

IMMERSION



FUNDRAISING GUIDE

Whether you stumbled on the IMMERSION program through a Google search, received a postcard in the mail, or a family member, pastor or friend told you about the opportunity and said, “You have to apply!”, you got here. You poked around the EM website, browsed through pictures and read about communities. You’ve prayed and thought about doing something like this for a while and can’t help but feel like God is calling you to travel and serve. You can even picture yourself as part of the team, and just as you’re about to click on the application, you see it—[the price tag](#).

You wonder if you’re really cut out for this. You’re frustrated at God. “Why would you call me to something that I can’t possibly afford?” You want to believe He will provide, but you know there’s no way you can come up with that kind of money on your own. We want you to take heart. It might feel like there are overwhelming barriers to raising the funds for an IMMERSION program, but we believe that with some hard work, support from the EM team and lots of prayer, God’s provision and timing will be perfect.

Whether you’ve been accepted to an upcoming term or are just checking things out, we want to ease some of your fundraising fears. In this document, we’ve compiled some real ideas and tangible resources to help you reach your goals, both taken from past IMMERSION participants and other “creative fundraising think tanks” (a.k.a. our own experience). Feel free to use these exact ideas or tailor any of them to fit your own interests and community. Above all else, use these ideas to help get your creative juices flowing!



WORDS of WISDOM AS YOU BEGIN

1. DON'T BE INTIMIDATED

▶ Talking about money isn't always easy and asking for money can be even harder, but fundraising doesn't have to be intimidating. You'll no doubt have to put a lot of your own money and energy into preparing for the IMMERSION program, but you'll also learn to trust God in new ways, relying on him to provide the right connections and spark the creative ideas. **Be bold** as you step out and share your story with other people. Tell them about how you're relying on God to provide and how they can be a part of that story.

2. HAVE A PLAN

▶ While you should be hopeful about fundraising for IMMERSION, **you need to be realistic**. The best reality-check is to develop a detailed plan for how you want to raise the money. Follow the EM payment plan and set monthly goals. Stay organized and keep track of your one-time gifts, monthly donations, fundraising event goals, and personal contributions, estimating how many donations and commitments will be necessary to reach your monthly fundraising goals. If you need a place to start, you can download our example online from the EM MISSION CENTER.

3. GET CREATIVE

▶ It's great to have large, one-time gifts or monthly donors, but **you will need to get creative about fundraising**. Grab some friends and brainstorm ideas. Think specifically about the network of people in your life. Maybe you're part of a sports team or Bible study that could help you host a yard sale. Maybe you're good at sewing and could sell custom-made aprons to the ladies who play cards at the Senior Center. Think about the things you already love to do or the places you're already connected. You'll be amazed how willing people are to help when you give them a unique way to get involved!

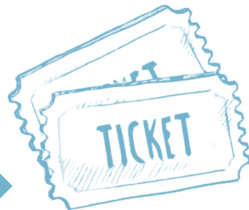
4. WE'RE HERE TO HELP

▶ This document is meant to kick-start you towards creative fundraising. Read it and run with our ideas. **Make them bigger and more awesome than we thought possible!** If you come to the end of your creativity and start to get discouraged, we are more than willing to talk. Contact one of Experience Mission's IMMERSION staff members and they will be happy to give you advice and encourage you towards meeting the benchmarks on your payment plan.

HOST AN EVENT

Hopefully, you know people who enjoy doing fun things. These people would probably also be more inclined to do fun things if they knew they were supporting you in the process. That's why it's a perfect time to host an event. **Plan a fun activity, invite the neighborhood, explain why you're doing it, and help give a large 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 community 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 and candy to guests.

TIP:

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

YARD SALE

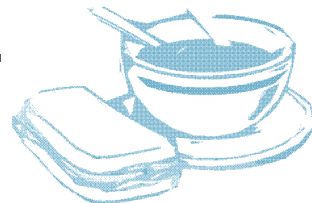


Do you or someone you know have a yard? Then you can have a yard sale! Chances are you and your friends and family have more things lying around than you currently use or need. A yard sale is a great way to not only de-clutter your life, but also turn that excess into cash for your trip! Pick a Saturday, ask around for item donations (preferably sell-able things) and grab a lawn chair. A day of sitting outside could amount to a month's worth of fundraising!

