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The Resource Page

... creative and practical ideas

Brought to you this month
by Tom Stocks



Missions store ministry



time limit set. The issue is how to get congregants to make the Sunday morning announcement a reality when it comes to collecting items needed for mission causes.

Pastors and others charged with making Sunday morning announcements are forever looking for ways to encourage and inspire folks to bring in much-needed items for local mission causes. Sometimes it may feel like they are running a market stand on the corner where they must “hawk” the goods and services they are asking folks to give.

Cathy Harris, children’s minister at Rosalind Hills Baptist in Roanoke, Va., came up with a way to solve all of these logistical issues,

and it resulted in increasing mission-collection giving tenfold. The answer is a missions store located in a high traffic area. It became one solution to the problem of folks who want to give but do not have the time or inclination to shop for items.

Items are displayed in a professional-looking glass display case, accompanied by information about the cost, purpose and destination of the goods purchased. Congregants can purchase items at a discounted price. For example: Peanut butter is sold by the jar for \$1.00 or 12 jars for \$10.00. After purchasing the items, individuals can place them in a clearly-marked collection area three steps away. At the end of the collection period the items are delivered to the receiving organization or group.

The store consistently offers three or four items that complement church-wide giving to local mission projects. Items offered for individual or bulk purchase may include boxed spaghetti and cans of spaghetti sauce (for the food pantry); paper towels and toilet tissue (for local mission centers); and a “ditty bag” made up of a Bible, note pad, coloring book and crayons (for the truck stop ministry).

The success of the missions store has been overwhelming:

- The equivalent of items donated has increased from \$75 per month to \$500.
- Giving from and involvement of children have increased significantly as they purchase needed items with a dollar or two.
- A new spiritual gift has developed for some church members — “shopping for a bargain” — resulting in more donations.
- Monetary donations have increased as people often walk by the store and simply give a \$10 or \$20 bill and say, “Use this where it is needed most.”
- Some congregants who do not normally tread the path where the store is located asked that a satellite store be opened, so it is now set up on Wednesday nights for persons who attend supper and the activities that follow.

The store has also become a place where people can view different types of missional advertisements and information (ex.: Global Missions Offering emphasis or Operation Christmas Child and the shoeboxes collected). The sky is the limit when the creativity kicks in regarding what items are needed to help further missions. There is always energy about how these can be displayed and seeking out the most effective price point so that everyone can get involved in giving. **BT**

“I forgot the peanut butter — again!” These may be words you have said yourself or overheard in any church where collecting items for mission causes is done on a regular basis.

Many churches collect items (peanut butter, jelly, spaghetti noodles, canned goods, socks, coats, candy, etc.) that will be passed on to a local mission. The major problem churches face is getting folks to *remember* ... to purchase the items, to bring them to church, to drop them off at a collection point, and to do all of this in the

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