

Support Raising



Go Impact

You might hear the term “fundraising” for your trip. Fundraising is simply asking someone for money; support raising is asking a donor to join you in a mission endeavor. We encourage you to take the support enlistment approach:

Ask others for the opportunity to explain the call that God has put in your heart to share the gospel with people who do not know Jesus as their Savior.

Invite them to join you in sharing the gospel by actively praying for you and/or helping provide for the financial needs of this mission experience. The support approach requires more effort on your part, such as providing prayer updates, reports, and follow-up when you return, but it will be more fruitful for both you and those supporting you.

Seek the benefits of support raising.

Lead your trip participants to use this mission trip as a great opportunity to:

SHARE THE MISSION VISION.

Others need to know what you are doing and why. The mission of God is worthy of our participation, and more importantly, it is a matter of obedience to Christ’s command.

LEARN WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SENT.

God calls the church to send out the workers he raises up for the harvest (Acts 13:2). The church should have a stake in what you will be doing. Your team should have the strong sense that they are representatives of the church as well as ambassadors for Christ.

DEVELOP INTERDEPENDENCE AMONG BELIEVERS.

The church is the body of Christ, and members need to learn how to support one another and experience the sacrificial giving and joyful receiving God’s people are called to exhibit.

PRACTICE STEWARDSHIP.

To join in the mission of God is to elevate it as a priority over other things in our lives. It involves a sacrifice of time, money, and energy, and represents the best investment of ourselves and others.

Avoid the drawbacks.

Don’t let finances minimize spiritual preparation. A constant focus on raising money may drain time, energy, and effort from the important task of preparing spiritually, learning cross-cultural skill and people group-specific information, and building unity within the team.

Beware of causing “donor fatigue.” It is easy to ask for help from the same people and groups every time, but it can lead to diminishing results. Also, donors can come to resent those who request funds but make little or no sacrifice of their own.

Recognize that pride could become a stumbling block for some team members if they have more success than others in enlisting support. Similarly, discouragement from lack of support can lead others to withdraw from the trip. Help the group to work closely together to make it possible for each member to go.

I have seen God provide time and again when groups are diligent, so don't get overwhelmed by the cost. Start early! I encourage you to provide the plan but put the responsibility on the students. We always make our students work hard as part of their preparation for the trip and as a way to earn the right to go. They also learn the meaning of service.

(Veteran student missions leader)

1. Start early in planning the trip and enlisting participants.

There is no substitute for ample time to raise funds for your mission project. Recruiting your participants before Christmas, for instance, gives them the chance to ask friends and relatives to support their mission project instead of giving a gift. Allow as much time as you can for this phase of preparing your team. Depending on how motivated and disciplined your students are, they will need to begin raising support as early as nine months before the trip, with the awareness that fundraising may extend almost up to the trip itself.

2. Begin close to home.

Before asking for support from anyone else, ask yourself (and your group) what you will sacrificially give to your own support. You cannot ask others to sacrifice financially if you are not willing to do the same. Consider what you can alter in your lifestyle that would provide money for the mission project.

- a. Give up eating out.
- b. Give up movies.
- c. Give up money usually spent on new clothes.
- d. Ask for mission trip support instead of birthday gifts.
- e. Look for ways to earn funds in side jobs and one-time assignments. Neighbors may be willing to hire you to do yardwork, house cleaning, and pet-sitting, especially if they know you will use the money in service to others.

Best practices

In rare cases a church may offer enough budget support that mission trip groups do not have to seek help in covering costs. More likely, team members will have to plan carefully and work hard to pay for their trip. Here is some hard-won wisdom in making this less difficult.

3. Ask for church budget support or other funding.

- a. Many churches are very willing to give to students involved in missions. Talk with your pastor – don't surprise him or your church leaders by going to others first. There are several avenues a church may provide to directly support you and your group.
- b. Approach your missions committee about possible funds for which you can apply.
- c. The student ministry or missions ministry may have a budget for student mission trips.
- d. If permitted, make a presentation to the church at which time a love offering is taken.

4. Cultivate support with letters.

Assist students in writing to potential supporters. Plenty of examples are available on the internet, but a personal, customized note is always preferable. Be sure to get permission from church leadership before sending out letters to church members. Make the letter informative about the purpose of your trip, your motivation for going, and your own investment. Provide a way for donors to submit funds directly to the church rather than to individuals.

5. Fundraise with events.

If your church or ministry permits it, consider hosting one or more of these events:

- a. Chili cook-off – Ask people to bring homemade chili to a fellowship for competition. Ask attendees to pay for their meal with a donation.
- b. Spaghetti or pancake meals – Set a per-plate fee.
- c. BBQ sale – Enlist a volunteer team to prepare and smoke the meat. Pre-sell by the pound

- at catering prices.
- d. Bake sale.
 - e. An auction for missions – Promote desserts specially made by church members. Seek items and skilled services (such as landscaping, haircuts, interior decorating) to be donated by church members and the community. Enlist an auctioneer to make things exciting and fun. Conduct a silent auction for some items.
 - f. 5k walk/race – A race is a popular event. With an entry fee and a course, you can have an event for families and the community.
 - g. Car wash – An oldie but goodie. Please make sure the cars actually get cleaned.
 - h. Work Angels – Advertise for students who are available for hire to do basic yard or housework. Mention that all proceeds will support the students on their mission trip. Recruit an adult to coordinate assignments.