

Fundraising Language Guide

Encounter Missions

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Why Fundraise?

We know mission trips come with a cost, and while some have the financial means to cover it fully, others may need support along the way. Either way, we want to make sure finances never stop you from saying yes. The beauty of the Lord's work is that it always extends beyond ourselves, and that includes mission and ministry expenses. He is faithful to provide.

Extending the Invitation: Inviting others into the mission, through prayer, presence, or financial support, is both biblical and beautiful. Scripture is full of examples: Jesus sent disciples out in pairs with nothing extra, trusting in the provision of those around them (Luke 10:4). Remember the Lord's words, "Ask and it will be given to you...for everyone who asks, receives" (Matthew 7:7-8). We saw this lived out in Acts when "the community of believers was of one heart and mind... they had everything in common" (Acts 4:32). What we have is a gift from God, meant to be freely shared.



What's Included: This guide includes background, setup steps, and FAQs to help you fundraise. All sample letters, emails, social media posts, text templates, and thank-you notes are collected in the Templates section at the end, use them as guidelines and add your own flair. Make every ask personal, it should feel and sound like you! People want to know what they're supporting and why, so share your heart, your calling, and how their support helps make this mission possible.

Making it Your Own: You also have a customizable personal fundraising page through Service Reef, please take advantage of it! This platform allows all donations to go directly to your mission expense, which takes a lot of the guesswork out of who's donations go where and whether or not you will receive the funds meant for you.

A Quick Note on Tax Deductibility: Encounter Missions is not a tax-exempt organization, and donations made to support your mission trip are *not tax-deductible*. If a supporter asks about this, let them know simply and honestly: their gift is a personal contribution to your mission expenses, not a charitable tax deduction. Do not imply or promise a tax receipt.

Cash donations: All gifts should go through your personal Service Reef fundraising page so they are properly recorded and applied to your trip balance. If someone wants to give cash, we recommend that you kindly redirect them to your fundraising link instead, or let them know you can follow up with the link so the gift is tracked correctly.

Getting Started

Pray! Thank God in advance and then make a list of people in your life who love and support you, and don't limit it to those you think "have a lot of money." Once you have your list, **pray and ask the Lord** who He might be extending a personal invitation for partnership. Then choose your approach, a text, email, social media post, phone call, and make the ask. You might be surprised how many people are just waiting for an invitation!

As a reminder, not every fundraising ask requires a personal invitation. Some people respond best to reading a social media post about an upcoming trip! You will find an example in the Templates section that you can use. Just be sure to include your personal fundraising link!

Setting Up Your Service Reef Fundraising Page

Before you start reaching out, get your personal fundraising page ready. It's the link you'll share in every text, email, and post.

1. Log in to Service Reef and find your mission trip listing.
2. Locate your personal fundraising page setup (this may be under your trip dashboard or profile).
3. Add a profile photo, your name, and your trip name and dates.
4. Write a short personal story: why you're going, what the trip involves, and what you're asking for. You can adapt the language from the Templates section.
5. Set your fundraising goal to match your total trip cost.
6. Review the trip's opportunities/breakdown page on Service Reef so you can describe accurately what donations cover.
7. Copy your personal fundraising link, you'll use this in every template below.



If you get stuck on any step, reach out to us via email here: team@encountermissions.org.

FAQs – Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *Is it really okay to ask people for money?*

Yes, and here's the reasoning behind that yes. The mission you're going on doesn't belong to you alone, it belongs to the Body of Christ. When you ask someone to give, you're not asking them to do you a favor. You're inviting them into something God is already doing, and giving them a way to participate in it without getting on a plane themselves.



Paul understood this when he wrote about the gifts he received from the Philippians: “Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek the profit which increases to your account.” (Philippians 4:17) The giver receives something too, a share in the fruit of the mission. Asking isn't taking from people. It's offering them a place in the story. If you still feel hesitant, consider this: the discomfort we feel when asking for financial support is often the fruit of fear that comes when we take our eyes off of the Lord.

Consider that Jesus himself depended on the support of others during his ministry, with women “which ministered unto him of their substance.” (Luke 8:3) If receiving support was part of how the mission of Christ himself was sustained, it isn't something to be ashamed of now. Your yes to this mission, and your willingness to ask for what it requires, may be exactly the kind of courage that quietly gives someone else permission to say yes to something God is asking of them.

