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## Vision:

“Fundraising is, first of all, a form of ministry. It is a way of announcing your vision, and inviting other people into your vision with the resources that are available to them. ... Fundraising is proclaiming what you believe in and proclaiming it in such a way that you offer the other person an opportunity to participate in your vision. So it is precisely the opposite of begging.” From *“Spirituality of Fundraising*, by Henri Nouwen.

Fundraising for a mission trip can seem like a daunting task. The purpose of this guide is hopefully make it less so, and to inspire you with a few ideas of things that have worked for other groups who were coming on mission trips.

The easiest mistake to make in fundraising is to focus on the what instead of the why. Giving people the vision of why you want to raise these funds and what you are going to do with them is far more important than putting together the perfect event with the best decorations.

By inviting people to contribute towards the vision of your mission trip, you are giving them an opportunity to partner with you. People who may be unable to participate personally can still be involved in your mission. Invite people into the trip by asking them to pray along with you about the various stages in your preparations, the trip itself, and processing what you learned after the trip.

Most importantly, follow through after the trip to share the experience. Whether you make a video, keep a blog of the trip, or just take your supporters out for coffee, the most important part of the fundraising process is including your supporters in the celebration of what God has done through your trip. Whether you focus on the family you built alongside, or the life change of the participants who went to serve, your supporters want to know what happened.

## Fundraising methods:

For basic fundraising, your two main options are 1: write letters to ask people to support the trip and 2: hold an event. Both of these things can be expanded on by using Social Media. You will find some social media tips at the end of this document.

## Letter Writing:

Writing letters is the simplest option, and often the most effective. People in general are generous, and are willing to support a good cause as long as you make a case for why its important. If you are raising funds for a church trip, each person who is going on the trip should reach out to people they know individually. Reaching out to people who are already involved in your life gives you a chance to deepen the relationship by sharing the heart behind why you want to do this trip.

A good fundraising letter includes at least three elements. Firstly, thank them for the ways that they are already involved in your life. Always thank people for their past involvement before asking for something new. This part of your letter should be personalized to each recipient. Secondly, paint the vision for what you are asking for. Be as specific as you can about what you hope the trip to be and the impact you are hoping to see. Tell your supporters about how you plan to make that impact happen. Thirdly, make it easy for people to contribute if they choose to. If you are using a website then make the link obvious, or if you are asking people to write a check then include a return envelope.

A tip for closing your letter. Research shows that people are more likely to respond to your letter if they feel invited to do so. Guilt is a terrible motivator when you are asking people to contribute; it just doesn't work. Using a phrase along the lines of “If you choose to support is trip, you are free to do so...” is much more likely to result in a positive response.

## Fundraising Events:

Putting on a fundraising event is usually more work, but can be a fun way to get a larger group of people involved in supporting your trip. Remember that anything you spend to put the event together gets deducted from the proceeds, so simple is often better. A good place to start before planning an event is to have a brainstorming session. Get your group together and write down every idea you come up with, the sky is the limit. After about 30 minutes (at least) of brainstorming, look at your list and fine tune it taking into consideration your resources, space, talent, and community. You will be surprised with the results and may come away with several fundraising events.

Also, some restaurants will offer fundraising nights where a % of the proceeds get donated to your cause. From what we've seen, these events usually have a relatively low return for the time you invest in them, but some groups have done them successfully.

Amor is happy to create a fundraising page to help you collect the funds for your trip. We will set up a page within the Amor website where you can direct your supporters to give directly towards your trip. Once your mission trip is registered, talk to your mission trip coordinator about what you need in order to set this up.

Alternatively, websites like Crowd-rise ([www.crowdrise.com](http://www.crowdrise.com)) or GoFundMe ([www.gofundme.com](http://www.gofundme.com)) can be helpful if you want to be able to accept credit card donations without going through the Amor website. Whichever platform you choose, the key to success here is telling your story well through a short video, and making sure that each member of the group promotes the page to their social network.

Below are a few event ideas to get you started. These ideas are just the tip of the iceberg. The success of your event hinges on the team getting behind it and promoting it, rather than having the perfect plan. So pick something fun and run with it!

## Event Ideas:

### Themed Dinner

Take the Mexico mission trip for example: Set up a Mexican themed dinner and have the group dress in traditional Mexican attire as they serve a basic combination plate dinner to those who have purchased tickets. Suggested menu: tacos, rice and refried beans. Have volunteer cooks assist with the preparation of the meal. Use the evening as a time to tell people about the vision of the trip. Or for South Africa maybe prepare a BBQ with Peri Peri seasoning.

### Servant Auction

Auction off group members to become "servants" working for a set amount per hour that is donated towards your trip. Depending on where you are located, spring clean-up, fall leaf cleanup, or winter snow shoveling can be good times of the year to target. You can even have participants auction off a special skill they possess.

### Individual Trip Sponsorship

Ask people in your church to sponsor various aspects of the trip. Offer small and large options. You can offer people the opportunity to sponsor an aspect of the trip, like breakfast one morning, or a part of the home you are building, like the roof.

