

## **The Church Fair – tips on running and organising**

A church fair is a great way of raising significant funds and bringing the church and local community together. It is also a large and labour intensive project.

Below is a list of tips to help get you thinking.

You will need:

- A clear and attractive fundraising goal
- A committed and enthusiastic organiser
- Well planned and well communicated organisation of the event
- Good levels of participation / buy in from volunteers
- Good communication/publicity which targets who you want to attend
- Good things to sell and do at the Fair which are:
- Well / appropriately priced (not too expensive or too cheap)

Your organiser is the key to ensuring the success of the fair.

- Your ideal person will be:
- A good organiser with strong relational skills
- Identify with the cause
- Have lots of available time
- Have an eye for detail
- Be able to delegate
- Be both robust and sensitive
- Calm and positive under pressure
- A good judge of character

It's a big ask and is really an unpaid job but talk to anyone who has done it and they'll tell you how much fun it was and how great it is to make the funds for the chosen cause.

It is also good for your organiser to have a back-up. An extra person who can assist them specifically. Many great friendships are made through these activities.

### **Planning**

- Ask the congregation who would like to be part of the fair committee.
- It's also a good idea to approach people who you know have a specific skill set that you need.
- Consider the date carefully ie. so it doesn't clash with other community events - a clash may decrease interest in your event.
- The time of year is important if it's an outside event.
- March is an ideal time- settled weather, school is back.
- It is good to draw a list of key tasks and then "chunk" them down to what they really entail.
- Think about the type and number of stalls you want to have.
- The number of helpers and the number available.
- Are you having any child focussed activities or stalls?
- If you have had previous fairs – look at what went well and why.

- Conversely look at what didn't go so well. Do you want to do it again? What changes will you make to ensure success.

Allow at least 3 to 4 months from planning to execution!

This allows you time to pull together a team, promote the event and collect sale items etc.

### **The lead up to the big day**

- You will need to have some budget for promotion and signage.
- (*see also the module-using the local media and how to promote your event*)
- You will need to have signage on the church
- This should include the date and a call for donations of goods etc, along with contact details.
- It is useful to offer to pick up goods.
- If storage is short consider hiring a container to store goods.
- If you're using a container you can sort items prior to putting them into store.
- Any prep work such as this makes it easier setting up.
- If you're having a clothes stall ensure you have an adequate supply of hangers and clothes racks.
- (You can hire racks if you don't have any or buy them second hand)
- Have enough pins, pens and labels for pricing.
- Bags for sold goods and baking.
- Newspaper is handy on the china stall for extra wrapping of fragile pieces.

### **Setting up**

- It is good to build a team of helpers and get them to come at times that suit.
- For example, your older parishioners may find coming during working hours suits them better versus the people who will want to help after work. Cater to them all.
- If you have people coming straight from work it is a good idea to put on Pizza especially the night prior.
- This builds camaraderie for the big day and ensures they stay longer –not having to rush home for tea!
- It gives you an opportunity to re-confirm your helpers on the day and provide any last minute information.
- You often find the people who do the setting up are the sellers on the day.
- Consider your pricing – fair and reasonable.
- Have some 'bargins' for your child shoppers – as they will come back each year.

### **On the day**

- Make sure your helpers are clearly identified.
- Use name labels/ same colour tee shirts/ anything that makes you clearly visible as a helper.
- A roving ambassador with a mic can entertain and inform the crowd.
- Be alert to theft – sadly this happens in all settings.
- If you have a valuable item to sell and it doesn't – consider Trade Me – after the fair.
- Look after your helpers – a cup of tea is always welcome.
- Make it fun.

### **Money handling/security**

- Ensure you have enough change/float on hand at each stall.
- Ask your stallholders to wear a money belt – a number of people have these.
- It makes for easier cash handling and security.

- It is good to have dedicated identified runner –who can bring more change if required and take charge of money as it starts to grow.
- Count and lock up any money raised –you should have two people doing this together.
- Money it is best placed in the church safe as fairs are usually week end events when banks are closed.

### **Packing up**

- Have a dedicated team that are fresh to do this job.

### **Letting the congregation know**

- Remember to thank everyone for their efforts.
- Let them know the sum raised as soon as possible.

### **Debrief**

- Think about and note what went well.
- Ensure you keep a list of people's names and skills for next year.
- Ensure you acknowledge people for their work.
- You may want to issue a media release to the wider community if the fair has reached its projected target- eg you made enough money to replace the roof. If you didn't reach your target you can tell them and let them know there will be other opportunities later in the year to do this. Thank them for their help and support.

**ENDS**