Q: *What if I don't know anyone with money?*

This question usually comes from comparing your network to a mental image of “donors”, people with disposable income who write big checks. But that's not how most mission funding actually works, and it's not how God tends to work either.

Think of the boy with five loaves and two fish (John 6:9-13). It wasn't enough to feed five thousand people, not by any normal math. But Jesus took what was offered, gave thanks, and it multiplied. The boy's contribution wasn't the meal, it was the offering. What he gave was small. What God did with it wasn't. In practice, most missionaries are funded by a wide circle of people giving \$20, \$50, \$100, not by one or two large donors. If your list is mostly people of modest means, that's not a weak list. That's the normal shape of mission funding.



Q: What if people say no?

Underneath this question is usually a fear of rejection, of looking foolish, or of damaging a relationship. When you ask someone to partner with you, you are giving them an opportunity to say yes to something good. If they say no, they are not rejecting you, they are simply not the person God has prepared for this particular gift right now. That may have nothing to do with you, your friendship, or your calling, and everything to do with their own season, finances, or priorities.

Jesus told His disciples to go out and offer peace to a household (Luke 10:6). Notice what happens if the offer isn't received: the peace doesn't disappear, it returns to the one who offered it. The same is true of your ask. A no doesn't take anything away from you. *The act of asking, in faith, is itself complete, regardless of the answer.* Most people who say no will still respect you for asking, and some who say no now may say yes later, once or twice has not always been the final answer.

Q: How much should I ask for?

Your total fundraising goal and what you ask any individual person are two different numbers, and conflating them is a common source of stress. Usually it is sufficient to share your total need and your current percentage raised for people to understand where you are. This opens the door plenty wide for people to make their own informed decision in supporting you. Being clear and honest about your total need allows people to give what they are able.

Q: How often should I share my fundraising page?

Share when you launch, then provide updates every 1–2 weeks, and a final reminder near the end. Updates aren't just reminders to give, they're also a way of keeping people connected to what God is doing through your preparation, which matters whether or not they've given yet.



Q: What if I feel awkward or uncomfortable asking for money?

If we only ever asked for support when we felt like it, we probably never would! Discomfort is very normal when asking for support, however, this feeling is usually rooted in fear of man or in the fear of the perception of others. Paul, who relied on the generosity of churches throughout his ministry, wrote candidly about this tension: “Not that I complain of want; for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content” (Philippians 4:11). He wasn't naturally comfortable depending on others either, he learned it. Contentment in asking is something formed over time, not something you either have or don't.

Practically, start with the person on your list you feel most comfortable asking, even if their gift would be small. One completed ask, regardless of outcome, makes the next one easier. The discomfort tends to shrink with practice, not with waiting for it to go away.

Q: Can I ask people for prayer instead of money?

Yes, and this isn't a lesser ask or a fallback for people who can't give financially. Prayer support is its own category of partnership, not a consolation prize. When Paul asked the Corinthians for help, he connected their giving and their prayer together as one act of partnership: *"you will glorify God by your obedience in acknowledging the gospel of Christ, and by the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others;"* (2 Corinthians 1:11). Prayer and material support were both described as forms of help, not ranked against each other.

Some of your most committed prayer partners may never give a dollar, and some financial supporters may rarely pray for you specifically. Both are real partnerships. When you ask, it's worth offering both options explicitly, some people will be relieved to know prayer is a meaningful way to say yes.

Q: What if I don't raise the full amount?

You are responsible for your full trip cost, whether that comes through fundraising or your own resources. Full payment is required 2-4 weeks before the trip (the exact timing is trip-specific and is always communicated on each of our missions' registration page in the 'Financials' section). This is how the logistics, deposits, and commitments to local partners on the ground actually work. Our corporal commitments don't move based on how your fundraising is going.

At the same time, Scripture is full of examples of provision arriving in ways that didn't make sense on paper, the widow's jar of oil that didn't run dry (1 Kings 17:14-16), the tax money found in a fish's mouth (Matthew 17:27). These weren't guarantees that could be planned around in advance, they were provision that showed up in the moment of need. The Lord calls us to labor, He calls us to ask, seek, and knock. If we do, we can trust His providence!

That being said, you ought to fundraise faithfully and as early as possible, because early effort gives God and your supporters the most room to work. But don't build your plan around a last-minute miracle, build it around faithful effort plus a real plan for the gap if one remains, whether that's personal savings, a payment plan conversation with your trip coordinator, or both. Faith and prudence go hand-in-hand.



