

Below is a list of ideas, big and small, that you may wish to use for your fundraising event, or as part of a fundraising day. For some ideas you can sell what your produce, others fundraise through tickets, sponsorship or donations. Feel free to use any of them, and if you have any more ideas, please let us add to this list.

Auction – Auction those unwanted toys, books and other items to people who want more clutter in their houses. Funds raised are donated.

Bag Packing – It is not the most exciting of events, but in terms of financial return it is very productive. If done with young people, they often get a real sense that they are making a difference when they see the cash go in the bucket. The person who put in the £10 note will be the talk of the steamy for weeks to come.

Bath – Fill a bath with something not typically found in a bath such as beans, custard or jelly. This is usually a sponsored ‘bathe’ for as long as the poor volunteer can handle it.

Battle of the Bands – Rather than having young children muddle with instruments, have them sing along to their favourite song. However, you will need to set an example, so grab your bass guitar, embrace your inner rocker and sing the night away.

BBQ – Unless you are an expert on the grill, this is best included with other activities on a family fundraising day or holiday club. A good burger can bring the neighbours and donations rolling in. The question is, with or without onions?

Bring and Buy Sale – See Auction.

Cake Baking and Decorating – There are people who think this can be done as a non-messy activity. It is not true; there will be mess to clean up. After the cakes are finished they can be offered in exchange for a donation. A twist for adults and older young people, is that if you have a stiff dough (more bread than cake), you can press your face into it before baking, and make a face-cake!

Carol Singing – You may have a bunch of angels or tone deaf darlings, but when it comes to children singing carols it does not matter, people love it. This could be done as a concert in a park or shopping centre. Make sure there are some strong adult voices in the ensemble to help the children, and please keep this for December.

Christmas – Sticking with the December theme, the possibilities here are limitless; be a Santa, offer mulled wine or spiced latte. How about a Gingerbread house competition?

Chocolate Fountain Finger Fun – Think of a traditional chocolate fountain with fruit and marshmallows to dip in the molten goodness, but using fingers only, no cutlery or skewers.

Coffee Morning – If you would like to host a coffee morning with a donation for SU Scotland, please let us know so we can provide you with helpful materials to share or possibly even a speaker if you would appreciate one.

Dinner Party/Come Dine With Us – A twist from the popular TV show in which you host a series of dinner parties with friends. At the end of the meal, each guest places the amount of money they thought the meal was worth (the donation) in an envelope which is sealed. At the end of the week the totals are added up and the meal which received the highest total is the winner. This can be scaled to maintain affordability for all you potential Michelin stars out there.

Dress Up Day – Favourite Disney character or superhero? Fundraisers often use this to set a theme for a whole day of activities, and yes this is for grown-ups too.

Easter – Eggs to paint, eggs to find, eggs to throw, many activities can be themed around Easter.

Eating Contest – Ever tried ice cream speed eating, hot chillies or consuming a doughnut without licking your lips? These are all very challenging and hilarious to watch. This could be an eating challenge with a prize and entry fee. Have a bucket close for... eventualities.

Fashion Show – Often taken too seriously by teens and adults, a children's fashion show is a great spectacle of what is important to kids. Have the kids pick their own outfits and you will see everything from princesses and batmen, to bow ties and netball kits. A humorous and encouraging commentary as the children do their turn on the catwalk, can add to the atmosphere.

Finger Painting – Good for youngsters creating those pictures only a parent could treasure. Why not get feet and noses involved too. For a variation, use fabric paints to create t-shirts for the children or family members to wear.

Flour Fight – Get a fistful of flour, take aim at a friend and launch. This will get out of hand very quickly, but can create lasting memories. For some colour add a little powder paint to the flour, and ensure you take lots of photos. This would work as a great one off event, or as the crescendo of a day's fundraising activities. Do not try this unless it is a dry day.

Fun Run – If organising your own event is daunting, then there are plenty of events throughout the year and across the country that you can piggy back on.

Give up... – Sponsored challenge to give up something you cannot be without. Examples could be the internet for a week, your phone for a day, chocolate or alcohol for a month. You may actually find this a blessing.

Guessing Games – This is a classic fundraising side show. How many beans in the jar? When is the teddy bear's birthday? What is the name of this puppy? Like a tombola, these are a staple of the fundraising event.