TIP:

Remember to advertise on Craigslist and in the paper, and keep your prices reasonable! Lots of little sales beats a couple big sales every time!

COOK-OFF



Pit your friends' cooking abilities against each other in a good ol' fashioned cook-off. Whether it's homemade soup, dessert treats or gourmet chili dogs, a well-advertised cook-off gets any food-lover's attention. Charge a small entry fee for participants and eaters, and have the best dinner of your week!

TIP:

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

TOURNAMENT



Hosting a tournament is a great way to have fun while raising some much-needed funds. Pick something that will draw a good number of your friends (or their friends)—whether it's basketball, flag football, HALO or Mario Kart—and grab a prize or wacky trophy for the winner! Charge a reasonable entry fee, provide snacks, and let the fun begin.

TIP:

A big tournament can take some legwork and organizing, but it's worth it! Who knows, you may even start an annual tradition while you're at it!

MORE: FOOD/TOY DRIVE

Host a potluck that benefits local people. Your servant's heart shows up best while serving others.

SPAGHETTI/ BBQ FEED

Lots of cheap food + hungry people = fun dinner with friends!

KARAOKE NIGHT

Print out lyrics & sing along to YouTube videos. Guests pay to see friends their belt it out.

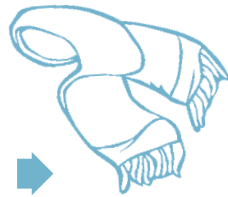
EAT OUT FOR A CAUSE

Ask local restaurants if they'll donate a % of 1 night to your trip. Then invite out everyone you know!

BECOME A SALESMAN

Whether it's a carwash for a sports team or Krispy Kreme 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.

HOMEMADE HANDICRAFTS

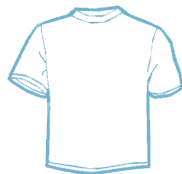


Spend ten minutes on Etsy or Pinterest, and you'll realize that anything hand-made goods are a hit. You may have the skills to make desirable items, even if you've never used your talents for that purpose. If you're an artist who paints posters or you crochet hats and scarves for the winter, you have a talent that other people can appreciate. Ideas for things to make include crocheted or knit hats/scarves, greeting cards, paintings, photograph prints, sewn aprons, screen-printed posters, and almost ANYTHING ELSE. Be creative!

TIP:

Whatever it is that you decide to make, the more meaningful it is towards your cause, the better!

IMMERSION T-SHIRTS



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. Here are a couple resources (found online on the EM MISSION CENTER) to help make that possible.

1 Screenprint Shirts – Through a partnership with FundtheNations.com, we have 3 unique designs, printed in the ink and shirt color of your choice. (See final page for more info!)

TIP:

Once you pick a design, collect pre-orders for your shirt before ordering them altogether. More shirts = less cost.

2 Design Stencils – Go DIY with simple cut-out stencils used for painting shirts on your own, or use them on other sellable merchandise!

TIP:

Skills with an Exact-O knife and paint aren't required but will definitely help!

BRACELETS



Bracelets and wristbands are another great way for people to wear their support for you everywhere. You can make your own bracelets by visiting the local bead or craft store, or you can order personalized, silicon "LIVESTRONG" -esque wristbands from a number of websites. Either way, bracelets are a cheap, sellable item that keeps your trip on the minds of everyone sporting one on their wrist.

TIP:

Make sure you pick a selling price that not only covers your costs, but gives you money towards your trip!

MORE:

SWEET SUNGLASSES

Order some customized sun specs or grab a cheap pack on eBay, and give people a stylish way to support you!

YOUR TUNES

If you've recorded any music, sell cheap, burned copies of your CD and reserve a portion (or all) of the proceeds for your trip.

