



FUNDRAISING GUIDE

for MISSION TRIPS

LETTER WRITING



WHERE TO START

While you are asking for financial support for your mission trip, **think of your letter as a life update from you.** One of the most exciting parts of your life is the mission trip you'll be joining in the near future. With this in mind, craft your support letter in a way that tells the story of *what you have been up to* in your life and faith and *where you're going*. Once you've done that, invite your supporters to join you in it. They can be a huge help not just by giving money, but also by committing to pray for you and being willing to hear your story when you return.

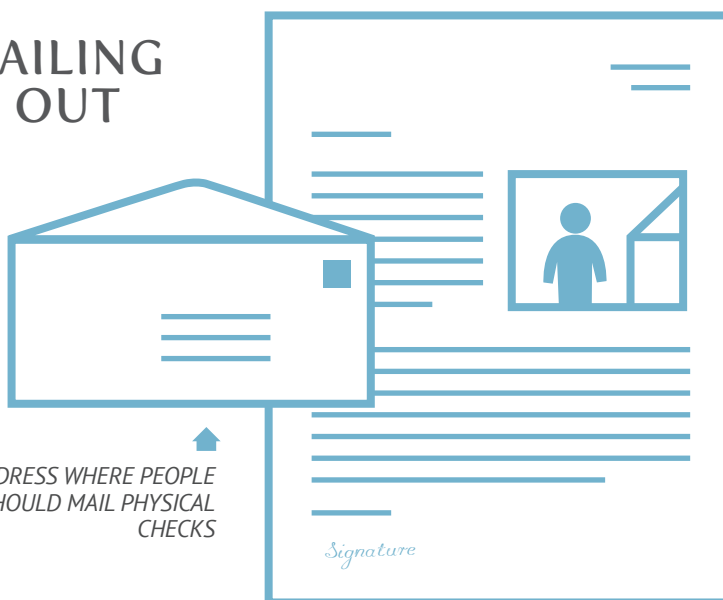
➡ **TIP: Consider the presentation of your letter**

Make it a fun and interesting piece of mail! Most mail we receive are bills and bank statements—plain text on white paper. Don't be afraid to change up the format. Add a picture of yourself. Add a map of the place you're going to. Be creative, get to the point (we recommend keeping it short with maximum one-page letters), and above all, be yourself!

EXAMPLE SUPPORT LETTER

Check out our example letter on the last page of this guide. Feel free to use it as a template, but definitely make your letter personal and unique to you!

MAILING IT OUT



IN THE ENVELOPE

- 1 Letter with info, photos, how to donate (online or by mail), and links to places to learn more.
- 2 Donation envelope stamped and pre-addressed—in case your supporters prefer to donate by check instead of online.
- 3 Optional, but extremely helpful—a small note card with your name, the name of your group program, and trip dates, to be included in the envelope with any check donations not going to you!

WORK FOR IT



FROM ODD JOBS TO YOUR 9-5

Depending on your fundraising network, you may need to earn some of the money towards your trip—but this is good for you! **“Sweat equity” towards your trip will help you see it as something of value.** Much like how you feel when you study all night to pass a test, you value reaching a goal much more if it took sacrifice. You may already have a job that takes a lot of your time, but if you don’t or work part-time, here are a few ways to earn some cash on the fly (while probably getting to know your neighbors in the process! Bonus!)

OUTDOOR WORK



There is always work to be done outside. You can mow lawns or pull weeds. Rake leaves or shovel snow. They’re simple tasks, but many homeowners are happy to support a good cause to avoid having to do the work.

► TIP: How much?

Working for “donations only” gives you a great reason to explain why you’re raising money. It may even bring out people’s generosity!

WASH CARS



All you need is a hose (and maybe a bucket, a sponge and soap). Many people don’t have time to wash their cars and would be eager to say Yes when you knock on the door, ready to go. Add sparkle up someone’s life as you get to know them better too.

► TIP: Air dry

Spring and summer are better seasons for this, unless your neighbors are fans of frozen soap!

BABY-SITTING



This is easier for people who spend time around families with young children, but there are also listings online for nannies and baby-sitters (though mostly for women). If it was a legitimate means of income for you in middle school, it can still be a great way to fundraise for IMMERSION!

► TIP: Have a job?

Taking a night off to babysit is maybe not your best option. But babysitting on an off day might bring in some much-needed extra dollars.

