

Helping Young People Give-



Globally

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Young people who have been raised with technology some of us never dreamed of know it better than anyone—our community is global. The trick, as always, is helping them express their love for God and neighbor—even *global* neighbors—in effective, fun ways.

Young people in our congregations likely know too much about fundraising; they've been raising money for trips and activities since elementary school. However, they may not have much experience raising funds for others. Enter: the ELCA's World Hunger Appeal. It seeks to link our culture of abundance with areas of great need in God's global community. It helps young people:

- grow in faith;
- witness to others by their actions;
- deepen their understanding of global community;
- have fun in the process.

As the World Hunger Appeal celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, it invites young people to join in the celebration. Under the fundraising theme "25-in-25," youth groups and congregations are invited to creatively use the number 25 in developing *extra* fundraising activities in this 25th anniversary year. Although it may not be your first goal, involving young people in raising funds for others will necessitate fun at the forefront.

Goal #1: Fun

Despite the grim reality of hunger in our world, sound stewardship is born not of guilt, but of the joyful realization that God's grace creates unbounded opportunities. This allows youth (and adults) to be serious about their commitment—but frees them to have fun at

the same time. Simply using this anniversary as a springboard for action is fun. For example:

- ask individuals to put 25 cents in a coin roll each day for a given number of weeks;
- encourage a group to give or raise the cost of 25 pairs of Nikes;
- for a given number of weeks—perhaps 25—give a youth group \$25 or \$250 from the congregational budget or from an individual and ask them to find creative ways to multiply it; use the parable of the talents for discussion and as a guide (Matthew 25:14–30);
- sell enough hot dogs at a local fair to buy 25 pigs for our Lutheran World Federation project in Haiti.

A churchwide dream is for all congregations and youth groups to participate in special, home-grown, eye-catching, quirky and *fun* fundraising activities this year, starting this spring.

But there will also be a special 25-day period in the fall—from November 1 (All Saints Day) to November 25 (Thanksgiving)—when all congregations will be invited to celebrate and to renew their commitment to this anti-hunger work. Consider using *The Real Meal Deal* (Augsburg Fortress, ISBN 6-0000-7365-8) as a fall retreat for youth in your congregation or with several other congregations. This free resource combines experiential learning and fundraising for world hunger in a day-long structure with many options.

A congregational anniversary, a local event, or a secular celebration can also provide the impetus for outward-directed giving. For example, *Souper Bowl* (1-800-358-SOUP) is an easy way to collect funds for hunger on Super Bowl Sunday each January. Youth of all denominations ask worshipers to simply drop a dollar into a soup kettle on their way out of church. Each youth group designates where the money goes. ELCA congregations are encouraged to split it between a local charity and the ELCA World Hunger Appeal. Young people report their earnings that same day via the Internet, and then can watch how those dollar bills add up after congregations from across the country have reported their results to a central clearinghouse.

Consider other tried-and-true activities, such as the annual fall CROP Walk, which is both fun and effective. If the young people in your congregation are set on raising funds for a summer trip or the 2000 Youth Gathering, urge them to tithe their earnings to world hunger. Ten percent of what they raise for their own needs could go to the Hunger Appeal or disaster relief. Or, challenge them to give 25 percent of their earnings from a particular fundraiser.

Goal #2: Financial

Setting a challenging but attainable dollar goal helps young people shift from an “any-outcome-will-be-OK” mind-set to a “we-can-do-this-if-we-try” approach. Yes, this can be risky. What happens if we fall short of the goal? Keep in mind that when youth enthusiastically set or embrace a goal, the results can be amazing.

Just ask folks in the Virginia Synod, where young people attending a fall event took on a specific youth-to-youth challenge (\$250/congregation) and raised nearly \$20,000. In congregations and synods, setting specific fundraising goals invites youth to ponder a

key stewardship question: What is an appropriate financial response to a disaster such as Hurricane Mitch, given the resources of our congregation?

Finding a match for what youth raise can provide extra encouragement, and teaches young people how to multiply resources. Matching can occur in at least three ways:

*From a fraternal organization, such as Lutheran Brotherhood or Aid Association for Lutherans. They often match funds raised for world hunger and disasters.

*From an individual in the congregation.

*From the congregation itself. Young people issue a challenge to members of their congregation to match what they raise.

When \$1 suddenly becomes \$2, enthusiasm and increased giving is often the result.

Goal #3: Facts

Incorporate education into the fundraising process. Choose some key facts you'd like youth to know about the global community—facts that clarify why funds are needed and what difference their action will make. Invite them to find creative ways to teach key facts to the congregation or Sunday school. Used in connection with fundraising efforts, a presentation, newsletter article, skit, or quiz broadens the entire experience.

ELCA Web sites provide on-line information—from facts as specific as what \$1 can buy in emergency situations to more complex information about sustainable development. The ELCA World Hunger Appeal will collect and post on its Web site new fundraising ideas being generated in congregations. Send youth on a fact-finding mission to this Web site and others listed at the end of this Help Sheet.

Facts connect with the mind; faces often touch the heart. Resources are available that show the human face of these facts. Posters, stories and videos are either included or listed in the Hunger Packet, which is mailed to each congregation in May or available from the ELCA World Hunger Appeal office in Chicago. Speakers who can paint “word pictures” of these faces may be available locally. Call your synod hunger coordinator (directly or through your synod office) or Lutheran World Relief (1-800-532-6350). The ELCA World Hunger program will collect and post on its Web site new fundraising ideas generated by congregations.

Avoid the lure of the “child sponsorship” fundraisers, which effectively provide moving images of children, but which often spend *three times* more on administration and fundraising than does our own church's hunger program.

Goal #4: Faith

Fundraising can be seen as a mechanical exchange of money or as a way to deepen the stewardship of God's creation. Fundraising to fight world hunger helps young people take

seriously God's call to open our eyes to the harsh reality that 34,000 of God's children die *each day* from hunger and poverty-related diseases. It teaches reliance on God's promise to multiply our gifts of time and money to change that reality.

Surrounding fundraising activity with prayer underscores that fundraising is an action of faith, which takes shape in community. And inviting youth to lead the way in fundraising by sharing their own resources presents the challenge of matching word and deed in their own lives.

When they raise funds to combat world hunger, young people make a public witness to their faith and acknowledge God's call to do justice in a world where many go to bed hungry. Fundraising serves to counter hopelessness and apathy. The dollar that passes from one hand to another is more than a piece of paper. It is a down payment on hope:

- for hungry people, for it is hope for a better life; and
- for young people raising those funds, it is hope and confidence that they can and do make a difference in this world.

Web addresses

 ELCA www.elca.org/co/hunger and www.elca.org/disaster	 Bread for the World www.bread.org
 Lutheran World Relief www.lwr.org	 Action by Churches Together www.act-intl.org/
 Crop Walk www.churchworldservice.org/	 Souper Bowl www.souperbowl.org

For more information about the Virginia Synod fundraising effort, email:
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