

FEBRUARY 2026

# MINISTRY FUNDRAISING

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



Diocese of Gary

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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.



# FUNDRAISING FUNDAMENTALS

## Reminders for you and your young people

1. **Set Expectations:** Make sure whoever is helping you organize the fundraiser knows what is expected of them. You are raising money for them so they should be part of the fundraising efforts. If someone 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. Keep a record of who helped and when.
2. **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!" Young people are more likely to participate and help if it is fun for them. Include them in on decision making when planning fundraising activities.
3. **Take Pictures:** For your own archives, but also to post online. Post to parish social media to show what the young people are doing and why they are doing it. If there is a teen involved, first get a parent/guardian's permission before posting.
4. **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.
5. **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.
6. **Practice:** Take time to practice your elevator speech on why you are fundraising. Practice helps so you are prepared when someone asks, "Why are you raising money?"
7. **Say Thank You:** Always, always say thank you. Send handwritten cards and have those involved sign them. Invite those who have donated to you to a dinner afterwards and present what you 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.

# PEOPLE MATTER

## Who can help you?

1. **Pastor:** Your pastor is one of the most important allies. He sets the tone for the parish and has both spiritual authority and relational influence. When a pastor publicly affirms a fundraising effort, whether through a pulpit announcement, a bulletin note, or a personal endorsement, it signals that the mission matters to the whole parish. He may also be able to connect you with parishioners who are especially generous or passionate about supporting young people and ministry initiatives.
2. **Office Administrators/Communication Coordinator:** The office administrators or communication coordinator are essential because they control the systems that actually reach people. They know how and when to place bulletin announcements, send parish-wide emails, post on social media, or update the website. A strong relationship with them ensures your message is clear, timely, and visible, which dramatically increases participation and support.
3. **Youth or Young Adult Ministry Leader:** A youth or young adult ministry leader can help generate energy and ownership around the fundraiser. They already have relationships with young people and families and understand how to communicate the deeper purpose behind the effort. They can help organize fundraising events, mobilize volunteers, and encourage parents and participants to take initiative rather than seeing fundraising as something done for them.
4. **Other Ministry Leaders:** Other ministry leaders such as the Knights of Columbus, women's groups, Bible studies, or cultural ministries can broaden your reach. These groups often already value service and charitable giving. They may be willing to host a small collection, sponsor part of a participant's cost, invite you to speak at a meeting, or provide volunteers for an event. Partnering with them builds unity across ministries while multiplying support.
5. **Local Businesses:** Local businesses, especially those owned by parishioners or connected to the community, can also be strong partners. Many want to build goodwill locally and are open to donating goods, services, raffle prizes, or even hosting a percentage-of-sales night. Sometimes in-kind donations such as food, printing, or venue space can reduce expenses significantly and make your fundraising efforts more effective.
6. **Parishioners:** Finally, never underestimate the generosity of parishioners. Many people deeply care about the future of the Church and want to support young people and vibrant ministry but simply need a clear invitation. When they can connect a face and a story to the mission, they are far more likely to give. Parishioners can contribute financially, offer prayers, volunteer their time, and become long-term supporters of the ministry's vision.

# EVERYDAY GIVING

## Ideas about how you engage in fundraising everyday

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **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 young people 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 young people about your fundraising goals.
5. **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.
6. **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.

# IDEAS FOR FUNDRAISING

## Other fun and engaging ways to collect donations

- **Stocks:** If you are asking your parish to invest in your young, set up stock options. Sell "stocks" for a set price. Give the stock holder a certificate for each stock they buy. Throughout the year have the young people update their stockholders by sending monthly investment letters. This could be a letter from a teen saying what they are looking forward to, how they are going to use the money from the stocks, and general youth ministry updates. At the end of the year, hold a "stockholders dinner" where the teens serve those who have invested in them, give presentations about the event or project the money went to, and give thanks!
- **Host a Rummage Sale:** Host a rummage sale, a craft market, or a used book sale with all proceeds going to youth ministry.
- **Bake Sale:** A classic for a reason. Have volunteers provide baked goods (including gluten free and vegan if you can) and sell after Mass or at an event. Set it up as a free will donation for each baked good.
- **Host a Food Event:** Fish fries, chili cook-offs, spaghetti suppers, tamales sales, taco dinners, pierogi parties, pancake breakfasts and more! This can be a great way to partner with a parish organization for help. Have your young people help with the event by serving food or by cleaning tables. Create posters for decorations. Have bios of the young people you are raising money for on the tables so guests know who they are helping.
- **Babysitting Opportunities:** Set up times when your young people 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.
- **Donor Letters:** Craft a letter your young people can send to their family members, friends, teachers, coaches, or other community members asking for donations for your cause. They can also personalize it with their own words. Always remember to say thank you in the letter. Regardless of whether or not they donate, the recipients of your letter have taken time out of their days to read your words. Ask them to pray for you.
- **Movie Night:** grab a big screen, a family friendly movie, and order some pizzas.
- **Second Collection:** Talk with your pastor to see if your parish can hold a second collection for your ministry. Have young people serve as ushers.