HOUSE KEEPING



Play the role of maid with a vacuum and duster to earn some extra cash here and there. Cleaning services are normally quite expensive, so you may be surprised how much people are willing to pay for your time!

MR./MISS FIX-IT



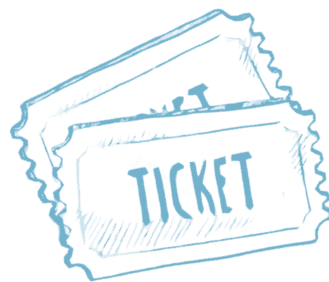
Do you know a lot about cars or bikes? Offer to change the oil or brake pads in your friends’ cars for less than the local garage. Or give your friends and family’s bikes a tune-up, repairing flats, cleaning chains, fixing brake lines, etc. All for a small fee, of course!

SAVINGS PLAN



If you are not reliant on 100% of your income, it is a good savings practice (and go-to money-saving strategy) to choose a % of each paycheck to go towards your trip. Even 5% each time will add up to a significant contribution.

HOST AN EVENT



GET YOUR PEOPLE INVOLVED

Basic event recipe: **Plan a fun activity, invite the neighborhood, explain why you're doing it, and help give a larger group of people a small way to help you out.** Some events already provide easy ways for people to contribute, while others may work best with **cover charges** that provide guests a specific amount expected of them to give. In both cases, hearing your story may inspire attendees to support you in bigger ways than just their pocket change!

MOVIE NIGHT



Get the neighborhood, church, or friend group together for a movie on the lawn! (Option 2: Roomy living room or garage with a projector.) Pick a classic or something relevant to your trip, charge a small entry fee, and provide free popcorn to your guests.



TIP: Flick to pick?

If you're inviting families with kids, all-ages and kid-friendly movies are sure to draw a bigger crowd!

COOK-OFF



Pit your friends' cooking abilities against each other in a good ol' fashioned cook-off. Whether it's soup, dessert, or gourmet chili dogs, charge a small entry fee for participants and eaters, and have the best dinner of your week!



TIP: Winner winner

If it's a contest, we suggest finding a fun prize for the winner. Everyone loves a good healthy competition!

YARD SALE



You and your friends and family probably have more things lying around than you currently need. De-clutter and turn that excess into \$\$ for your trip! Ask ahead for item donations (preferably decent things), pick a Saturday, and hang out in the sun. A day in the yard could make a big fundraising dent!



TIP: Small ticket items

Keep prices low or go "by donation" only! Lots of little sales beat a couple big ones every time.

MINI TOURNAMENT



A tournament is a fun way to raising much-needed funds. Pick something that appeals to your friends (or their friends)—basketball, flag football, ping-pong, video games. Charge an entry fee and provide snacks. Grab a prize or wacky trophy for the winner!

BBQ OR PASTA FEED



Turn up the backyard speakers, and invite a crowd over for lots of cheap food together. Ask for an entry fee and set up a QR code to donate to your trip. Combine with a holiday to maximize the fun and people looking to hangout for the evening!

KARAOKE NIGHT



Print out lyrics or just look up sing-along YouTube videos, and invite your performers and big spenders for a night of belting it out for a good cause. Spice it up by having people either pay to see others sing or pay to get out of it!

SELL GOODS



ITEMS TO REMEMBER YOU

Whether it's a carwash for a sports team or donuts for ASB, we're all familiar with the idea of selling something to raise money. Having goods to sell gives your supporters an easy reminder to pray for you and your trip while you're away. It also provides a way for people to support your trip who don't even know you, merely because they like what you're selling.

HOME-MADE



You may have the skills to make desirable items, even if you've never sold any of them. Paint canvases, create greeting cards, crochet hats or scarves, sew aprons, sell photography prints, build pallet furniture, or do almost anything else! Get creative!

CUSTOM GEAR



One of the best ways for people to show their support (and spread the word about your trip) is by giving them something to wear. EM partners with Fund the Nations to help participants create and sell custom T-shirts and more, including tote bags, stickers, bracelets, sunglasses, patches and hats. Visit FundTheNations.com to get started!

BAKE SALE



Got the baking bug (or know people who do)? Pick a date for your sale and start stockpiling baked goods. Set out a table on your street, at your church, or at the park, and sell your baked goods for donations to your trip. Put out a QR code or link to your fundraising page to make it easy to support you!

LEMONADE STAND



Go old school and sell lemonade on your street or college campus. Talk about your upcoming trip while providing cold drinks on a hot day. Ask for "donations only" to get considerably more for each cup than your standard lemonade stand!

