a common understanding of the purpose of your fundraising.

Fundraising Checklist

Our youth group fundraisers should:

- Directly benefit both the youth group and the individual who is purchasing our services.
- Reach out to serve another’s needs as we fulfill our own; that is, be “other-directed” as well as “us-directed.”
- Give a portion of the profits to a worthy cause outside the group.
- Sell an item or service that the buyer needs.
- Be divided between whole group efforts and individual projects.

- Be selected by both the youth group and the advisers.
- Be voted upon and approved by parents of the young people.
- Be approved by the pastor or appropriate church leaders.
- Be approved by the church council (or other governing body).
- Be limited to ___(number of) fund-raising projects per year.
- Be fun as well as work.
- Other: _____

Do's and Don't's of Fundraising

Before proceeding with fundraising, consider the following:

1. Do begin your planning well in advance of the event. Allow at least twice as much time as you think you will need.
2. Don't wait until the last minute to solicit adult help. Ask parents and other adults to get involved during the beginning stages of planning.
3. Do be selfish. Consider your own schedule in the plans.
4. Don't forget the busy lives of your teenagers. Remember to consider their schedules.
5. Do give ownership to young people, parents, and other adults by seeking their advice, assistance, and support from the start.
6. Don't assume anything. Figure all costs of a project at their highest potential. It's better to be surprised if there's extra money left rather than disappointed because the project costs more than you expected.
7. Do be creative. Think of every possible angle of support for your young people. Consider every way to get what you need.
8. Don't move ahead with a project without proper approval from your church council or governing board. Use the channels your church has established.
9. Do keep people informed. Make sure the congregational members, staff, parents, and young people are fully aware of the projects, the expectations, the goals, and the time frame for every event.
10. Don't forget to pray for your young people and the benefits they can receive through the fundraising projects as well as the events they are raising money for.
11. Do help young people see a purpose in their projects other than simply raising funds for their events.
12. Don't build failure into projects by neglecting publicity, planning, and adequate personnel to carry out the event.
13. Do thank people who assist with your projects—young people, adults, and businesses who donate goods and services. Everyone enjoys appreciation, whether it be public or private.
14. Don't forget to have fun!

Developing a Planning Calendar

One way to avoid communication break-downs and missed goals is to establish a planning calendar. Develop the calendar in a way that it can be duplicated for your young people, parents, and church staff.

The amount of lead time and the number of fundraisers you will need depend upon the amount of money your group needs. For example, taking 10 young people on an overnight retreat at \$25 per person means you'll only need to raise \$250. But if you plan to take 30 young people across the country to a summer event in Colorado, you'll have a different situation to address. With an estimate of \$400 per person, you'll need to raise \$12,000, which could take several months and involve several fundraising projects. So start planning now...

Steps in the Planning Process

1. Consult your pastor about the activity you want to support with fundraising. If you don't have the support of your pastor and the rest of the church staff, you'll be fighting an uphill battle even before fundraising begins. (This includes the person who types the bulletin and the newsletters into which much of your publicity goes!)

2. Get approval from the proper church board or committee for the trip or event you're planning. A clear understanding of your intent will stifle criticism and skepticism about your fundraising efforts.
3. Meet with the youth board, including counselors and officers of the youth group. Make sure leaders support the event you're promoting. This support includes a commitment to have adequate adult supervision and participation of officers at the event and at the fundraisers.
4. Form a fundraising planning committee from your youth and adult leadership. Make sure individuals on the committee have gifts that relate to fundraising as well as creativity and wisdom. Don't just pick friends or people you like!
5. Write a job description for the committee. Include necessary timetables and goals. Make sure everyone knows this group is a *planning* committee so its members aren't expected to do all the fundraising themselves.
6. Organize a fun, informative evening for the entire youth group and their parents. Discuss the event being planned and ask the fundraising planning committee to make an initial report about how funds can be raised to support the activity. If promotional videos, slides, and other media are available, be sure to have them on hand to "sell" the idea. This kind of report will give added impetus to the suggested fund raisers. Invite questions and be prepared to answer them or find out the answers as soon as possible.
7. Ask youth group members and their parents to talk about the activity at home. Give each group member a commitment form. Have them complete the form, indicating their interest in the activity and their willingness to participate in the planning and execution of fundraisers to support the activity.
8. Set a deadline for returning the commitment forms. Once you have the number of people identified, you can start to plan your fundraisers.

Use of a Fundraising Planning Committee

Once you've gained approval and support from church leaders, adult counselors, and young people, the fun begins. Encourage members of your fundraising planning committee to be creative.