# IDEAS FOR FUNDRAISING

## Other fun and engaging ways to collect donations

- **T-shirts:** If your group is planning on making t-shirts for the event or conference, take orders from parishioners as well. That way, they can feel even more invested in your young people and will have a wearable reminder of what they gave to. It will also help the community come together. Some companies have easy fundraising platforms, like Custom Ink ([www.customink.com/fundraising](http://www.customink.com/fundraising)).
- **Game Night:** Have a collection of games people can come and play. You can offer a prize for the winner of each game tournament and sell snacks to bring in a bit of extra cash from the fundraiser.
- **Envelope Fundraiser:** Lay out on a table a collection of envelopes with money amounts written on the front. One version has 100 envelopes. On each envelope there is one money amount, \$1, \$2, \$3 and so on until there is an envelope from \$1-\$100. Encourage parishioners to take one envelope and give what is written on the envelope. Another way is to have a set number of envelopes with one money amount. For example, 20 envelopes with \$1 on it, 20 envelopes with \$5 on it, 20 with \$20 on it, 20 with \$50, 10 with \$100, and 10 blank ones where people can write their own amount. It's a quick, fun way of encouraging parishioners to give what they can. Make sure you collect their information when they turn in their envelope so you can send them a thank you card!
- **Penny/Coin Collection:** Invite the parish to bring unwanted pennies or coins to the parish and collect them in jars/water cooler jugs, or buckets. Those pennies add up!
- **Kickball/Dodgeball Night:** Have a fun night with the kids of your parish. Don't forget to invite a round for parents to play too!
- **Sponsor a Youth:** Layout how much the trip or event will cost. Invite community members to sponsor part of the event. For example, layout ticket cost, travel expenses, the cost for a meal, or other expenses.

# IDEAS FOR FUNDRAISING

## Other fun and engaging ways to collect donations

- **Selling Items:** There are many options out there for you to have your ministry sell things for profit, like candy bars, cookie dough, Krispy Kreme doughnuts, and more. Two Catholic organizations we recommend are SockReligious and Tiny Saints.
  - SockReligious is a Catholic sock company out of Indianapolis. They sell socks with designs inspired by saints and liturgical living, <https://sockreligious.com/pages/fundraising>
  - Tiny Saints is a Catholic keychain company. Each keychain is a tiny saint. <https://www.tinysaints.com/pages/onlinefundraising>
- **Sponsor a Mile:** Measure the distance the group will be traveling and have people sponsor a certain amount of distance. For example, it will take 6552 miles to get to Seoul from Chicago. Divided by \$5000, and that's about \$1.30 a mile.
- **Partner with a Restaurant:** Many local restaurants offer fundraising opportunities, with a portion of the sales going to your cause.
- **Garage Sale:** Ask friends, family members and members of your church community to donate items and host a garage sale (yard sale). You could host this in your church's gym or fellowship area.
- **Talk with Your Parish:** Each parish has a different culture and gifts that can be used when you are planning out your fund

# SAMPLE FUNDRAISING LETTER

Dear [Name],

I hope you are doing well! I am writing to share something exciting and ask for your prayers and support.

In 2027, I have the opportunity to attend World Youth Day in Seoul, South Korea. World Youth Day is an international gathering of young Catholics from around the world who come together to celebrate their faith, pray with the Holy Father, and experience the beauty of the universal Church. It is a powerful moment of encounter, with Christ, with the Church, and with young people from every nation. I truly believe God is inviting me to be part of this pilgrimage.

World Youth Day is more than a trip. It is a spiritual journey. Over the course of the week, I will participate in catechesis, Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, cultural experiences, and service opportunities. I will join hundreds of thousands of young adults in prayer and worship, united in our desire to follow Christ more deeply.

The total cost of the pilgrimage is approximately \$5000, which includes travel, lodging, meals, registration, and formation leading up to the event. I am working to raise these funds through personal savings, parish fundraising efforts, and the generosity of family and friends.

Would you consider supporting me in one of two ways?

1. Prayer – Please pray for me as I prepare for this pilgrimage and for all young people who will attend.
2. Financial Support – If you feel called to help financially, any amount would be a tremendous blessing. No gift is too small.

If you would like to make a donation, you can:

- Send a check to: [details]
- Donate online at: [link]
- Contact me directly at: [phone/email]

I promise to carry your intentions with me to Seoul and to pray for you in a special way during World Youth Day.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and for being part of my faith journey. Your encouragement and support mean more than you know.

With gratitude and hope,

[Your Name]

[Parish]

[Contact info]