GET SOCIAL



LIGHT IN A DARK PLACE

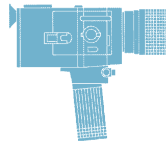
The data is out there: social media is slowly killing us. We're more angry, more lonely, more depressed, and less connected to the world around us than ever before. But the majority of people still find themselves doom scrolling multiple times per day. With your upcoming missions experience, **you have an opportunity to spread a little hope and encouragement** into a sometimes bleak space. You will soon be traveling to a new community, building meaningful relationships, coming alongside those in need, and actively seeking to bring dignity to "the least of these." And right now, you get to invite the people you're connected to *online* to join you in something meaningful and help make this *offline* experience a reality.

DO YOUR THING



Whether you make viral TikToks or write long meditations on Instagram, keep doing what you do best, but make it about your upcoming trip. Don't just ask for money, but also let people know about your hopes, dreams, and excitements for serving others on this trip. Be real and authentic and people will respond!

GET IT ON FILM



Videos are the most engaging part of social media! So, get in front of the camera and let people know what you're doing! The more updates, the better. Share updates about the trip as you know more, fundraising event opportunities and more. Your friends care about you! Seeing you be bold and putting yourself out there will be inspiring.

GO LIVE



Your fundraising efforts may need an online boost. Go live from your Yard Sale or Cook-Off, inviting people to join or take part by donating from afar. Invite people into your life in meaningful ways by using the online tools at your disposal!

HELPFUL TEXTS



Despite the potential wide reach of social media, one of the most effective ways to use your phone for fundraising is by sending **personal texts** to the people on your potential supporter list. It starts a conversation people can't ignore!

Dear [Sponsor Name],

Hello from Indianapolis! As you may know, I am currently in my senior year at the Franklin High School, and I will be graduating this coming spring. I can't believe I'm almost finished with school! I'm nervous but excited for what God has for me in the future. One of my favorite authors, Shauna Niequist, writes, "Giving yourself to something you believe in is never irresponsible." Recently, I've been trying to discover what God wants me to do next and the unique plan that God has for my life. While I've enjoyed volunteering with the youth group at Westlake Christian Church every once in awhile, I recently started feeling like God wanted me to serve in a different way. So I decided to join my church's mission trip to Haiti. The details have come together in the last month, and I'm really excited for what God has for me and my team.

Our team of 25 will spend in eight days in Haiti in July, doing whatever Experience Mission (the organization we're partnering with) has set up for us to do or needs from us. While we're there, we'll build relationships and meet lots of local people, living and serving alongside them. Many of the local people have a vision for making their community better, so our team will get to help make a small part of that vision a reality. I know we will learn a lot, especially since their culture is so different from ours. I hope that we will be able to bless them, too.

Now, here's where you come in. A trip like this would not be possible without external support. It's my great desire that I would have a big group of people supporting me through prayer and donations. I've started fundraising already and have some creative ideas to get as many people involved as possible. Knowing that people are cheering me on will help encourage me as I prepare to travel overseas for the first time.

If you would like to contribute financially, you can give through the Westlake Christian Church website or mail in the pre-addressed envelope and giving card that came with this letter. If you mail in donations, make sure you write checks out to "Westlake Christian Church" (with my name on the bottom line) in order to keep donations tax-deductible.



Here are instructions for donating online:

1. Go to westlakeecc.org
2. Click DONATE at the top of the page
3. Click the 'Support a Mission Trip' box at the bottom of the page.
4. Find the trip labeled 'Youth to Haiti' in the dropdown menu
5. Complete the donation form and add my name in the 'Comments' section.

Thank you in advance for partnering with me in this adventure. I know it may be a sacrifice to support me financially, and I want you to know how much I appreciate it! I also want to be clear that your emotional and prayerful support mean much more to me than any donation. I'd love to talk with you more about my upcoming mission trip and passion for serving or hear any creative ideas you might have for fundraising. Also, I invite you to follow the team blog (listed below) for all of our trip updates! I can't wait to see what God continues to teach me through this opportunity. Thanks for being a part of it!

Sincerely,

(Participant Signature)

[Participant Name]

TEAM BLOG westlakeyouth.blog.com
 INSTAGRAM [@yourIName](https://www.instagram.com/yourIName)
 CHURCH WEBSITE westlakeecc.org
 EM WEBSITE experiencemission.org