

# SUPPORT RAISING STRATEGY

You have accepted the mission of helping reach the lost through an E-team. One of your responsibilities in accepting this mission is to represent Christ's cause, Mission X, to others. As an "ambassador" for Christ you have the chance to ask family and friends to invest in His cause financially, giving them the opportunity of investing in eternity. (Matthew 6:19-21)

The following are tools you can use to complete this part of your mission.

## **1. Namestorm**

Begin by developing an initial list of possible ministry partners. In namestorming there is one rule ... anything goes. No name is unqualified. Don't decide for anyone whether or not he or she is interested. If you limit yourself to those you feel can or will give, you may disqualify those whom God wants to become ministry partners. Later you will need to prioritize whom to contact first, but for now, don't disqualify anyone.

Here are a few ideas to get you started on your support list.

Parents	Doctor	Retired people
Brothers	Nurse	Bible bookstore
Sisters	Dermatologist	Morticians
Aunts	Service station	Bank presidents
Uncles	manager	Coach
Cousins	Community	Teammates
Grandparent	leaders	Realtors
s	Hospital	Veterinarian
Former	personnel	Apartment
employers	Family attorney	manager
Former	Christian	Dog groomer
customers	business groups	Mayor or other
Friends of	Beautician	civic leaders
parents	Barber	Downtown
Parents of	Policemen	businesses
friends	Foundations	Military
Accountants	Wedding lists	personnel
Architects	Garbage	Bible studies and
Avon lady	collector	prayer groups
Florist	Neighbors	Christmas card
Mailman	Former	lists
Banker	neighbors	Chamber of
Parent's	Editor of local	commerce
employers	paper	directories
Parent's	Advertising	People you have
associates	agencies	led to Christ
High school	Insurance agent	Referrals
teacher	TV/radio	Telephone
College	stations	directory
professors	Car salesman	Engineers
High school	Printers	Eye doctor
friends	Plumber	Fellow students
Dentist	Servicemen	Spiritual mentors
Hygienist	Tax men	

Take plenty of time to mull over these categories. Push yourself; see if you can come up with at least 200 names.

Next you'll want to put your list in priority order as either "ML" for most likely, "L" for likely, and "LL" for least likely based on your evaluation of how likely they are to give. Start by contacting your most likely people first, and then work through your likely and then least likely people.

## **2. Write**

The body of the following sample letter should contain personal elements geared toward each person you are writing, and a "generic" section that can be used for everybody. You can easily use this sample as the generic section for all your letters. You will simply need to adjust the paragraphs for your specific trip and background.

- 1. Give your letter a specific date.**
- 2. Your greeting should be personalized.** If you use a printed letter, hand-write the name instead of using "Dear friend."
- 3. Acknowledge your relationship with the reader.** What can you say that will help the person identify with you? Refer to your last visit or letter, business concerns, sports interests, known struggles, hobbies, etc., to help them say, "I know who you are."

4. **Bring your reader up to date on what you're doing.**
5. **Educate your reader.** Share how you became involved in Mission:X and how the Lord has given you a desire to reach people for Christ. Explain how you hope the Lord will use you in your future ministry.
6. **Explain your need.** The purpose of your letter is to give your reader an opportunity to help. Make sure you explain exactly what you need.
7. **Involve your reader by asking them for specific action, based on the needs you have shared.** This can include challenging him to help cover part or all of the cost of your E-team/mission trip, which includes lodging, meals and transportation. State the deadline by which you need the money.
8. **Acknowledge your relationship again** with an emphasis on thanks, appreciation, gratitude, partnership and commitment. This ties your opening acknowledgment to your request.
9. **Close the letter and sign it.**
10. **Enclose a self-addressed, stamped return envelope.**

## *Sample Support Letter Follows*

October 15, 2004

Dear Mr. And Mrs. Smith:

I am enjoying my junior year here at Florida State. It's hard to believe that I will be graduating soon! I have a great opportunity before me this summer and I wanted to write and tell you about it.

My freshman year of college I made two major decisions: 1) I decided to seriously pursue a relationship with Jesus Christ 2) I decided to major in computer science. Both of these choices have changed the course of the past two years.