LEMONADE STAND

Go old school and sell lemonade on your street or campus. Talk about your trip while helping thirsty people and making some green.

MANUAL LABOR

You can fundraise non-stop for six months, but at some point, you will have to actually earn some much-needed money towards your trip. The good news is spending some of your own money on this is incredibly good for you! **Putting in “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. Many of you probably already have jobs, but for those that 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!)

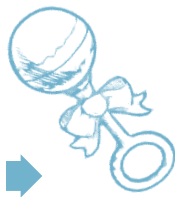
OUTDOOR WORK



No matter the season, there is always work to be done outside. In the spring and summer, you can mow lawns and pull weeds. In the fall, bust out your rake and leaf-blower, and, in the winter, become an expert at snow-shoveling. They're simple tasks, but many homeowners are happy to support a good cause to avoid doing the work.

TIP: Working for “donations only” gives you a great reason to explain why you're raising money. It may even bring out the generosity in people!

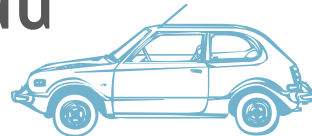
BABY-SITTING



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

TIP: If you already have a job that pays well, taking a night off to babysit is most likely not your best option, but babysitting on an off day might bring in some much-needed extra dollars.

WASHING CARS



Good news! All you need is a hose (and maybe a bucket, a sponge and soap). A lot of people don't have time to wash their own cars and would be eager to hire you when you knock on the door with your sponge and bucket. A clean car not only brightens up someone's day, but washing their car might give you time to get to know them even better.

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

YOUR JOB



If you currently have a job, but are not reliant on 100% of your income, it is a good savings practice (and go-to money saving strategy) to choose a percentage of each paycheck to go towards your IMMERSION program. Even 5% each time will add up to a significant contribution toward your trip over the course of a few months. It may also bring meaning to work that can sometimes feel tedious.

TIP: This is a great time to start curbing excess spending and begin to budget your paycheck anyway. It's a necessary life skill, and it can free up money you didn't even think you had.

MORE:

HOUSE-KEEPING

Play the role of maid with a vacuum and duster to earn a few extra bucks here and there.

AUTO MECHANIC

Do you know cars? Offer to change the oil or brake pads in your friends' cars for less than the local garage.

BIKE REPAIR

If you're a bike person, make it a point to know how to fix 'em! Fix brakes, repair flats, replace spokes. All for a small fee, of course!

LETTER WRITING

Letter writing is one of the oldest and most effective ways to fundraise. Especially in this age—letters in the mail being few and far between—receiving a personal letter from someone you know and love is a joy. While we are all incredibly connected online (more on that in the next section), we often don't have the time to catch up with everyone in our life, especially family, family-friends, and—if you've moved away for school—the church community we grew up in. They love us and support us from afar, but don't hear from us often. Your upcoming IMMERSION experience is a great opportunity to reconnect.

WHERE TO START



While you will be asking for monetary help, think of your support letter as a life update from you. Currently, the biggest and most exciting part of your life is the one, three or six-month trip you'll be taking in the near future. You think about it often and, hopefully, it is a stepping-stone to what you see yourself doing in the future. With this in mind, craft your support letter in a way that tells the story of what you have been up to 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.

TIPS:

Consider the presentation of your letter. Make it a fun and interesting piece of mail! Most mail that we receive comes in the form of bills and bank statements, many of which are plain text on white paper. Black "Times New Roman" font on copy paper will excite people about as much as black "Times New Roman" font on copy paper can. Don't be afraid to break outside of the traditional format. Add a picture of yourself. Add a map of the country you're going to with a star on your destination. Be creative, get to the point (we recommend one-page letters), and above all, be yourself!

MORE: EXAMPLE SUPPORT LETTER

Check out our example letter on the last page of this guide. It's just an example, so no copying allowed!