Plan an evening of brainstorming with your fundraising committee, adult counselors, and other key leaders. Suggest to the committee that they invite congregational members who are experienced with fundraising for civic or business organizations. Ask different youth leaders to read a portion of this guide ahead of time and be prepared to offer two or three fundraising suggestions they like from each section. Ask them to share in detail the purpose, expectations, and desired results of each fundraiser. Tape newsprint to the walls of your meeting room and list possible fundraisers. Remember: In brainstorming, people do not express opinions—yet.

After the creativity of your group is exhausted and the list has been made, divide fundraisers into three categories: sales, services, and special events. Decide which suggestions are feasible for your group.

Give each person a means for voting on the fundraisers he or she believes are the best. You can do this with a show of hands, a secret ballot, or even the dot method. (For the dot method, purchase colored, self-sticking dots from your local office supply store. Buy two or three different colors. Give individuals the same number of dots and allow them to vote by placing their dots on the newsprint sheets. If you choose to use more than one color dots, you might give instructions such as the following: "The bright orange dots indicate, 'This fundraiser looks great,' the blue dots represent, 'I don't think this one is too hot,' and the brown dots say, 'Yuck, I don't think we should even suggest this one.'" This method of voting gives a quick visual approach to feelings about the top fundraisers.)

Have the committee take the final list of suggested fundraisers to the next youth group meeting for approval. It might be wise to choose three times as many fundraisers as you actually intend to use so youth group members can provide input and feel like they're part of the decision. Have committee members prepare to discuss the following about each fundraising idea:

1. Purpose of the fundraiser.
2. How it will be carried out.
3. Needs and time expectations.
4. Anticipated income.

After committee members have offered their suggestions and responded to group members' questions and concerns, ask for approval from the group. Use one of the methods suggested before. Ask the fundraising planning committee to take the group members' responses to formulate a fundraising plan for presentation at the next meeting.

Forming a Fundraising Game Plan

Much of the success for your fundraising depends upon timing. For example, three sales fundraisers during the month of January, after people have spent their money on Christmas presents, followed by two months with no fundraisers indicates poor planning. Allow time between fundraisers and vary the nature of the projects among sales, services, and special events. If you choose six fundraisers to support an activity, try to have a balance between those three categories.

Remember, certain projects are seasonal. A 1950's drive-in is great fun. But if you live in Minnesota, you'd better plan to have it during a summer month! Fertilizer sales work great in the spring, rummage sales fare well in the fall, and Christmas wreaths sell best in November and December. For everything (including fundraising projects) there is a season.

Group or Individual Projects?

It's important to think about the nature of your young people. Face it, some kids just aren't salespeople. Some teenagers would rather die before they ask someone to buy their project. This means that if a young person is to profit from a sales fundraiser, Mom or Dad will probably take the product to work and sell it to people there. On the other hand, that same young person might have tremendous talent at putting together a great talent show, publicizing an event or helping with a fellowship night at church.

Strive for a balance between group projects (everyone works together and divides the profits) and individual projects (the individual reaps the benefits of his or her own initiative and/or selling capacity).

Alternating group projects and individual projects on a monthly basis can benefit your group. Begin with a whole group project so everyone's account will register an amount in the ledger. You might schedule your fundraisers like this:

Month	Event	Distribution of Profits
January	Chili Supper	Group accounts
February	Light Bulb Sale	Individual accounts
March	All Night Bake Sale	Group accounts
April	Fertilizer Sale	Individual accounts
May	Singing Tel-a-Grams for moms	Group accounts
June	Cinnamon Roll Sale	Individual accounts
July	1950's Drive-In	Group accounts

Group Projects. Establish guidelines ahead of time that explain clearly how profits from a given project will be divided. For example, if your youth group sponsors a Parents' Day Off, decide whether everyone who works that day will get an equal share of the profits. Consider people who only work part of a day or merely help with publicity and scheduling. The fundraising planning committee and adult youth group leaders should address the questions early. After devising an equitable formula for dividing funds, the committee must publicize and maintain its position so group members will understand what's going on.

Individual Projects. Every group has a few "go-getters" who can sell anything to anybody. (Their relatives, friends, and neighbors usually have closets full of calendars, candy bars, and Christmas ornaments they've purchased from the go-getters!) If one of your youth group members is particularly good at sales, ask that person to share his or her techniques with the others. Have that individual give a sales demonstration or tutor the less eager salespeople in the group. Check to see if this super-salesperson would be willing to go with others and coach them on their door-to-door efforts.