Q: What if I raise more than I need?

Any funds raised beyond your goal are generally applied to Encounter Missions' general fund, supporting future missionaries and ongoing mission work. If you want excess funds earmarked for your own future mission trips instead, let us know before your current mission begins. Otherwise, those funds will go toward other mission needs.

Q: Should I keep donors updated?

Yes. Updates express gratitude and help supporters feel connected to the mission they helped make possible, not just to you. Share prayer requests, brief updates while you're preparing, and a post-trip

testimony after the mission (see Templates section). For many supporters, that update is the moment the trip becomes real to them, it's where their gift turns into a story they can point to.

Q: What do I say if someone asks how their donation will be used?

Your fundraising goal is designed to cover the full cost of participating in the mission, so you can focus on preparing your heart for the trip rather than worrying about logistics. Here's what that includes:

- Registration fees cover your spot on the team and the administrative work that goes into preparing for the trip, including coordination with our local partners.
- Travel costs include your in-country flights (if needed), ferries (if needed), van rentals, and driver stipends needed to and from the various mission locations you will be ministering in as well as transportation to and from the airport.
- Lodging covers your accommodations for the duration of the trip arranged by our team.
- Food covers your meals throughout the trip, so you won't need to budget separately for that once you're there.
- Ministry expenses cover the supplies, translation materials, and physical missionary resources needed for the work itself, whether that's worship musician stipends for healing prayer ministry, local guide stipends for neighborhood evangelization outreach, marketing materials and items needed for local communities, or other resources specific to that mission's focus.



Q: Are donations to my mission trip tax-deductible?

No. Encounter Missions is not a tax-exempt organization, and gifts toward your mission trip are not tax-deductible. If someone asks, let them know their gift is a personal contribution to your mission expenses rather than a charitable donation.

Q: Can I accept cash donations?

Cash donations are discouraged. Direct supporters to your Service Reef fundraising page so gifts are properly recorded and applied to your trip balance. If someone insists on giving you cash, you can deposit that into your own bank account and then personally submit a donation on your donation page for the same amount.

Q: What language am I allowed to use or change from the examples provided?

You are welcome to use all of the verbiage listed in the Templates section, but use language that sounds like you! Read the opportunities page breakdown on Service Reef of what we will be doing on each specific mission and include that in your description of what their donation will be helping to cover.



Templates

Use these as starting points. Replace bracketed placeholders with your own details, especially the specific ministry detail and dollar amounts, since specifics are what make an ask compelling. Always include your personal Service Reef fundraising link and a target date if you have one.

Short Text Examples

Informal

Hi! I'm heading to [Country] this [summer/fall] on an Encounter Healing Mission, focused on healing and evangelization. I'm raising support and would love to have you on the team, would you consider partnering with me? I can send you more details!

Formal

Hi [Name], I hope this message finds you well. I wanted to share that I will be going on a mission trip with Encounter Missions, ministering to children in schools, praying for healing, and equipping local leaders to evangelize long after we return home. I am raising support to cover my mission expenses, and would be grateful if you would consider partnering with me. I would love to send you more information and a fundraising link if you are interested.

Longer Text Example

Informal [to a couple]

Hello [Name]! I have some news, and a favor to ask.

This [summer], I'm heading to [location] to serve with Encounter Missions, a Catholic missions organization in partnership with Encounter Ministries. The parish priest there has asked our team to focus on [one or two specific things, e.g., leading a healing service and visiting families in the local hospital], and I'm honestly a little nervous and a lot excited.

First, I'd love your prayers, you two are some of the most faithful people I know, and that means a lot to me.

*Second, I'm raising **\$[amount] by [date] to cover the trip, and I'm currently [%%] of the way there. Would you consider partnering with me to help close the gap?** Your support would go toward food, lodging, and materials for the families we'll be serving, and anything beyond my goal goes directly to the ministry.*

I'd love to have you on the team! [add link to fundraising page]

Formal

Hello [Name], I hope this note finds you well.

I will be traveling to [location] this [summer] to serve with Encounter Missions, a Catholic organization in partnership with Encounter Ministries. Our team will be [one or two specific things: e.g., facilitating a healing service for parish leaders and visiting families in the local hospital], following the lead of the local parish priest.

