

10 Fun & Fast Ways to Raise Funds For Your Event

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I wish my church could have a girls' event. But we're just too small and we don't have that kind of



money. Have you ever found yourself thinking something similar? A lot of people have. Don't let your church size or lack of funds limit you from dreaming big when it comes to planning a conference or a retreat for your youth group. It's possible for even the smallest church with a zero youth budget to put on a phenomenal event complete with a band and professional speaker. Bringing a speaker or a band out will always cost money—but it doesn't have to come in one lump sum and it doesn't have to be accounted for in your church budget.

Get creative. And if you have an idea I didn't mention, I'd love to hear it. Send me an email at shannon@beingagirlbooks.com

1. Partner with other local churches. One of the easiest ways to make hiring a professional speaker or band affordable is to split the cost between a group of churches that are willing to join forces to pull off a large scale event. If enough churches are able to work together, each church might find enough in their annual budget to fund their portion of the event without further fundraising. So, make a list of local churches in your area and schedule meetings with people in the same department (youth, women's, etc...) and see if you can make something happen.

2. Take a special offering or make an announcement to your congregation. Ask your pastor or ministry leader if you can present the financial need to those in your church body. Many times there are a few wealthy people who are willing to give a lot to fund special events (especially for youth), and more often than not there are many people who would be willing to give a little. I can think of at least three cases where a need was presented and someone in the congregation offered to pay the *entire* honorarium of the desired speaker.

3. Ask local businesses to participate. Even if the owners of some popular local businesses aren't Christians, they still may be willing to donate funds or services (food, door prizes, etc...) to your event in exchange for advertising space in your printed program. Most of the time a business can write off a donation to a church event, and they will consider it free advertising. So make a list of popular hot spots and get to work. In my experience going in person and dropping off a letter asking for a donation works better than cold calling or sending an unsolicited letter. Make personal contact and the business owner is less likely to blow you off or forget you. It also helps if you personally frequent a business and are a regular customer.

4. Host a car wash. I know the car wash idea may seem like a waste of time. Who really wants to hold a sign on a street corner and beg people to let you wash the grime off their cars, right? The most effective fundraising car wash I've ever seen was held on a weekend during church services. That's right—*during* church. The week before the pastor made an announcement that the youth group would be washing cars the following weekend in order to send a kid to camp. He asked people to bring \$10 and pull into a special part of the parking lot. People ate it up because it didn't take any extra time. They were already at church anyway—why not pay the \$10 and leave with a clean car? The key to pulling this off is announcing it beforehand so people come prepared.

5. Sell donuts and/or coffee after church. This doesn't have to be fancy. Some churches have elaborate coffee carts that different ministries can use to make specialty drinks in order to raise funds for upcoming events or missions. But if your church isn't equipped to do that don't despair. Just brew regular coffee and buy a few dozen donuts before church. Set up a table outside the main sanctuary and sell your donuts and coffee after the service. By then people's stomachs are growling and those donuts really look good. If possible, set up near the Sunday school classes and small children will do all of your marketing for you.

6. Have an "all church" garage sale. Ask members of your congregation to donate new or gently used items to be sold in an all church garage sale. Then advertise widely in your local community. One person's junk is another person's

10 Fun & Fast Ways to Raise Funds For Your Event 2

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treasure, so don't be too picky about what you accept. Host an all day sale in your church parking lot. Put the proceeds from the sale toward your event and donate the leftover items to Goodwill.

7. Charge a small fee for event tickets. If you can get close to the amount of money you need for your event, but you can't get all the way there, consider charging a small amount for tickets. Coming up with that last \$500 might seem like an impossible feat, but if 50 people paid \$10 you would have it easily. Statistics prove that people value events more if they have to pay something for tickets. They are more likely to follow through with coming even if they no longer feel like it on the day of if they actually *bought* a ticket.

8. Make your own food and decorations. A great way to instantly cut the cost of any event is to make your own food and decorations. Although pizza is the most common fare at many of the teen events I speak at, I've also been to a handful of events where a group of people from the congregation made everything from sandwiches to desserts and pancakes. Some of the cutest decorations I've ever seen were made out of simple construction paper. Other churches have a lot of decorations on hand from when they host weddings. One event I went to was catered by a professional who went to that church and considered making the food for that weekend a ministry. Don't be afraid to ask around. You never know who you have in your midst.

9. Cut down on travel costs. Travel costs are one of the most expensive parts of having a professional speaker or band out to your event. If possible, look for speakers and bands that live in your region of the United States. Reimbursing someone for fuel is a lot cheaper than paying for airfare. Lodging costs can also be trimmed down if someone in your church has a guesthouse or basement apartment they'd be willing to host a speaker or band in. Instead of renting a car for an out of state speaker, assign someone to pick him/her up at the airport and play chauffeur for the weekend. Ask around. More often than not someone will have what you need and be willing to help.

10. Pray and ask God to provide! This really should go at the top of the list since it's the most important, but I put it at the end since it's also the most obvious. Even though it sounds cliché, I've seen God do radical things through prayer. I've heard many stories about groups who held a prayer meeting asking God to provide for them to host an event and within hours they received some sort of major funding. For others, things moved slower. One church I spoke at waited an entire year for God to provide the funds necessary—and when He did the event was awesome. Watching God provide piece by piece was a faith building journey for all of those involved with planning and was most likely why God took so long to answer their prayer.

Don't allow a small or nonexistent budget to discourage you from dreaming about what God can do in and through your church. Prayerfully consider the items on this list and start putting some of them into action. Before you know it, you'll have enough money to hire a professional speaker or band for your event *almost* for free.



An author of ten books, Shannon Primicerio teaches teenage girls how to apply the Bible to the drama of real life and read it like it's God's love letter to them. By helping girls establish intimacy with Christ, she puts them on a path that will ensure they will still be walking with Him long after high school and college.

Her books and conferences provide:

- *Guidance and structure for how to have a daily quiet time
- *Strategies for battling peer pressure in areas like dating, purity and friendship
- *Insight on how to see yourself as the beautiful treasure you are
- *Direction on how to find your purpose and live your passion for the glory of God

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