When planning fundraisers, remember sales are much easier if items are similar to what buyers would purchase anyway. Think about selling household items such as soap, food products, and gifts. Novelties and more frivolous items are easier for buyers to resist. Picking the wrong item to sell only wastes time. Suggest to young people that they select items that are useful to their buyers. Easy sale boosts not only sales but the egos of the sellers.

Combination. Some events may combine group and individual projects. For example, group members may take individual orders for pizzas, then get together on a Sunday afternoon to make pizzas and deliver them. In that case, a percentage of the profits could go to the individual sellers and a percentage of those who make and deliver the pizza creations.

The "free" car wash also has benefits for the group as well as individuals. Before the project, individuals can seek pledges from individuals or businesses for the number of cars the group will wash. Those care owners who haven't made a pledge but just "show up" at the car wash may choose to make a donation to the group. These donations can be divided among all car washers who worked the day of the project.

It's possible that through combined individual projects and group projects some individuals may raise their share of the funds early. If this happens, young people should agree on how to handle this situation before it becomes a problem. For example, your committee might establish a policy in which individuals who reach their goal would be encouraged to participate and help others in group projects, but their share of the profits would be divided among the others until all members have reached their goal. When everyone reaches the goal, use the additional profits for paying the way of adult leaders, planning a surprise stop on the trip, or contributing to a worthy cause.

Accounting Procedures

No matter what size group or what amount of money you're working with, you should have accurate and fair accounting procedures for fundraisers. This may be the first time your young people have dealt with money that isn't solely their own. Through supervision and proper advice, they can learn proper budgeting and accounting procedures that will help them through a lifetime.

Once it's been established who will attend an event and benefit from fundraisers, set up a ledger that includes all names of young people who plan to participate. Include space to record the names of fundraisers, date of projects, and the amounts to be attributed to each individual. Following is an example:

Event: District Youth Gathering
Numbers to attend: four

Fundraiser	Chilli Supper	Light Bulb Sale
Date	January 15	February 21
Total amount earned (after expenses)	\$189.36	\$148.00
Amount to individual	\$47.34	(individual)
 Group		
Janie Anderson	\$47.34	\$40.00
Anita Garrett	\$47.34	\$20.00
David Manson	\$47.34	\$88.00
Gary Rodman	\$47.34	-0-

Establish a special interest-bearing bank account for the trip or event you're supporting. Your treasurer should be able to balance the money in that special account and the amounts attributed to each individual at any given time.

In most cases, it is not wise to give cash profits from a fundraiser directly to the young people. Individuals or businesses who donate to a special cause expect the money to go to that project. Money distributed in cash tempts young people to spend the money in other ways, such as on a new CD or a chocolate sundae. Use an accounting system that credits accounts and maintains all money in one account.

If you're involved in a project that requires earning large amounts of money, it would be wise to invest that money in an interest-bearing account. When it comes time to withdraw the money for your event, you can use the accumulated interest for a special treat along the way. This interest can also be an incentive for groups to get started early on their fund-raising projects.

Another Key to Success: Preparation

In order for your fundraising to be successful, adequate, and appropriate, preparations are essential for each project. Make sure information about fundraising projects reach three different groups of people: your youth group members, your congregation, and at times, your community.

Obviously, you can't make a fundraising project successful by yourself. This is a "youth fundraiser," not a "youth group leader's fundraiser." Guard against failure by making sure youth group members plan and carry out the event themselves. Include these ingredients as part of every fundraiser:

1. Appropriate preparation of materials and facilities.
2. Sufficient help to carry out the activity.
3. Adequate adult supervision.

Ask young people and adults to sign up well in advance of any project. When they commit themselves to a project, let them know what is expected, especially time commitment, the tasks to be done, and, if possible, the hours they'll be expected to work. The more information you provide ahead of time, the better off you'll be in having a successful fundraiser.

Depending on your system of organization, consider having a young person and an adult co-chair each fundraising project. This team would be responsible for making sure all preparations are made and executed on time and in the proper manner. This would include providing publicity, securing needed assistance, assigning jobs, setting expectations, and designating any other tasks necessary to accomplish this specific fundraiser.

Preparation of Materials and Facility

When planning a fundraiser, make a list of all the items you will need. For example, if you're having a spaghetti dinner, make a grocery list of all food items, paper products, and other goods several weeks in advance. Watch newspaper ads and coupons for special deals so you're not scrambling at the last minute to get bargains for the youth group. Talk with businesses or organizations who have offered assistance about donating items you might need.

Involve kids in the shopping trip to purchase items for the fundraiser. This can be a great learning experience for young people as they are forced to compare items when they shop, buy in quantities, and plan for a large event. Make sure a knowledgeable adult accompanies the young people on their buying trip.