Left-overs Shower – Organise a lunch or dinner and ensure there is soup, plenty of veg, gravy and a custard pudding. Instead of your guests eating their whole meal, encourage them to leave some leftovers. The entertainment is that the guest of honour for the evening will, at the end of the meal have the leftovers poured over them, possibly while giving a speech. Please ensure you gain their consent before the event. Tickets could be sold for the meal, or donations could be collected. This works very well when children are in attendance.

Lunch Lessons – Befriend a local chef who will be willing to offer a parent/child cooking lesson. A meal is held after the lesson to share and eat the food.

Ice Cream Sunday – 40ft of ice cream spanning seven trestle tables! Decorate with copious amounts of chocolate sauce and jelly tots. Once everyone has eaten their fill, put your spoon down, pick up some ice cream and rub it in the face of a close friend. This is very messy.

Make Up – This one is for the ladies. Instead of completing the morning makeup routine yourself, be sponsored to let your husband, or other clueless male acquaintance, apply it for you, with no guidance whatsoever. What do you mean foundation goes on first?

Night Walk – Only to be undertaken with a guide and a good torch, a midnight walk in the countryside followed by hot coco can be a fun event. It does not have to be at night, but it does make it a bit more exciting.

Paddling Pool – see bath.

Panto – Even a poor amateur panto is a serious undertaking to organise, however a 20 minute children's panto is manageable with a couple of dedicated volunteers. This is where the children write the story, make the set and direct. The more child lead decisions, the better. Families will fall about laughing as the children put their own spin on a classic panto tale.

Party – Every child loves a party and most grown-ups do too. So hold a party. Why not make it glow in the dark, or a theme to tie into your dressing up day? Simple to organise but challenging on the day, my advice is to have lots of people to help.

Pyjama Day – This day can be extended into a sleep over, but if children come along wearing their PJs and with their favourite bed time story, it can be a relaxing time. I am sure a 'midnight' feast just before home time will solve that.

Quiz – A normal quiz is no fun for children who do not know answers. But there is a lot of fun to be had when the children create a quiz for their parents. Can you name all of Peppa Pig's friends or answer the question, what is a good name for a dog? A good quiz for adults is always a draw too, especially if there is a decent prize.

Readathon – Asking a child to read for a whole day is not a plausible idea, but a team or class of children can take it in turns. Why not get sponsored yourself to read the New Testament in one go? Is that even possible?

River Lunch – This one is best for the summer months. Host a nice normal lunch, but have in in the middle of a shallow river/stream. Metal legged tables and chairs are advisable, as are shorts. Your guests will be very grateful if the water level is only ankle high and not up to their seats.

Silent Auction – Source desirable prizes from local business or other contacts, and hold a regular auction. However bidding is not public and each bid is written on a piece of paper that no one reads until the draw is made. Will you get a bargain, or pay a bit more to secure that essential item?

Slip and Slide – Just add water based paint to the water and soap mix. People can donate to slide.

Sponsored... – You can be sponsored for just about any activity that takes effort, or requires a level of discomfort. Please remember to lower expectation levels if you include children.

Tea Dance – A classic fundraiser. Glasgow set a world record for a tea dance when 4,000 people attended an event in 2010. We do not mind if your dance is considerably smaller than this.

Treasure Hunt – Kids love a treasure hunt to find prizes, or puzzles that lead to prizes. It really is all about the prizes; they are hunting treasure after all.

Welly Walk – Following the same idea as the bath, filling your wellies with baked beans, or maybe mayonnaise as people sponsor you to go for a brisk walk around the local park. It is not too bad once the contents between your toes warm up.

Big Events

Endurance – There are lots of distance running and cycling events around the country. Most big towns and cities will have a 10k or half-marathon. The West Highland way is a great challenge on foot and there are hundreds of miles of cycle paths in Scotland. The Great Glen can be attempted on foot, cycle or canoe. These events should not be entered into lightly, and some of the more extreme events insist you enter as a team with support vehicles. There are also lengthy car rallies for those who enjoy a road trip, some you need a supercar to enter; others strictly dictate you cannot have a vehicle worth more than £1,000.

Extreme Sports – Bungee jumping and skydiving are the obvious choices here. These are very effective for people who wish to face their fears. All activities should only be attempted under professional supervision.

Large Scale Parties/ Dinners – Possibly the most lucrative form of fundraising event in both financial and reputation-building terms, if you feel in a position to undertake the organisation of this please contact SU Scotland before you start planning, even if you have experience in this.