Going on a mission trip? Or just thinking about it?
That’s great! But before you can go, you’ll need to fundraise.
Here are 36 surprisingly simple ideas to help you reach your goal:

1. Send a support letter to everyone you know. Yes, everyone!
2. Email all your friends and family.
3. Start a blog about both your fundraising journey and your trip.
4. Post on all your social media platforms.
5. Ask your pastor if you can speak briefly at your church.
6. Look for opportunities to speak at other groups you are a part of — particularly if the groups are service oriented (school clubs, business organizations, book clubs, etc.).
7. Have a big yard sale, and ask friends and family for any items they would like donate.
8. Host a bake sale—bonus points for doing this in combination with your yard sale!
9. “Flock” people’s yards.
10. Host a car wash (or even a dog wash).

11. Make it a challenge. For example, “If I raise $2,000, I will let my friends duct tape me to a wall.”

12. Make it a competition. Whichever “side” gives the most will “win.” For example, if you have a beard, people could donate toward either keeping it or shaving it off.

13. Host a fundraising run/race.

14. Throw a spaghetti dinner, pancake breakfast, or omelet brunch. Get creative, but stick to low-cost ingredients.

15. Start a personal fundraising page on GoFundMe or another platform.

16. Raffle off something cool. This doesn’t have to be an item. You can raffle off a skill you have—for example, if you’re a portrait artist, one of your donors could win a free portrait.

17. Offer mini rewards to all your donors, especially if you have a particular skill: a sketch, a jar of homemade jam, a bar of homemade soap, an oil change, etc.

18. Offer to “take” donors with you. Each donor sends a photo of him or herself, and you will take a photo “with” the donor when you arrive in country.
19. Auction off an interesting or popular item (for example, a signed jersey, a limited collectible). This is something you can do in person or on the media platform where you have the most connections.

20. Host a livestream video event (play games, do challenges, have guests, etc.). Be sure to promote it for several days beforehand.


22. Break up your trip and let people “purchase” each individual element: a vaccine you’ll need, your booking fee, a particular leg of your return trip, your baggage fee, etc. Announce when a particular aspect has been covered.

23. Sell tickets to an “evening in [your trip destination]” event. Serve food from the country, give a presentation, play musical recordings from the country, etc. Do your research; make this as immersive as possible.

24. Find a friend to host a dinner. This is a more low-key version of the previous suggestion. If you have a friend who loves to host and wants to help, ask them to invite people to an informal meet-and-greet dinner (or game night) at their house. Part way through the evening you can make a short pitch.

25. Hold a coin drive. Ask friends and family to collect as much loose change as possible for your trip. Hand out coin banks. Look online for DIY coin bank designs.

26. Host a Bunco or bingo night. Set a price to play or ask for donations. Gather some donated prizes, have some snacks, and everyone has fun!

27. Collect clothing and textiles. Places like Clothes for a Cause and Value Village both pay by the pound.
Hold a flower fundraiser. Flowers have a high markup, so buying them wholesale can be a smart fundraising opportunity. Some local florists, like Williams Flowers & Gifts/Flowers to Go, may have their own packages for fundraisers.

Bring back gifts. Is there something interesting that the location of your mission trip is known for (for example, a craft, a candy, or a type of clothing)? If it is inexpensive and easy to pack, you could offer to bring back something for each person who supports your trip. Even if you can’t bring back much, consider mailing out thank-you postcards from your trip.

Sell T-shirts. Design the shirts to reflect the country you are visiting and sell them to your friends and family.

Make and sell jewelry. You can design it based on the country you are visiting and the colors of its flag.

If you are part of larger group (especially a church group), consider putting on a talent show and selling tickets to the event.

Hold a restaurant take-over. Many restaurants, including chains like Skipper’s and McDonald’s, host these.

Create a “Mystery Wheel” of prizes (a donation per spin).

Sell chances to dunk a teacher/pastor/youth leader in a dunking booth or to throw a pie in their face.

Set up a lemonade, hot chocolate, or coffee stand.

IDEA #36
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