One youth group leader helped the kids prepare a grocery list for a spaghetti supper for 100 people at their church. When the list was complete, the youth leader noticed she had failed to suggest some quantities for the young shoppers. But they assured their leader they knew what they were doing and left for the store. The kids returned from their shopping adventure with 100 pounds of spaghetti noodles—one pound per person!—and one gallon of ice cream—one spoonful per person! The young people thought they had done a great job because they'd spent less than the youth leader had budgeted for the supper.

When making plans for a fundraising event to be held in your church or some facility outside your church, make sure you book that location far in advance. Church calendars fill quickly, and some groups may assume they can use facilities without actually receiving permission. Make sure your date and the number of hours you use it for (including set up and clean up times) are scheduled through the proper church channels.

If you are using facilities outside your church, such as a community building or booth at an indoor flea market, a deposit or fee may be required. Be sure you're aware of all requirements and regulations regarding the use of this space before you make any commitments. Arrange to pick up the keys and find out how the facility is to be cleaned when the event is over.

Sufficient Help to Carry Out the Activity

Achieving a proper balance between helpers and tasks to be accomplished is often difficult. Try to outline all tasks needed for a specific fund raiser. Then estimate the number of people needed to accomplish each task. (Keeping accurate records from year to year, especially if a specific fundraiser is repeated, can be extremely helpful in this part of the planning process.) Ask the youth group members to sign up in advance for a task that best meets their talents and a time that meets their schedule.

Having too many helpers can often be as detrimental as having too few. Too many people in a kitchen, for example, decreases the productivity, quality, and efficiency of those who could adequately accomplish the tasks on their own. Also, not everyone is good at everything. Encourage young people to pursue tasks they knew how to do or are willing and able to learn. If training is necessary, make sure there's a knowledgeable instructor and adequate time for training to take place.

Adequate Adult Supervision

If you're the youth leader, you will burn out quickly if you take primary responsibility for organizing and carrying out all fundraisers for your youth group. This is an excellent area to give ownership and responsibility to parents. Personally solicit their support and assistance for any fundraising projects. Since communication between young people and their parents sometimes breaks down, parents may not realize they've been "volunteered." Avoid that uncomfortable situation by double-checking with parents. Depending on the number of fundraisers and the number of parents available, consider asking each parent to assume primary responsibility for one fundraiser and to serve as an adult adviser for another.

If more adult support is needed, don't forget the available resources you have in your congregation. Involve the senior citizens group in making food for a bake sale or creating Christmas wreaths. Many senior citizens are active, vibrant, and capable people with years of experience. Young adults provide another source of energy and talent. Use them as drivers for events, mentors, or simply encouragers for those who are wilting over a hot grill.

Every congregation has individuals with special gifts and skills—carpenters, chefs, writers, and photographers. Don't be afraid to ask these skilled individuals to teach others or donate their time. Most churches have time and talent records available in which you can look for specific skills if you aren't aware of the gifts within your congregation.

When you use these individuals—parents, senior citizens, young adults, or people with special gifts and abilities—don't forget to thank them for their services. Have your fundraising committee assign a person to write thank-you notes to all non-youth group participants in each specific project. Include individuals and/or businesses who donate their time, products, advertising space, or anything else you use in your fundraiser.

It's also important to thank people publicly for their services. If you're having a dinner, schedule a "cooks parade" at the event. If there's a printed program, list with a note of appreciation the names of those who have donated time, products, or services. If your church uses Sunday bulletins or newsletters, acknowledge people who helped make your fundraiser a success. People like to be appreciated, and they'll be encouraged to help again when asked. Some might even volunteer next time.

Publicity to Your Congregation

For most youth group fundraising activities, the principal supporters of the project will probably be members of your congregation. In addition to the more traditional means of communication such as newsletters, bulletins, and posters around the church, use your creativity to think of new ways to keep people informed.

Before you begin asking for money, let the congregation members know about the activity they are going to be asked to support. Tell them when the event will take place, where it will be, what the purpose is, and who will be participating in it. By sharing this information *before* you begin asking for money, people will have a vision for the event and have more interest in supporting it. You can probably share this information at the same time you are soliciting adult involvement with the youth group. By sharing the event with the whole congregation, you may reach some inactive young people who would like to join the action. As you know the details of the event, write an article for the newsletter or bulletin. Or prepare a special letter that can be mailed at a bulk rate to the whole congregation.