My personal walk with the Lord has grown tremendously. I have also been able to build relationships with others through my involvement with the student ministry at my local church. Through (church name) I have learned how to share my faith and help new believers grow in their walks with Him. It has been exciting to see God use me to reach others with the Gospel.

That is why I was so excited when I heard about an opportunity to go on an E-team trip with other students. This is a 7-10 day project to help reach the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The opportunities to share my faith and minister to the lost will be endless. My faith will be stretched as I do things I've never done before.

In order to make all this possible, I need to develop a team of ministry partners...a group of people like you who would give to make my trip possible. I need a total of \$2,000 by May 31<sup>st</sup>, which covers airfare, food and lodging. Mr. and Mrs. Smith, will you prayerfully consider joining my team by giving a gift of \$100, \$200, \$300 or more? In order to know how close I am to reaching my goal, I will call you next week to see what you have decided and to answer any questions you might have.

Thank you for considering joining my team to help reach the world for Christ.

Sincerely,

Checks should be made payable to Metro Life Church (please put my name on the memo line of the check). All contributions are tax deductible; you will receive a receipt directly from Metro Life Church. Please send checks to: Metro Life Church, 910 S. Winter Park Dr., Casselberry, FL 32707 Attn: M:X Funds

## **Things to avoid when writing support letters:**

- 1. Never apologize for writing or calling a person whom you wish to involve in helping you meet a need.** You are providing them with an opportunity to be involved in a spiritual ministry through his resources.
- 2. Never ask without a time frame in which to take action.**

### **3. Call**

The degree of your success in the letter-writing strategy depends on your follow-up phone call.

The follow-up call is critical for three reasons:

- 1. Most people suffer from information overload.** Consequently, mail is easy to ignore or forget.
- 2. Your time frame.** You have a lot of money to raise in a short period of time. A follow-up phone call will help you get

decisions as quickly as possible. The best suggestion is to call one week after you've dropped the letter in the mail.

- 3. Courtesy to your ministry partners.** Many people will want to help you but won't unless you call to answer any questions and to get their decision. Your phone call takes the burden of response off them and puts it on you.

### **Follow-up Phone Conversation:**

Be sure to establish a specific time in the letter to get their decision. When you ask for a response, do so directly. Then remain quiet until the person responds, even though this may feel uncomfortable. Talking more at this point will distract them from making a decision.

If, when you call your potential ministry partner has not made a decision, set another time to call within a day or two.

#### **1. Introduce yourself.**

"Hello, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_. This is \_\_\_\_\_ calling. How are you?" Let him respond. Take a few moments to establish rapport, but be brief.

#### **2. Refer to your letter and explain your mission trip plans.**

"As I mentioned in my letter, I am planning to go on a summer E-team through a student ministry."

### **3. Be very specific to ask for a definite response.**

“In my letter I asked if you would be in a position to support me financially for the E-team trip. Have you had a chance to think about that?” (Wait)

After getting a person’s decision, always ask them to refer you to other people who might like to invest in your ministry.

If an individual decides to support you, if at all possible arrange a time to stop by and pick up their check. If they live out of town, ask them to mail it in the self-addressed stamped envelope you enclosed with your letter. If you arrange to have them send you a check and it doesn’t come, you will need to follow up with a phone call to see if it was lost in the mail.

- ◆ **Your support checks must be made out to Metro Life Church.**

### **4. Thank**

Send a thank-you note the same day the ministry partner gives you his decision. Be sure to keep a record of this so you’ll know to whom you’ve sent one and so you won’t send two to the same person. This thank-you letter is an important part of developing a relationship with your ministry partner. This should be a personal, handwritten note or letter. Do not print or copy a form letter.

Always include something personal in your note to show specifically how you and Christ's cause have been benefited by their generosity. You owe them a good thank-you note.

### **Sample Thank-You Note:**

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Smith,

Thank you for your gift of \$100 to support my ministry this summer. Your prayers and finances are greatly appreciated. Your investment will have far-reaching results as I help reach people for Christ!

Please join me in praying that God would continually deepen my commitment to the cause of Christ. Your prayers are very important. Thanks again for your help.

In Christ,

Your name