I am a person who values your friendship, and I wanted you to be among the first to know. First, I ask for your prayers, for safe travel and an open heart to receive what God wants to show me.

*I am also raising **\$[amount] by [date], and I am currently [%%%] of the way there. Would you prayerfully consider partnering with me?** Your support helps cover food, lodging, and ministry materials, and [\$amount] specifically covers [concrete item].*

Thank you for taking the time to read this. It means a great deal to me.

Email Templates

Subject: I'm going on mission to [location], here's how you can be part of it

Hi [Name],

This [summer/fall], I'm traveling to [location] with Encounter Missions, a Catholic mission organization in partnership with Encounter Ministries.

While there, I'll be [one specific thing: e.g., praying with families at a healing service in [city], or leading a youth session in a local parish]. I felt called to say yes to this, and I'm grateful for the chance to go.

*I'm raising **\$[amount] by [date] to cover travel, lodging, and ministry materials, and I'd love for you to be part of that.** You can give through my personal fundraising page here: [insert link].*

And if giving isn't the right fit right now, I'd be grateful for your prayers over the team and the people we'll be serving.

Thank you for reading this. I'll keep you updated as the trip gets closer.

With gratitude,

[Your Name]

Phone Call Dialogue Suggestions

Opening: "Hey [Name], do you have a few minutes? I wanted to share something I'm really excited about."

Share your story: "This [summer/fall], I'm going on a mission trip to [location] with Encounter Missions. [Share one specific thing you'll be doing and why it matters to you]."

Make the ask: “The trip costs [amount], and I’m hoping to have it covered by [date]. I’m reaching out to people I trust to ask if you’d consider being part of that, even [a small amount] would make a real difference.”

If they say yes: “That means so much to me. I’ll send you a link to my fundraising page, it’s quick to give online, and I’ll keep you posted on how things go.”

If they need time: “Of course, no pressure. I’ll send you the link so you have it whenever you’re ready.”

If they say no: “Totally understand, thank you for hearing me out. I’d love your prayers for the team either way.”

Close: “Thank you so much, I really appreciate you.”

Social Media Templates

Simple Social Media Caption Example

This [summer], I’m joining an Encounter Missions healing trip to [location]. If you’d like to support me through prayer or a gift, I’d be grateful, just send me a message and I can share more about what we’ll be doing and how to help.

Full Social Media Post / Letter Example

This [summer], I’m traveling to [location] with Encounter Missions, a Catholic organization in partnership with Encounter Ministries.

Here’s the short version: [one or two sentences on the specific need, e.g., the parish has asked our team to lead a healing service for over 200 families and train local youth leaders to keep it going after we leave]. I’ve been praying about this for [time period], and I’m confident this is where God is leading me.

I’m sharing this for two reasons.

First, I’d ask for your prayers, for safe travel, and for an open heart to receive whatever God wants to teach me there.

*Second, **I’m raising \$[amount] by [date] to cover travel, lodging, and ministry materials, and I’m currently [%%] of the way there.** If you feel led to give, you can do that here: [insert personal fundraising page through Service Reef].*

Thank you for reading this far, and for any prayer or support you can offer. I’ll share updates and stories when I’m back.

Thank-You Note Template

Send this within a few days of receiving a gift. A short, personal note goes a long way.

Text or Email Version

Hi [Name], thank you for your gift toward my trip to [location]! It means a lot to have you with me on this. I'll share updates as the trip gets closer, and again once I'm back. Thank you, truly.

Handwritten Note Version

Dear [Name], thank you for your generous gift toward my upcoming trip to [location]. It's a reminder that I'm not doing this alone, and it means more than I can say. I'm praying for you, and I'll share stories from the mission when I return. With gratitude, [Your Name]

Post-Trip Update & Testimony Template

Send this to your supporters within a few weeks of returning. It closes the loop and helps people feel part of what happened.

Hi everyone,

I'm back from [location], and I wanted to share what happened, and to thank you again for being part of it.

[Share one specific story or moment: e.g., on the last night, a woman who had been praying for her son's healing for years came forward at the service, and the whole room prayed with her. Moments like that happened again and again.]

None of it would have been possible without your prayers and support. Thank you for saying yes with me.

If you'd like to see photos or hear more, just reach out, I'd love to share.

With gratitude,

[Your Name]