When the time comes to schedule fundraisers for the event, let church members know well in advance so they don't purchase that item or service from another source. For example, a church member might purchase a Christmas wreath from a local greenhouse because he or she didn't realize the youth group would be taking orders the next Sunday.

10 Quick, Creative, Money-Saving Publicity Tips

1. Use eye-catching teasers and gimmicks in Sunday bulletins and church newsletters. For example, several weeks before an event, ask the church secretary to intersperse lines through the bulletin like the following:
 - "F.L.Y.S.S.A.T.S. is coming! (First Lutheran Youth Spaghetti Supper and Talent Show)
 - "Have you heard what's happening on April 9? Details to follow in next week's newsletter."
 - "Don't miss the F.A.P.A.P.E.!" (First Annual Pizza and Pop Extravaganza)
2. Arrange for special clip art to highlight bulletin and newsletter articles. Ask a talented artist in your youth group to design a logo to go with your event.
3. After the congregation is informed about your event, prepare a special fundraiser, and insert a coupon in the newsletter that says something like the following:
 - "Fifty cents off the \$3 admission to the youth group's Talent Show!"
 - "A family discount! Bring five people with the same last name to the youth group's Italian Dinner, and you can bring a sixth person free."
 - Bring four people who live in the same house to the melodrama—and you can bring a neighbor for half-price!"

Most people are attracted to a bargain and will give some thought to taking advantage of a special deal.

4. Invest in a button maker. (You can find them online.) Buttons are a great way to personalize your projects. Use acronyms that will cause people to ask about the button you are wearing. For example, "LYF is selling S.S.S." (Lutheran Youth Fellowship is selling Super Submarine Sandwiches). The button maker itself can be used as a fundraiser. Use it for making personalized buttons at Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, Mother's Day, or other special occasions.
5. Use theme items on posters to catch people's attention. If you're having a bake sale, glue a slice of bread, a

paper cupcake liner, a wooden spoon, or a cookie to the sign. If you're having a newspaper drive, cover a piece of tagboard with old newspapers and use big, black letters written on the newspaper to give the information.

6. Use theme projects to help publicize the event you're raising money for. For example, if you're going to a mission project to Mexico, sponsor a Mexican fiesta with Mexican food, pinatas, and music as a fellowship activity. For the price of admission, you could offer a certain number of tickets that would be good for cakewalks, fishponds, pinatas, and other games for the whole family. You could sell additional tickets for a nominal price, as well.
7. Solicit donations from people in order to get a commitment. Rather than sell tickets for an Easter breakfast, for example, ask people to sign up to bring items and take a freewill offering at the door. Post a chart on the bulletin board that instructs people to sign up below if they plan to attend. They should sign their name under the product they plan to bring. Remind them to list quantities.

This method helps to offset costs, allows people to contribute more than they might if they bought a ticket and gives people ownership and commitment in advance of the event. Remember to list the donors and add a word of thanks in the next newsletter.

8. Recycle items from your local stores and businesses for your events. Most businesses spend a great deal of money on signs and advertising gimmicks that they use for only a season. If you see a display or a hanging advertisement in your local store, ask the merchant if you may have it when he or she is finished using it. Let him know you will come by and pick it up and be there when you say you will.

Grocery stores or movie theaters sometimes have life-size caricatures of famous personalities endorsing products or selling movies. Ask the manager if your non-profit organization can have the cardboard display figure when the promotion is over. What better way to advertise your event than to have a celebrity endorsement in the halls of your church!

9. Drawing or raffles for special projects are great attractions to use for your publicity. If you need tickets or coupons, it's not necessary to spend lots of money to have them reproduced. Most church copy machines can produce sheets of tickets at a relatively low cost. If you need consecutive numbering or two halves numbered, put some of your young people to work with a pen. If perforations are required (for two halves of a raffle ticket or for coupons) a sewing machine and a steady hand can get the job done quickly. A heavy-duty sewing machine needle (without the thread) can pierce holes in a straight line through a small stack of regular paper. (Don't use heavy paper or cardboard, or you'll have the expense of replacing the sewing machine.)
10. Ask some of your talented youth group members to prepare a brief, humorous skit that promotes your upcoming fundraiser. Involve others in your skit such as chair people of various committees, parents, adult choir members, young adults, and senior citizens. Or, have youth group members prepare a devotional with a theme relating to the activity they're raising money for. Arrange for the young people to share that devotional as an opening for several boards, committees, or organizations in a particular month.

Publicity in Your Community

In addition to the suggestions made for publicity to the congregation, there are vehicles that can reach people in the surrounding community. Use a variety of media to capture people's attention at different times and in different places, to increase curiosity about an event and to make people want to become part of the action.

