



Alternative Gifts International | Alternative Gift Markets, Inc.

alternativegiftmarket

an introductory guide for gift market coordinators

Thank you for inquiring about hosting an Alternative Gift Market! We believe hope for the world begins in our local communities. The Alternative Gift Market (AGM) experience can inspire your local congregation, school, or organization to change the way they give and exchange gifts and as a result, inspire change in the world. Hosting an Alternative Gift Market will 'bring the mission to the people' by presenting a variety of causes that promote self-sufficiency to aid the world's poor and improve the environment. Alternative Gift Market "shoppers" give directly to the causes featured in our annual catalog. Essentially, when you host an Alternative Gift Market, you are connecting compassionate donors with those who are most in need around the world. We invite your congregation, school, or organization to become one of the hundreds of Alternative Gift Markets that take place each year.

OUR MISSION

Alternative Gifts International is a non-profit organization that inspires support for humanitarian and environmental causes. We offer donors the option to designate charitable gifts through carefully selected agencies in the name of their relatives, friends and associates.

WHAT IS AN ALTERNATIVE GIFT?

The simplest description is that an Alternative Gift Market Shopper (donor) can support a variety of extraordinary causes such as planting trees or providing drinking water for our fellow global citizens and by doing so, may honor friends, family members, or associates for birthdays or other special occasions. As an 'alternative' to traditional, material gifts a donor can choose a complimentary greeting card to accompany a gift insert that states the specific gift made to a cause. Both the gift insert and card may then be presented to the recipient. For a list of our current causes visit www.alternativegifts.org.

The popularity of our Markets during the holiday season is due to the many thousands of people who prefer to complete their holiday shopping by purchasing 'alternative gifts' at Gift Markets. Our gifts, however, are appropriate for events and celebrations year-round and provide joy to the donor, the recipient, and ultimately the human beings whose lives are forever changed by the generosity of Market shoppers.

An example of the gift insert is below.



Not actual size

WHAT IS AN ALTERNATIVE GIFT MARKET?

Alternative Gift Markets (AGM) are non-profit shopping events that provide life-saving resources to others in need through the coordinated and charitable inspiration of individuals and communities. The Market is promoted in the local community allowing people to express their compassion through the purchase of Alternative Gifts. The Alternative Gifts purchased at church and school sponsored Markets support the humanitarian and environmental causes featured in our catalog.

HOW CAN AN ALTERNATIVE MARKET HELP MY LOCAL COMMUNITY?

Hosting an Alternative Gift Market allows your congregation, school, or organization to nominate a local food pantry or homeless shelter to receive an AGI grant. Each year the AGI project, "Feeding Hungry & Homeless Americans," raises thousands of dollars which are distributed back into the communities where Markets are held. By hosting a Market, you are helping the world and in turn you can help a food pantry or homeless shelter in your community. For many volunteers, this giving-back benefit is the incentive needed to help recruit and inspire more volunteers. Request our Market Materials Packet for more information about pantry or shelter eligibility guidelines.

WHO CAN BECOME AN ALTERNATIVE GIFT MARKET COORDINATOR?

You can. Alternative Gift Market Coordinators are inspired volunteers who believe in helping the less fortunate people of the world. They possess empathy for humanity, value social justice, and support preservation of the environment. They view their role as bringing awareness to their community. Market Coordinators connect those people and causes in need with people who care to help.

WHAT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO HOST A GIFT MARKET?

AGI provides the template for designing your Market and the materials needed to accomplish it. No two will be exactly alike. As the Market Coordinator, you and your team of volunteers have the freedom to design a Market that reflects your vision, ideals, and sense of celebration. All you need initially is a little faith and the desire to help others, but most Market Coordinators generally follow the steps listed:

- 1) Order the Market Materials Pack from AGI.
- 2) Recruit an inspired planning team of three to five members.
- 3) Invite volunteers to join and represent projects featured in the catalog.
- 4) Choose a time and place for the market.
- 5) Promote, promote, promote! (see publicity kit in Market Materials Packet)

Feel free to share your ideas and ask questions at any stage of the planning process by calling AGI at 1.800.842.2243.

3 Steps to hosting an Alternative Gift Market

1

RECRUIT
a volunteer
planning
committee

2

INVITE
other churches,
schools, etc. to
represent an
AGI Project

3

PROMOTE
your Market
to attract gift
shoppers

HELP END POVERTY

UNITE YOUR COMMUNITY

HOST AN ALTERNATIVE GIFT MARKET

Visit our website to find a Market near you!

TYPES OF ALTERNATIVE GIFT MARKETS

Churches and Congregations (All Faiths)

- Form a large multi-day or one-day market as a day of service to the world
- Invite other congregations to represent projects from the catalog
- Invite local non-profits and fair trade organizations to join
- Organize food sales and musicians to enhance the shopping experience

Schools and Colleges

- Learn about world issues: geography, poverty, and the environment
- Provide hands-on projects for every age and skill level
- Foster community giving for service-learning teams, fraternities and sororities
- Build Teamwork

Catalog Markets

- Display several AGI Catalogs and invite people to give
- Set up a display table in your church, school, or business
- Display catalogs in corporate lunch rooms

Express Markets

- Choose projects for a fundraiser (car wash, trade show, special event, etc.)
- Plan a fundraising challenge for a specific cause at your school, congregation, or workplace
- Represent AGI at women's fairs, community festivals, Earth Day celebrations

Company/Employer Match Markets

- Invite employers to match employee giving
- Provide employees with a copy of the catalog to choose a gift
- Set a fundraising goal and hang posters
- Display catalogs in bookstores, coffee houses, and music venues

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When should I start planning a market?

