

ON THEIR OWN BUT NOT ALONE

## Fundraising Idea: Penny War

Hope for Humanity's Penny War is a spirited game of friendly competition between classrooms or grade levels. The participating students not only have fun, they also raise money for a worthy cause and learn something about their world.

The object of the game is for each team to collect as many pennies as possible during the "war" while simultaneously "sabotaging" the other teams. Of course, the ultimate object of the game is to give the students an opportunity to raise money to support a project that helps others.

Each team collects coins in a see-through, narrow-necked container. Large water jugs are ideal, but one-gallon plastic milk jugs will also do the job.

Each container is labeled with the name of the team—the class, grade, teacher, room number, or any identification of your choosing.

The containers are kept in places with adult supervision. Home rooms, the school library, or a location in view of the office staff are good choices.

Students bring pennies to school and put their pennies in the container that belongs to their team. Their team receives one point for every penny in the container.

But it gets more complicated. Students may sabotage the other teams by putting "silver" coins (nickels, dimes, and quarters) into the containers of the other teams. Each silver coin subtracts points from that container by the value of the coin. A nickel subtracts 5 points from the total, a dime reduces it by 10, and a quarter by 25. This is where strategy comes into play. This is why the game is so much fun.

Containers may be emptied and counted daily or they may accumulate until the last day of the contest. The pennies and silver coins are counted separately. The total monetary amount of the silver coins is deducted from the total number of pennies.

Some groups prefer for the totals for all classes to be posted daily to encourage friendly competition. The totals (for pennies, silver, and points) may be posted as tallies. A chart, blackboard, or whiteboard, in a central location, would work well for these postings.

Other groups like to keep the results a secret, and to not count the coins or reveal the standings until the last day. This leads to lots of speculative strategies and tactics.

Either way will work—you should decide which way is best for your group, and then stick with that process through the entire Penny War.

We suggest that two prizes be awarded. First prize goes to the team that has the most points: pennies minus silver. Second prize goes to the team that collects the most money: pennies plus silver. A pizza party would make a good first prize for the winning team. The second place winners could receive a doughnut party. The prizes are optional—it is the money raised for the project, the friendly competition, and the learning about the project you are supporting that really makes this work.

It is recommended that the school request their local bank to count the pennies and silver coins.

If you would like to conduct a Penny War, the first step is to present the idea to the student council or school board. You will need to state the project you are supporting, and set firm dates for the event.

The Penny War starts with an introductory program during which the rules are explained and the students are told about the project that will benefit from the fundraising event. This program may be led by the student council members, who distribute the containers to the teams and their sponsors. The principal or class advisor presents information to the student body about the project chosen and the difference their war will make in the lives of other people. An appropriate video or multimedia may be viewed at this time.

The project can run for either one or two weeks. A cut-off time needs to be set, after which no more points will be added or subtracted. A good cut-off point is the end of school on the day before the awards program, so that there is time to compile the totals.

If this is a one-week war, during the awards program the totals are announced for each team—pennies, silver, and points. The second place and first place winners are congratulated.

Halfway through a two-week war, a midpoint program can present a tally of the amounts collected. The principal, church pastor, or sponsoring teacher can provide more information about the project chosen. The next week, during the awards program, the totals are announced and the winners are congratulated.

It is recommended that pictures be taken and interviews be conducted to send to the local papers and newsletters as well as to Hope for Humanity.