1. Radio and TV stations are required by law to give a certain amount of free air-time to community concerns. Check with your local stations to see if your group's project qualifies. Ask your local radio and TV stations to publicize your fundraisers and events on their community calendars. Find out their deadlines and get your information to them well in advance.
2. Local newspapers usually have a "What's Happening This Week in _____" section also. Send them complete information in advance of the deadline and give your phone number in case they have questions or the information is unclear.
3. Newspapers often have religion sections in which they feature articles about church activities. Have one of your youth group members who has a flair for writing develop a story and submit it to that section of the paper. (Be sure you read the article to check for accuracy before you deliver it to the paper.) Include a picture from last year's event, or stage a picture of what's going to happen this year. This extra touch will add appeal to the article.
4. If your project is actually a service—especially if it has an unusual twist like the "Youth Sponsor Free Car Wash"—you may have the potential to attract a feature in the community newspaper.

5. Grocery stores and other businesses often allow you to post signs or posters. Make sure you include the name of the church and its location. Remember to write the date your sign can be removed on the back or have group members pick up or remove signs after the event. This courtesy helps businesses keep a positive attitude about the services they provide.
6. Display signs on the church lawn or string banners across the front of the church (make sure this form of publicity is approved by the proper individuals or committees of your church). These vivid reminders are great ways to let the neighborhood know what is happening.
7. Distribute fliers or door hangers around the neighborhood close to the church or in a housing area where your members live. These notices are another means of informing non-members about an event. Remind the young people to place the fliers in or on the door since placing items in mailboxes is illegal.
8. Kites, hot-air balloons, spotlights, neon signs, or unique vehicles parked on the curb with a special sign are more expensive forms of publicity, but they are excellent ways of drawing attention to a special event at your church. Use your imagination!

Well planned, creative publicity can make the difference in a successful event. Use your resources and enlist the help of others. You'll make your efforts worthwhile.

15 Ways to Avoid Concerns About Youth Group Fundraising

Fundraising for events often brings criticism and concern from some congregational members. Here are some helpful suggestions on how to avoid criticism and respond to voiced concerns.

1. Keep your church leaders informed about your activity plans as well as the fundraisers to support it.
2. Go through the proper channels to receive approval for every project.
3. Provide information to church members to generate interest and ownership in youth group activities.
4. Publicize positive accomplishments of young people in your church. Include reports on who made the honor society, lettered in a sport, or received a scholarship.
5. Help your young people choose activities that have service-related elements to them.
6. Encourage youth group members to give a percentage of the funds they raise to a service organization outside the church.
7. Keep the number of fundraising projects to a minimum.
8. Intersperse fundraisers with service projects.
9. Solicit the help of your critics who have special skills and talents that could be utilized. They'll soon be on your side if they feel they are needed by you.
10. Give customers what they expect. Poor-quality products, items delivered late, and impolite salespeople leave people with a bad feeling about any project.
11. Encourage church leaders to put youth ministry in the church budget.
12. Ask adults in the congregation to make special gifts to your youth group program so that not as many fundraisers are needed. Developing a scholarship program for those with special needs is a great idea.
13. Publicly advertising your youth group's activities in the community is an excellent way to create positive feelings among church members.
14. Publicizing an event with pictures, a report in the worship service, and obvious enthusiasm on the part of the young people will help church members feel good about supporting another youth event.
15. Plan an appreciation dinner for the whole congregation, with personal invitations to your supporters.

A Final Word

Fundraising is a big task! Undertaking fundraising projects with young people requires patience, planning, persistence, and prayer. Don't neglect any of these. And remember, part of FUNdraising is FUN!

Fundraising Ideas

Car Wash Coupon Books

Schedule car washes and sell coupon books ahead of time for a summer of car washes (dates are already published). Have an uplifting Gospel message on the coupons.

DCE Lisa Day

Baked Potato/Salad Bar

Can be done during Lent/Advent/monthly

Youth bring in potato toppings (sour cream, chopped green onion, cheese, etc.) and salad toppings (croutons, bacon bits, cut vegetables, etc.)

One can approach a fruit market with what you are doing. They may give you potatoes at cost. Lettuce, too! Buy pre-cut/prepared salad if there are time constraints.

Ask for a free-will offering.

Keith Minda

Blackberry Jam

When the blackberries are ripe, we spend a few hours gathering the berries. We rinse and freeze them. At a later time, we come together and make jam. Jars, sugar, and Sure-Gel are donated. Jars can be decorated with a tag identifying flavor of contents with a catchy phrase like "Jammin' for Jesus."