### Shareholders

Supporters and friends can buy a "share" in the trip. Provide 'stock' certificates of their importance to the trip and be sure to share the experience with them after the group returns home.

### Bake Sales and Car Washes

Be creative and add a new angle by having a "sugarless bake sale", or a "chocolate-lovers' bake sale". For a car wash fundraiser add a twist like a "car wash and wax" while people pay to hit leaders of the group with water balloons or whipped cream. The most successful car washes are FREE with the group asking for a donation for each car washed.

### Yard Sale

Collect items from others such as clothing, furniture, car parts, electrical appliances, etc. for a profitable yard sale. Be sure to promote the cause while doing so for additional exposure. You can even have other groups help you...perhaps the children's Sunday school classes can donate and make the signs? Maybe an adult class will bring donuts the morning of? This is a good way to bring the whole congregation into the event. As well as raise excitement for the vision of the trip.

### **Aluminum Can Collection**

Set aside a central location or a private garage to collect aluminum cans for redemption at the local recycling center.

### **Sunday School Class Challenge**

Challenge Sunday School classes to compete with each other to raise money for the trip. Encourage them to keep track of what they collect and report on it each week. Celebrate with a class party after the trip with photos and testimonials.

### **Piggy Bank Collection**

Give every kid in your church a small piggy bank shaped like a house to fill with change. Have someone in your church donate the banks and at the end invite all of the kids up to the front of the church to turn their banks in. Add up the total and announce it to the church the next week.

### **Trivia Night**

Collect donations for prizes, like movies tickets, things for a gift basket, babysitting, etc. Then host a trivia night charging admission for each player. Use the prizes for the winners. Depending on your crowd you can have them "bribe" the MC for answers, with the money adding to the profit line. You can sell refreshments like soda and homemade baked goods as well.

### **Dinner and a Movie**

Host a spaghetti dinner and movie night. Charging admission. Also hosting a concession stand for treats during the movie. Again, look for donations of baked goods. Popcorn is also affordable.

### **Give up Something**

Ask people, friends, family, church members, to give up something for a period of time, like Starbucks, going out to lunch, etc. And to donate the money saved to the trip. They can even say a prayer for the trip when thinking about their morning coffee, or what to pack for lunch.

### **Carnival**

Set up games: bean bag toss, water dunk tank, darts at balloons, face painting, etc. Sell hotdogs and burgers with chips and a soda. Have a raffle. Have some trip participants share about why they are going on the trip. This event can range from small to large depending on your resources. Remember you want to have most of your materials donated so majority of funds raised will go to your trip. Do a web search, there are tons of affordable game ideas out there.

### **Servant Auction with a Twist**

This idea has a little twist. Have people sponsor your time serving in your community.

For example:

Volunteering to sort food at your local food bank.

Visiting retirement homes.

Yard work for the elderly.

Picking up trash in the park or at the beach.

The donor will get twice the bang for the buck and the participants will be laying good ground work for serving on their mission trip.

### **Walk-a-thon**

Choose a date and a route, make up some pledge forms, and advertise with posters. Have participants gather donations or pledges using their pledge forms.

### **Battle of the Bands/Concert**

Gather some bands from your local community. Book a venue and advertise with posters, flyers, etc. Hold a mini concert in which the audience chooses the winning band. Or ask a band to donate their time by performing a benefit concert for your cause. Charge admission for the event.

### **Craft Sale**

Have local crafters pay for both space to sell their crafts. Have a small entrance fee for shoppers. Sell donated desserts and drinks.

**Three-on-Three Basketball Tournament:** Organize a basketball tournament with the winning team receiving a prize. This can also be done with soccer, tennis, badminton, volleyball, or any other sport.

# Expand your efforts through Social Media

Social Media can be used to enhance any other type of fundraising that you do—such as letters and events. And it can also be used to raise money on it's own. And the best part is that it is usually free! Here are a few ways to use social media to help you raise money for your Amor Mission Trip.

## **Start a Blog**

Have your group write blog posts about why they want to go on the trip and what they are doing to get there. This blog can help supporters feel more involved as they watch your group journey through the preparation that it takes to go on an Amor Mission Trip. This blog can also be a great way for them to find out what happened on the trip afterward and it can be used as an outlet for participants to express their emotions as the debrief their mission trip experience.

## **Facebook Awareness**

Have your entire group change their Facebook profile picture to a logo or image representing the mission of your trip to raise awareness for the trip. The image could link to a webpage with more information about the trip or even a donation website.

## **Hashtag**

Create a simple and unique hashtag for your group's participants and supporters to use anytime they share an image, or status update that includes anything the trip. This is an easy way for supporters and friends to see what is happening before, during, and after your Amor Mission Trip. Use the same hashtag for instagram, twitter, and facebook. Example: If your church is named Christ Community Church in San Diego, your hashtag could be #cccsdamormissiontrip

## **Spread the Word about your Events**

Anytime you have a fundraising event, encourage your group members to use all their social media outlets to spread the word about the event. This can help you even be more successful as it will reach a broader audience and could help increase attendance.

For more information on how to use social media to help your fundraising events, contact your Mission Trip Coordinator who can get you in touch with our Social Media Specialist.