

YOUTH MINISTRY FUNDRAISING

TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS TO HELP YOU
AND YOUR MINISTRY MEET YOUR GOALS



Diocese of Gary

MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP AND EVANGELIZATION

FUNDRAISING FOR YOUR MINISTRY

We know that fundraising is one of those things that most ministries have to do in order to do the things they want to do. But did you know, it is one of the best ways to help introduce your community to the young people you serve? See this as a time to help your parishioners learn about your ministry and the amazing teens you serve. As you ask community members to invest in the faith and lives of your young people, take the time to introduce your young people to the community. Share their names, help them share their own dreams by telling their own story, and see this as an opportunity to grow closer as a community.

This handout has a few tips and suggestions to help your ministry do just that.



ENGAGING YOUR PARISH IN YOUTH MINISTRY FUNDRAISING

Ideas about how you engage in fundraising everyday

1. **Remind people why you are fundraising:** Don't just put one message in the bulletin and think you are done. Continuously remind your community why you are fundraising. Include bi-weekly or monthly updates on your progress and invite different voices to talk about the purpose of the fundraising.
2. **Encourage the parish to invest in your young people.** People are more likely to give when they personally know someone involved in the fundraising. Have the youth be the face of the fundraisers by having them write letters themselves to potential donors, updates in the bulletin or on a poster in the vestibule, or if they are able to, by speaking before Mass inviting those to give. Seeing the young people front and center reminds parishioners and community members who they are giving to. You can also talk to our parish about posting video updates from the teens about your fundraising goals.
3. **Encourage your young people to invest in the parish.** Help your young people meet other parishioners by attending events that happen at your parish. These are places where young people and older community members can meet one another, learn about each other's lives, and grow in relationship. This helps to encourage parish members to invest in the lives of these teens because they know them.
4. **Partner with parish organizations.** Talk to other parish organizations and see how you can partner to fundraise. Is your parish having a fish fry? See if the teens can fundraise by selling pop or bottles of water. Would the Altar and Rosary Society be able to host a bake sale for your teens? Partnering can help teach your teens the importance of being part of the larger parish community.
5. **Accept Virtual Donations:** Talk to your parish's pastor, financial manager, or administrative assistant to see if you can set up online giving for your ministry.
6. **Use QR Codes:** On posters, flyers, or even cards for the pews, include a QR code linked directly to your online giving page. It is a quick way to connect with those around you and makes online giving even easier than typing out a link.

FUNDRAISING FUNDAMENTALS

Reminders for you and your young people

- **Set Clear Goals:** Teens and their families should know why they are raising money. Having a clear goal can make it easier for people to connect with your message. Set a specific target amount for your group and participants, breaking it down if necessary. For example, each person is expected to raise \$500, or the group as a whole has a goal of \$6000.
- **Involve the Teens in the Planning and Implementation:** You are raising money so that your young people can do amazing things. They should be active in the planning process. This can be a great time to grow as a group, build up leadership skills, and allow teens to use their gifts and talents to meet your goal. Remind the teens that they are not just raising money; they are inviting others to be part of your ministry.
- **Set Expectations of Your Teens:** Make sure your teens know what is expected of them. You are raising money for them so they should be part of the fundraising efforts. If they cannot be part of the main event, see if there are behind the scenes actions they could do to still help out, like make decorations, posters, social media posts, or help with set-up/clean-up. Keep a record of who helped and when.
- **Make it Easy and Fun:** If it's too difficult, it makes it hard to participate. Break down tasks in a clear, easy way so they can understand. For example: don't just say, "Make a poster." Elaborate. "We are making a poster to let those who are attending the fish fry know what we will use their donations for, so make sure to include where we are going, what we are looking forward to, and who is going. Don't forget to say, "Thank you!" Teens are more likely to participate and help if it is fun for them.
- **Communication the Mission and Impact:** Tell stories about how past fundraisers have benefited the ministry or how the current fundraiser will help boost the faith of the young people that you serve. Give testimonials during Mass announcements or in the parish bulletin. Video clips of the teens talking about why they are raising money can make a big impact.
- **Take Pictures or Videos:** For your own archives but also to post online. After getting permission from their parents, post to parish social media to show what the teens are doing and why they are doing it.

FUNDRAISING FUNDAMENTALS CONT.

- **Use Multiple Avenues for Promotion:** Talk to your parish bulletin editor, social media coordinator, or communication coordinator to see how you can share your message with the parish or community. Make announcements at Mass (with the pastor's permission). Encourage your teens and their families to share fundraising events on their social media platforms and within their networks.
- **Consider the Parish's Calendar:** Look over the parish's calendar as you are planning dates for your fundraisers. If a parish has three different weekends where ministries are doing fundraisers, parishioners might not want to give on a fourth weekend. You can also look to see if you can partner with a parish event. For example, if a parish fish-fry doesn't sell pop, your youth ministry could sell pop as a fundraiser. Teens can also help clean tables or serve food as a way to say thank you to the organizing ministry.
- **See Who can Help:** Reach out to other parish ministries and organizations to see if they can help. Some community organizations or businesses are also willing to help, such as allowing you to advertise in their place of business or by giving you a discount on items you need for your fundraising. It never hurts to ask! Also, you might have people in your parish who are awesome at fundraising. Ask them for help.
- **Be Transparent and Accountable:** People are more likely to support you if they know where their money is going. Outline what you will use the money for (like hotels, registration, t-shirts). Some people will also be willing to sponsor a part of your goal, such as a business paying for a dinner.
- **Practice your Pitch:** Take time to practice with your teens their elevator speech on why you are fundraising. Practice helps so they are prepared when someone asks, "Why are you raising money?"
- **Celebrate Goals:** As you meet your fundraising goals, celebrate! Fundraising can be a long process, so as you meet those goals, take a moment to rest and celebrate your progress.
- **Say Thank You:** Always, always say thank you. Send handwritten cards and have the teens sign them. Invite those who have donated to you to a dinner afterwards and have the teens present what they experienced. Send a thank you card with a group picture at the event. Personalize the thank you. In all things, give thanks. Even if it is showing gratitude that your community members prayed for you. In all things, give thanks.
- **Make Prayer Part of the Process:** Take the time to pray with your teens and their families, asking for guidance, discernment, and the strength to continue even if it gets hard. Invite your parishioners to pray for your ministry!

