

# Tips for Hosting a Best Gift Fair

Congratulations on deciding to host a Best Gift Fair! You are offering a unique opportunity for people who want to give gifts with real meaning – and a value that goes far beyond the purchase price.

Church World Service can help make your Best Gift Fair both fun and easy to organize.

Here are a few tips:

## Plan:

- Form a team – people to organize the event and volunteers to staff it.
- Choose a location, date and time. Set aside four hours for the fair, plus setup and cleanup time for volunteers.
- Invite your congregation's ministries to provide displays or sell refreshments.
- Invite other nonprofit organizations, such as a local food bank, to participate.
- Learn about the work CWS is doing around the world at [cwsglobal.org/stories](http://cwsglobal.org/stories).

## Prepare:

- Order materials online - including catalogs, posters, gift cards and display items.
- Display the poster to advertise your fair date and location.
- Download additional promotional resources at [cwsbestgift.org/downloads](http://cwsbestgift.org/downloads) - including sermon starters, effective display hints, display items, social media graphics and more.
- Download and print donor receipts and gift card inserts to include with gift cards for customers to give their loved ones.



## Promote:

- Email area media and other congregations inviting them to your Best Gift Fair.
- Post your Best Gift Fair date and details on your church's website and in e-newsletters, in your local newspaper's upcoming events section and on Web-based community calendars offered by most local TV and radio stations.
- If other nonprofit organizations are participating, ask them to spread the word through their communications channels as well.

## Two weeks before your fair:

- Confirm all groups, ministries and nonprofit organizations participating in your fair. If they are providing or selling refreshments, find out if they will need power or a space close to kitchen facilities.
- Decide what goes where. Diagram your event layout, keeping in mind traffic flow, power outlets and emergency exits. Note spaces reserved for various groups and displays. Make copies of the final layout for participating groups and for volunteers helping with setup.
- Prepare a volunteer schedule for the day of the fair. You may want to split the event staffing (including setup and cleanup) into two-hour shifts.
- Create a shopping list to hand out at the fair. Include all participating groups/organizations, with space for shoppers to take notes and indicate the amount they are donating to each organization.

## How does a fair work?

During the fair, guests browse the displays, talk to participating groups and select items to purchase and organizations they wish to support with a donation.

In terms of payment, decide what will work best for your church and other participating organizations. For items purchased from CWS Best Gift, send in the following to CWS:

- Payment (checks made payable to **Church World Service**)
- All catalog order forms
- Tally sheet (found at [cwsbestgift.org/downloads](https://www.cwsbestgift.org/downloads))

Mail to: **Best Gift, Church World Service, P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515**

## How to make a great event even better:

- Add ambiance – a pianist, a CD, even a choir. (Don't forget to provide a CD player or sound system if necessary.)
- Offer food – anything from just the basics (fair trade coffee and baked goods) to light international fare (breakfast burritos, for example). Sell as an added fundraising opportunity!
- Create visual appeal – use the table toppers, price tags (available online) or display artwork from your children's ministries.
- Make the event user-friendly – with signs to point out refreshments, restroom facilities, special exhibits and checkout. You may want to include an area where young children can do a craft or hear a story while their parents shop the fair.
- Make "Gift Fair Volunteer" tags, so attendees can easily spot someone who can answer their questions about the gift fair or procedures.
- Hold a wrap-up meeting for organizers and volunteers to discuss what worked and what didn't and brainstorm ideas for your next Best Gift Fair.

## Keep the momentum going!

CWS Best Gift is a great choice for any gift-giving occasion - Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, birthdays, anniversaries and more. Throughout the year, the different ministries at your church can take advantage of this unique gift giving opportunity.

Promote the idea to self-contained groups and let them get creative. Your youth group might organize its own event. Small groups may want to host Best Gift Dinners. Women's ministries might hold an Best Gift Luncheon with a guest speaker.

However you keep the momentum going, we would love to hear about it! Share your CWS Best Gift event successes and photos with us at [info@cwsglobal.org](mailto:info@cwsglobal.org).