Lorraine Carter

Bedding Plant Sales

We found a nursery that sold plants and hanging baskets to us at wholesale. We took orders week before Easter for two to four weeks. Two weeks before pick-up, the order was called in. Customers picked up plants at church on delivery day. We sold limited selection and only in flats for simplicity. Flats cost us \$7.50 and we charged \$12/50, the local rate at nurseries. Our nursery delivered free if we sold 100 flats—this has always been accomplished with little effort. At Easter Breakfast we placed order forms on tables and had order form examples available. Super Easy!

Sarah Cannedy

Concession Stands

Have youth work at a professional football/baseball stadium at the concession stands or security. We found this to be good money and you don't have to do all the chasing around for supplies—it's all there. If there's a college or university nearby they may allow not-for-profit organizations to work in the same way.

Karen Dutton

In Missouri we worked with concession stands at Royals and Chiefs games pulling in 10% of sales at \$500-\$1200 per game using adults and youth.

Rev. Jon Beyer

\$\$\$ Per Mile

Draw a large map showing home location and destination (Servant Event location, Youth Gathering location, etc.). Mark off as many miles or each mile for the total distance. Calculate mileage from home location to destination and total transportation costs—divide costs by mileage—then ask sponsor to donate "X" number of dollars per mile. Mark off miles on map to show money collected.

DCE Roy Heflin

Selling Grocery Food Vouchers/Coupons

We have two stores we sell for—they give us 4% and 5% of the gross. Coupons are sold primarily in \$25 amounts, although some \$5 and \$10 coupons are also sold. Coupons are the same as cash. If you buy only \$21 in groceries, you get \$4 back.

Sold every Sunday after every service. Available during the week in the church office.

Terry and Barb Wiechman

Stock and Shares

We sold "stock" in our group. Shares were available for \$25 each. Many people in the congregation bought more than one, some only one, but we kept a list of all stockholders. Before we left the stockholders were given "stock certificates" and "quarterly updates" on our activities as we prepared for the Gathering. We also asked them to pray for us often. When at the Gathering, we sent each stockholder a postcard written by the youth. Then (this part was the most fun) we had a "Stockholders Brunch" where all the stockholders saw all our trinkets, heard personal stories from participants, sang songs, watched the video, and felt personally involved with what the youth experienced. They loved it!

Mindy Warnken

Water Bottle Bank

Put a large water bottle—like the ones used on machines—in a prominent place in the church building. Ask people to drop their pocket change into it over a period of time. Let them know how much you hope to have by what date and specifically what it will go toward.

Karen Dutton

Sponsor a Week of Church Lawn Maintenance

Members are asked to sponsor a week of church-lawn maintenance—the service being provided by the youth—matching funds were obtained.

Each year, part of the funds are set aside for a) attending District Camp and youth gatherings, etc.; b) some improvement of the church's facility (e.g. new sign); and c) for the National Youth Gathering.

Rev. Clare Skov

Golf Tournament

We have a small, very popular golf course with a pro who loves to have tournaments. The entry fee covers 18 holes and cart rental. They play four-person teams—best ball. Area businesses donate gifts for a raffle. Three places are awarded appropriate cash awards. (Entry fees are split three ways, 1/3 to course, 1/3 to youth group, and 1/3 for prizes. Youth sell soft drinks and hold a hole-in-one contest. Area businesses also give coupons that are randomly distributed. (18 holes x 4 golfers x \$40 = example)

Lorraine Carter

Sweetheart Dinner

A catered meal (maybe a member in your congregation is a caterer) for couples or singles who like to spend time with friends. Pictures (Polaroid) were taken as people walked in and were seated by the host/hostess. The youth dressed professionally, the room was decorated like an elegant dining room, the tables were card tables (not banquet tables) with cloth linens and napkins. The guest "check" at the end of the meal was a card with the couple's picture enclosed, and the card was signed by the youth server. Music should be "live" if a pianist or harpist could be there. Have a youth begin the dinner service with a prayer.

DCE Lisa Day

1950's Drive-In Fund Raiser

Turn your church parking lot into a drive-in scene from the 1950's and make money while you have fun.

Post on the building a large menu offering hamburgers, hotdogs, French fries, coffee, soda, and ice cream.

Bubble-gum-chewing, roller-skating carhops take orders and skate trays of food to customers. Prepare all food on gas grills at a large work area facing the cars. Everyone dresses in the 1950's theme: leather jackets, bobby socks, and greased hair. The customers enjoy watching the members work and laugh together. Free pieces of bubble gum come with each order.

