



## GETTING INTO FUNDRAISING

Most youth ministries that come to the LCMS Youth Gathering fundraise some or all the cost. It may not be an adult leader's favorite part of the planning process, but it is a necessary one. As you prepare for 2025, remember that success in fundraising depends on identifying the right strategy for your congregation, planning to maximize your efforts, and communicating well.

Here are five key things to consider when planning your fundraising and over 100 creative fundraising ideas.

1. **Consider how your fundraisers fit into the larger picture of your congregation's overall ministry, and your Youth Ministry program.** You will want to connect with your pastor and other leaders in your congregation to see how your fundraising efforts can fit into the overall stewardship conversation and church philosophy on fundraising. This communication can help you stay in line with guidelines already in place in your congregation. It will also help you coordinate with other groups in your congregation that may be planning fundraisers. With proper conversation and approval, you won't exhaust your congregation with too many fundraisers.
2. **Know your budget and how to manage your funds.** Spreadsheets are your friend! Download the [Budget Tool](#) from the Gathering website to help. People will want to know the basics as you ask them for money and may be more generous if they know you are handling funds well. Have systems in place for depositing your earnings. Take note that you cannot give fundraising money directly toward any individuals' accounts (This is an IRS red flag! Be sure to do your research and follow financial policies of your church). You also cannot use money leftover for uses outside of what it was fundraised for, so be prepared to spend, or hold onto money for future Gatherings if that is specifically how money was directed in fundraising.
3. **Use fundraising to foster relationships — among your youth, adult leaders, and your congregation.** Fundraising can be a place where adults show their support for young people and that support can help encourage relationships. Find ways to report back on the impact of the LCMS Youth Gathering to those who helped get you to the event. You can send thank you notes from New Orleans, post pictures, do a special time of sharing when you return, or even host a dinner for key partners that helps them to talk one on one with youth about their experience. More than asking for money, also ask for prayer from your congregation!



4. **Tell the story then make the ask.** People will be very generous when they understand what they are contributing to. Often youth ministries make the mistake of asking without explaining exactly why, so telling the story and hoped for impact helps people to understand what they are contributing to. Then, don't be afraid to ask for what you need. Leave the cost free will and often people will give more than you expect. Or simply post envelopes with specific dollar amounts on the front and ask members of your congregation to take one or more home and fill with the amount listed. This is low pressure, as individuals can take the amount(s) they are comfortable with.
  
5. **Think outside the box and work to get the most bang for your buck.** Work smarter, not harder. If you are struggling to come up with ideas, we have created a list with the help of youth leaders in our [LCMS Youth Ministry Facebook group](#).



## 105 FUNDRAISING IDEAS

### Events

1. Raffle
2. Bingo Night (In-person/Virtual)
3. Car Wash
4. Silent Auction (In-person/Virtual)
5. Live Auction
6. Car Show
7. Trivia Night
8. Drive-In Movie with Concessions
9. Garage/Rummage Sale
10. Melodrama Dinner Theater
11. Theme Dinners
12. Church History Night
13. Color Run
14. Mystery Meal
15. Art Auction and Meal
16. Book Sale
17. Adult Prom or Era-Based Dance
18. Childcare for Christmas Shopping/Parent Night Out
19. Painting Party
20. Team Scavenger Hunt
21. 5K (In-person/Virtual)
22. Craft and Vendor Fair
23. Farmer's Market
24. Rock(ing Chair)-A-Thon
25. Golf Outing/Tournament
26. Escape Room
27. Cooking Competition/Class
28. Volleyball tournament
29. 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament
30. March Madness pool/raffle
31. Tractor Wash
32. Quilt Auction

### Food/Meals

33. Superbowl Subs
34. Butter Braid Sales
35. Pulled Pork Lunch
36. Cinnamon Roll Sales (Frozen or Baked)
37. Peach Sales
38. Lasagna and Salad Sale
39. Pancake Breakfast
40. Local Restaurant Fundraising Nights
41. Chocolate or Candy bar Sale
42. Breakfast Tacos
43. Cookie Dough Sales
44. Pie Auction
45. Chili or BBQ Cook-Off
46. Big Cookie Sale
47. Frozen Pizza Sale
48. Soda Machine
49. Meat Sale
50. Doughnut/Scone Sales
51. Frozen Burrito Sale
52. Take Out Dinners Themed to Location
53. Valentine's Dinner
54. Advent/Lent Dinners
55. Easter Breakfast
56. Thanksgiving Dinner
57. Homemade Egg Noodles
58. Homemade Ice Cream
59. Strawberry Sales
60. Soda Booth at Church Picnic
61. Charcuterie Boards



### Items for Purchase

- 62. Easter Egg Hunt Kit
- 63. Valentine Cookie Kit
- 64. Church Cookbook
- 65. Car Wash Cards from Kwik Trip
- 66. Plants from Local Nursery
- 67. Easter Lilies
- 68. Poinsettias
- 69. Mud Love Bracelets
- 70. Church T-Shirts

### Creative Donations

- 71. Envelope Sunday
- 72. Youth "Stock" Purchase/Investment
- 73. Mini M&M Containers
- 74. Feed Our Hungry Youth
- 75. Pray a Mile
- 76. Free Will Donations
- 77. Targeting Donors
- 78. Budget Inclusion
- 79. Fake Event with Ticket Sales

### Other

- 80. Egg My Yard
- 81. Rent-A-Youth/Youth Service Auction
- 82. Scrip Program
- 83. Cleaning Items at local Consignment Store
- 84. Paper Shredding
- 85. Voting for Shave Pastor's Beard or Not
- 86. Selling Parking for Big Events
- 87. Scrap Metal Drive
- 88. Bags/Cornhole Tournament
- 89. Flamingo Flocking (with insurance)
- 90. Pumpkin Patch
- 91. Seats on Rose Parade
- 92. Christmas Tree Lot
- 93. Fireworks Sale
- 94. Local store Rewards Program
- 95. Pie a Pastor
- 96. Stadium Cleaning or Food Stands
- 97. Tech Support or Recycling
- 98. Sponsor a Leader's Marathon Run
- 99. Cutest Baby Contest
- 100. Face Painting at Corn Maze
- 101. Pay per Strip – Duct Take to a Wall
- 102. Dunk Tank at Church Picnic
- 103. Youth "Instacart" Shopping
- 104. Rake and Run
- 105. Renting Bathroom Privileges During Neighborhood Event