IDEAS FOR FUNDRAISING

Other fun and engaging ways to collect donations

Host Events

- Pancake Breakfasts, Fish Fries, Spaghetti Dinners, Taco Dinners, or more: Invite parishioners for a community meal and charge a fee per plate, with parish volunteers helping with supplies and cooking.
- Other Food Events: Host chili cook-offs, pierogi parties, and more! These can be partnered with other parish groups for support. Youth can serve or clear tables, with bios on tables so guests know who they're supporting.
- Talent Show or Variety Night: Youth can showcase their talents, with entry fees and snack sales.
- Game Night: Host a board or card game night for all ages, offering prizes for tournament winners and selling snacks.
- Kickball/Dodgeball Night: Organize a family-friendly night with rounds for both kids and adults.
- Movie Night: Set up a big screen and show a family-friendly movie, with pizza and snacks for sale.
- Trivia Night: Organize a trivia event, with rounds of questions covering a variety of topics. Charge a fee for teams to enter, offer prizes for the winners, and consider adding snack or drink sales. Selling "mulligans" or free spaces, can bring in some extra income.
- Babysitting Events: Set up holiday babysitting services where teens watch children while parents shop or prepare for holidays. Be sure to have adult chaperones present.

Seasonal Sales

- Holiday Fundraisers: Sell items like Christmas wreaths, Easter lilies, or Valentine's candy, coordinating with reputable suppliers.
- T-Shirts: If making t-shirts for an event or trip, take parishioner orders as well to build community investment.
- Bake Sale: Set up after Mass or during events, with free-will donations encouraged. Offering gluten-free or vegan options can attract more buyers.
- Rummage Sale, Craft Market, or Used Book Sale: Host these events with proceeds supporting youth ministry.

IDEAS FOR FUNDRAISING

Other fun and engaging ways to collect donations

Sponsorship and Donation Drives

- **Second Collection:** With your pastor's approval, hold a second collection at Mass specifically for youth ministry. Youth can serve as ushers to engage with the community.
- **Adopt-a-Youth Campaign:** Parishioners can "sponsor" a youth for an event by contributing toward specific costs.
- **Envelope Fundraiser:** Set up envelopes with donation amounts, encouraging parishioners to choose an envelope and give what's indicated. Collect donor information for thank-yous.
- **Penny/Coin Collection:** Invite parishioners to bring in spare change to fill large jars or buckets.
- **Sponsor a Youth:** Break down trip costs (e.g., ticket, meals) and ask community members to sponsor specific expenses.
- **Donor Letters:** Teens can write letters to family, friends, and other community members asking for donations. Emphasize gratitude by thanking all recipients and asking for prayers.
- **Stocks:** Sell "stocks" for a set price, giving stockholders certificates. Teens send monthly letters updating their "investors" on the ministry's impact. At the end of the year, hold a "stockholders dinner" with presentations and thanks from the teens.

Auction or Raffle

- **Silent Auctions:** Collect donations from local businesses and auction them at a parish event.
- **Raffle Tickets:** Offer parishioner-donated prizes, such as a dinner with the pastor or crafts. Ensure local regulations are followed.

Youth Ministry "Rent-a-Helper" Day

- Youth can offer small job services for parishioners, such as yard work or chores, in exchange for donations to the ministry.
- **Babysitting Opportunities:** Set up times when your teens can watch younger children for busy parents. Offer to babysit children while their parents are out shopping for Christmas presents or getting ready for a big holiday. Make sure adult chaperones are present as well.

IDEAS FOR FUNDRAISING

Other fun and engaging ways to collect donations

Experiential Fundraising

- Prayer Marathon or Service Hours Marathon: Youth commit to set hours of prayer or service, with donors pledging for each hour.
- “Lock-in” Challenge: Youth stay at the parish for a set time, with sponsors pledging donations to keep them “locked in.”

Digital and Social Media Appeals

- Online Giving Pages: Create a page for online donations to support specific needs or events.
- Social Media Challenges: Run a shareable challenge or hashtag campaign to engage supporters and encourage online donations.

Selling Items

- Candy Bars, Cookie Dough, Krispy Kreme Doughnuts: Many suppliers offer youth-friendly fundraising products.
- SockReligious: A Catholic sock company offering saint and liturgical designs. They have a fundraising program for parishes. [SockReligious Fundraising](#)
- Tiny Saints: Catholic keychains with saint-inspired designs. Great for all ages. [Tiny Saints Fundraising](#)

Local Businesses

- Many local businesses are willing to donate to a cause if asked.
- Some restaurants offer a fundraising opportunity where, when presented with a flyer, a portion of the proceeds from their sales will go back to the organization.
- Some shops will allow for organization to collect money outside of their doors.
- Businesses may offer a “matching funds” donations. If the congregation can raise a certain amount, the business will match what was raised.