Open the drive-in from 5 to 7:30 pm on a Saturday. Expenses include hamburgers, hot dogs, French fries, cooking oil, coffee, soda, ketchup, mustard, relish, onions, bubble gum, napkins, order pads, pens, ice cream, and plastic utensils.

Fast-food restaurants may donate several of these items, and some stores may offer church discounts. For example, ask your local baker if your cooking crew can borrow some aprons. Ask a lumber dealer to give nail aprons for the carhops to keep change. Borrow gas grills from church members.

Publicize the drive-in with posters, fliers, and press releases. You'll earn a good profit, have a lot of fun, and relive the nostalgic days of the 1950's era drive-ins.

Step-by-Step Planning for Your 1950's Drive In

Two Months Before the Event:

Explain the event to the pastor and select an open date on the church calendar. A weekend night is probably best. Sunday nights are often good since you have a last chance at publicity on Sunday morning, and people are less likely to forget if they're reminded the day of the event. Make sure this is a free night on the calendar because you'll use the whole parking lot.

One Month Before the Event:

1. Have your young people make posters reflecting the '50's theme for the night. Include items from the menu, hours, and location of the activity. Highlight the unique experience of being served hamburgers and other drive-in items by bubble-gum-chewing, roller-skating carhops. Since this event could appeal to people outside your church, make enough signs to post in local businesses and at church.

2. The unusual nature of this back-to-the-'50's activity could attract the news media. Make sure you alert radio, TV, and newspaper reporters to this fun evening sponsored by the young people of your church. Put the information on the community calendars provided by the different media.
3. Solicit the aid of carhops who know how to roller-skate. Other young people and adults can serve as cooks and preparers. Together they can provide quality control for this fast-food operation.
4. Publicize the event in your church newsletter. Include a coupon for a free root beer with any order of fries and a hamburger.
5. Contact local merchants about donating food and paper items for the event.

Two Days Before the Event:

1. Organize a shopping crew with complete grocery lists, including accurate amounts for the expected crowd. Don't forget to purchase paper products and small packets of ketchup, salt, etc. Buy an excess of items. Running short will leave people with a negative feeling about the drive-in. Most leftover food could easily be purchased by families of youth group members and non-perishable items can be returned. (Save all sales receipts.)
2. Place lawn signs on the church lawn as public reminders. Make signs that give directions to the parking lot most accessible to your kitchen. Prepare directional signs for the parking lot.
3. Check the church kitchen for adequate utensils. Borrow or purchase other items you will need.
4. Prepare order pads with the items you've included on your menu. Make sure you include prices and room for a total.
5. Go to the bank to get rolls of change for carhops to use.

Day of the Event:

1. Ask the setup crew to arrive two hours before serving is to begin. Arrange the kitchen for food preparation. Set up the stereo and gas grills outside on the church lawn. Put up direction signs in the parking lot. Complete all food preparation that can be done in advance.
2. Ask other crews—carhops, cooks, and quality control people—to arrive one hour before the event. Give final instructions and make sure everyone knows his or her assigned task. Make sure carhops have adequate time to get into costume.
3. One-half hour before you "open," start the grills. Plan to have your first hamburgers coming off the grill as your first customers arrive. They will be impressed.

After the Event:

1. Make sure church facilities—kitchen, lawn, and parking lot—look better than when you arrived. Take down posters and signs from around the church.
2. Do an accurate accounting of who assisted, and credit the accounts of those young people who helped raise funds.
3. Write thank you notes to all the adult helpers and the people who made donations. Include a note of thanks in the church bulletin to all those who supported the young people by attending the 1950's Drive-In.
4. DCE Margaret Hinchey



Fund Raiser Planning Worksheet

Purpose of the fund raiser: _____

Dollar goal: \$ _____

Type of fund raiser: _____

Name of fund raiser: _____

We will donate _____% of our profits to the following charity/service organization: _____

Location of the fund raiser: _____

Date: _____

Materials/Supplies needed: _____

Estimated Expenses: _____

Publicity: _____

What _____ When _____ Where _____

What _____ When _____ Where _____

Main contact person: _____

Final Expense Report:

Actual expenses: \$ _____

Total income: \$ _____

Net dollars raised: \$ _____

Evaluation of this fund raiser and notes for next time:

© 2000 by the Department of Youth Ministry, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Updated and revised for thESource July 2011.

thESource is published on the Web by LCMS District & Congregational Services—Youth Ministry. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 South Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295; 1-800-248-1930; www.youthesource.com. Editor: Sherrah Holobaugh Behrens. VOL. 8 NO. 7. July 2011.