

Noisy offerings make giving fun

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Are you looking for a fun, easy way to put smiles on the faces of your congregation's older members, involve your youngest members more fully in worship, and raise some extra money for mission support above and beyond your budget? Try a noisy offering.

A noisy offering is, as its name indicates, noisy. Noisy is fun, especially for the little ones. It's a noisy offering because your youngest worshippers collect spare change from the other worshippers, and when all those nickels and pennies that were weighing down grandma's purse fall freely into the tin bucket little Jacob is holding out to her, it makes some noise. This makes grandma smile, and it makes grandpa sitting next to her reach into his pocket, so as not to be outdone by grandma. And little Jacob feels important, because he is important. He is using his hands to do God's work! What could be better?

It is incredibly easy to start taking up a noisy offering in your congregation.

1. Decide when you're going to do it (start date/end date, weekly or monthly).
2. Decide what ministry you will support through this offering (malaria campaign, Lutheran World Relief, Young Adults in Global Mission, your local food pantry, etc.)
3. Let the people know this is going to be happening.
4. Decide what kind of container the children will use to collect

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the offering (brightly colored pails available from your favorite craft and hobby supplier, recycled cans—be sure there are no sharp edges, or even pots and pans brought from home).

5. Decide how you will handle the collected offering. By this, I mean, where will you keep the offering once it is collected, who is responsible for taking it to the bank, who will keep track of the total and send off a check to your designated recipient, etc.

In the congregations I currently serve, we begin the regular offering and then invite the children to come up to the front pew where the buckets are kept. They each take a bucket (it's important that you have enough containers for every child in attendance to have one!) and then they begin circulating throughout the congregation. When they are done collecting, they bring their buckets up to the altar. At one church, they empty their buckets into one big coffee can (to make even more noise!) and then return their empty buckets to the front pew. At the other church, they place their individual buckets on the altar (which does make for a great visual!).

You may be amazed by how quickly the change will add up. It's

wonderful what people will be inspired to give when approached in this way. We also let people know that a silent offering (paper money!) is also welcome and appreciated. I will say, though, that it's hard to convince the youngest ones that a dollar is even more valuable than a penny, because a dollar doesn't make NOISE!

Make some noise and change the world!



13th Payment Sunday

During the month of December, consider sending a special letter and envelope to congregation members with the goal of receiving a total offering equal to or greater than the congregation's monthly payment on the mortgage or other loans. This becomes a "13th" payment which most banks will apply directly to the principal.

This means that on a 20-year loan at five percent, a gift of \$100 today will save the congregation about \$150 in future interest. Or a \$100 gift today is worth \$271.26 against the loan.