MAILING IT OUT



EXPERIENCE MISSION
P.O. BOX 719
PORT HADLOCK, WA 98339

IN THE ENVELOPE

- 1 Letter with info, photos, how to donate (online or by mail), and links to your blog & the EM website
- 2 Donation envelope stamped and pre-addressed to EM, in case your supporters prefer to donate by check instead of through your online fundraising profile.

THE SOCIAL NETWORK

With everyone and their mom on Facebook, we are more connected to more people than ever before. We have online profiles on tons of sites. For the most part, we use these to share, comment and communicate about ourselves. But social networks are also a place to talk about tremendously valuable things in our world. IMMERSION is not just the experience of a lifetime, but it's also an incredible exercise in building relationships, living with those in poverty, and actively seeking to bring dignity to "the least of these." This is a powerful message that your Facebook friends might be encouraged to read.

START A BLOG

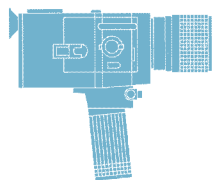


This is step one. It's a great idea to start a blog while you prepare, but blogging will be essential to processing your trip as it happens. Establish a real and honest voice in the run-up to the trip (share your excitements, hopes and fears), and your supporters will be inclined to continue reading while you're away. And pray for you. And share your story with other people. This is a great place for long-form thoughts. A Facebook post gets lost in the Newsfeed shuffle, but a few powerful words with a link to your blog may pique interest in your upcoming experience.

TIP:

Blogger, Wordpress, and Tumblr are easy blog sites with great templates to get you started. Don't forget to post pictures!

MAKE A VIDEO

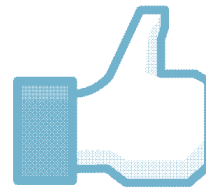


Step 3. We are officially living in "The YouTube Era" and stories are best told in our favorite medium, the online video. Put together a basic script of what you want your video to communicate (our idea: why you're going on the trip and why it's important to you) and work hard to make it creative and concise! Maybe you imagine your video like an "Amazing Race audition tape" or maybe you would rather communicate through a more serious video that explains your passion for the communities on your specific trip. **Make it real.** People connect with real stories of real people doing real things.

TIP:

With a great medium comes great responsibility! Just like a superb video will have a positive impact on your efforts, shoddy workmanship will reflect poorly on you and your trip, even if you try to say good things. Make sure the quality matches your enthusiasm to go!

FACEBOOK



Step 2! Most likely your biggest social network is on Facebook, and it has limitless possibilities for sharing your story and engaging your friends and acquaintances to support you. A proven way to get a response is a specific call to action. For example, a past IMMERSION team member created an Event and invited her ENTIRE FRIEND LIST. She had a simple idea. If every one of her friends gave just \$3 (the price of one coffee) towards her trip, she would raise almost \$3000. She got a huge response to this simple call, and many people gave more than \$3 after reading about IMMERSION. EM has created simple online donation pages for you to direct potential donors to, making ideas like this a reality.

TIP:

Focus on quality and not quantity. People won't need a daily reminder about your trip, but occasional links to blog posts or invitations to fundraising events will make each post more valuable!

MORE:

TWEET GRAMS

For events & campaigns, Twitter & Instagram are a great way to update. It's also an easy way to update while you're traveling abroad.

FANTASY CASH

Like fantasy sports? Check out this fundraiser that merges online games with raising money for your cause. Your friends compete with each other while helping you achieve your goal. Learn more: fantasyhub.com

PRINTED T-SHIRTS

AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY FOR
IMMERSION PARTICIPANTS THROUGH
OUR PARTNERS FUNDTHENATIONS

POTENTIAL DESIGNS ➔



"HOPE"



"PLACES"



"LIVE YOUR MISSION"

HOW TO ORDER ➔

Contact our partners at **FundTheNations** at bubbacrowder@fundthenations.com, and let them know which design and color combo (your choice of shirt color and ink color) you would like to see a digital mockup of. They can also help you design your own shirt. Once you've decided on a design, collect pre-orders, and when you're ready to buy the shirts, FundTheNations will handle your order and ship your shirts to you for free!

MORE RESOURCES

ALL RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE
FOR TEAM MEMBERS ONLINE
AT THE EM MISSION CENTER

PAYMENT PLANS

- ▶ *1M, 3M & 6M IMMERSION Plans*
Each IMMERSION term is different, so make sure you download and keep track of the payment plan for your specific term.

DONATION PAGES

- ▶ *Your Own Fundraising Homepage*
Set up your fundraising page through the Mission Center with photos, videos, and updates, and share with your network.

T-SHIRT RESOURCES

- ▶ *Screen-Printed Designs*
(see next page for all the needed info to order IMMERSION shirts from **FundtheNations.com**)
- ▶ *Stencils for Home-Made Shirts*
For the DIY-er in everyone.

STAFF CONTACT INFO

- ▶ *Emails & Phone Numbers for the EM Leadership Development Team:*

Heather Reynolds
Amanda Delbeke
Sarah Tibbot

EXAMPLE DOCUMENTS

- ▶ *Fundraising Plan Spreadsheet*
Check out our example to get an idea for how you might set up planning and tracking your donations and fundraising.
- ▶ *Support Letter*
Download our letter for one example of how you might structure your support letter. Remember, the possibilities are endless!

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

- ▶ *IMMERSION Community Photos*
Use these for posters, Facebook events, your support letter, or any other means of fundraising. They are yours to use and put where you like, as it pertains to your IMMERSION trip.
- ▶ *EM & IMMERSION Logos*
For any materials you may want to put together, here's a file full of various color and black & white versions of commonly used logos and graphics associated with the program.
- ▶ *EM Videos*
Share & screen videos to help share the story.

Dear [Sponsor Name],

Hello from Seattle! As you may know, I am currently in my senior year at the University of Washington, 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." For the past few years, I've been trying to discover my purpose and the unique plan that God has for my life. I've enjoyed volunteering while working and going to school, but I recently started feeling like God wanted me to serve in a more long-term way. That's when I discovered Experience Mission and their IMMERSION program. IMMERSION is a six-month program for young adults who want to travel and serve in a cross-cultural setting. It was exactly what I was looking for, so I applied, and the unbelievable happened: I got accepted! Since then, the details have come together so quickly, and I really feel like is God in all of it.

So, I'm leaving in July! I'll join a team for six months, traveling from the Navajo Reservation in the U.S. to South Africa, Mozambique and Lesotho in Africa. I never imagined I would get to go to Africa, and I'm so excited to partner with local people and tackle meaningful projects like HIV/AIDS education, water sanitation and church outreach. While we're there, we'll build relationships and learn from local people, living and serving alongside them. Many of the people have a vision for making their community better, so our team will get to help make it a reality. I know we will learn a lot, especially since their cultures are 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 possible without external support. It's my great desire that I would have a big network of people supporting me through prayer and donations. I've started fundraising and have some creative ideas to get as many people involved as possible. Knowing that people are cheering me on will help encourage me when life gets challenging overseas. I'd love it if you could be a part of that network!

The best way to contribute financially is through a one-time or monthly donation. You can give through the Experience Mission website (which I recommended) 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 "Experience Mission" (with my EM UserID "JSTE1001" on the bottom line) in order to keep donations tax-deductible. (All donations via the website will automatically be tax-deductible.) You can give one-time or monthly donations through the EM website by visiting my personal sponsorship profile here:

experiencemission.org/sponsor/jaredtoafrica

Thank you in advance for partnering with me in this big 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 the IMMERSION program or hear any creative ideas you might have for fundraising. Also, I invite you to follow my blog (listed below) for pre-trip thoughts and updates while I'm gone! I can't wait to see what God continues to teach me through this opportunity. Thanks for being a part of it!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jared Stephens



BLOG yourblog.tumblr.com
FB PROFILE facebook.com/yourname
TWITTER [@yourtwitterhandle](https://twitter.com/yourtwitterhandle)
EM WEBSITE experiencemission.org