Large multi-organizational Markets start planning 6 months in advance. It is wise to allow at least 2 months of planning time, but a Market can be organized in a few weeks. Market materials can be ordered and registration completed anytime after July 1. Markets may register using the enclosed form or online at www.alternativegifts.org.

How should a market be organized?

Market Coordinators are not limited to how they organize their markets. Multi-Congregational Markets are the largest and most elaborate of the annual markets. The hosting congregation invites several other congregations from the community to join and plan the Market. Each congregation that joins will choose one or two projects to represent from the catalog. By having several congregations involved, each is then responsible for designing their display tables and staffing the tables during Market hours. This also creates a larger pool of shoppers because each church will invite their congregation to attend the Market. Similarly, school-based Markets may involve other schools or individual classes, clubs, departments, or service-organizations to participate in a larger Market as well. Invite your local non-profit organizations to participate or representatives from fair trade organizations such as Ten Thousand Villages or SERRV to display items. Consider asking musicians and artists to perform at your Market and if you wish, arrange for children's programs to teach about the importance of giving. Catalog-only Markets are an easy and common alternative to holding a scheduled AGM. Families or gatherings of friends can also use the AGI catalog to host an Alternative Gift Home Party. We encourage Markets of all sizes!

When is the best time of year to hold a Market?

Traditionally, Alternative Gift Markets (AGM) are held during November and December. Many multi-faith congregations, schools, and organizations are now holding Markets around other important times of the year such as Lenten season, Earth Day, or in association with school projects. We encourage you to select the time of year best suited for your vision.

What is the ideal location for a Market?

A large banquet hall, gymnasium, or school multi-purpose room often provides enough space for display tables, chairs, and an open space for people to mill about, gather, shop, and share in the experience. Some Markets also provide food or coffee service, so table seating would be necessary for patrons.

During what hours are Markets open for business?

A typical AGM is open from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Some Markets are open for a few hours on Saturday or Sunday over a 3 or 4 week period. Each coordinating team should determine the most suitable time frame for their Market.

Do all catalog projects need to be represented at Markets?

Market Coordinators select the catalog projects for representation at their respective Markets. AGI encourages Markets to represent all the catalog projects however we understand this may not always be feasible. AGI strives to raise awareness and funds equally for all of our agency projects.

What is the cost to host a Market?

AGI asks that participating congregations, schools, and organizations purchase the supplies needed to stock the Market. By sharing the minimal costs, your organization helps AGI control our operating costs. We are thankful that over 300 Markets have participated in sharing the costs. See the enclosed Registration & Order form for prices. Many Markets offset expenses by offering baked goods, food services, and crafts for sale. Call AGI at 1.800.842.2243 with questions or ideas.

How can AGI help me?

Call and ask for the Market Facilitator at 1.800.842.2243. AGI is ready to answer your questions and share ideas to help you make your Market successful. We may even be able to connect you with other Market Coordinators in your region. To see an Alternative Gift Market in action, use the 'Find a Market' feature on our website to see if other Markets exist in your area.

What makes AGI different?

Since 1986, AGI has worked with inspired volunteers to launch Alternative Gift Markets throughout the United States and Canada. We have a unique and different outreach – we 'bring the mission to the people.' By carefully selecting causes from around the world, including here in the United States, grassroots-inspired volunteer efforts present and promote these causes to communities.

How are agencies and projects selected for inclusion in the AGI catalog?

Alternative Gifts International (AGI) maintains contractual agreements with each non-profit agency whose respective project(s) are featured in our annual catalog.

Each agency selected for inclusion in the catalog must:

- 1) Be 501 (c)(3) certified
- 2) Submit a proposal for a project that is active and has been in operation for at least one year.
- 3) Provide proposals, budgets, annual reports, and other supporting documentation as requested by AGI.
- 4) Sign an agreement restricting funds to the proposed project only.
- 5) Submit reports on the continued viability of their respective project. *(Subject to Change)*

How are the Market funds distributed?

90% of the funds generated through AGI Markets, online, and from individual donors is distributed directly to the project or cause for which it was raised. AGI retains 10% of all donations for operations and administration.

What is the history and location of AGI?

Alternative Gifts International was founded in 1980 and incorporated in 1986. Growing from a single Alternative Gift Market in California, AGI has since expanded to include over 300 Markets throughout the United States. Our operation is headquartered in Wichita, Kansas.

AGI Greeting Cards (H=Holiday, A=All Occasion)

Artist: Hilaire Sampson



H-1. Let It Snow

Over the woodlands, brown and bare
Over the harvest-fields forsaken,
Silent, and soft, and slow
Descends the snow.

– Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Artist: Rebecca Bridges



A-1. Leaves

One touch of nature makes the whole
world kin.

– William Shakespeare

Artist: Lynda Legg



H-2. Partridge

Blessed is the season which engages the
whole world in a conspiracy of love.

– Hamilton Wright Mabi

Artist: Stephanie Martens



A-2. World Tree

The earth is what we all have in common.

– Wendell Berry

Artist: Marianne Burch



H-3. The Star of Bethlehem

Long ago, guided by a bright star, kings
brought extravagant gifts to an infant born
in a cow stall. Today, we bring 'simple
gifts' to a troubled world, seeking hope for
peace in a new day.

Artist: Paula Rodriguez



A-3. Love & Strength For All

How wonderful is it that nobody has to wait
a single moment before starting to improve
the world.

– Anne Frank

Artist: Mayo Kolman



H-4. Joy to the World

Joy to the world, The Lord is come
let the earth receive her King
let every heart prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing.

Artist: Anonymous



A-4. Blossoms

The gift is but a seed–
a flower's tiny start
May it so bloom and flourish
as to blossom in your heart.

Artist: Karen Houseberg



H-8. Let There Be Peace *NEW!*

Peace is not something you wish for;
it's something you make, something you
do, something you are, and something
you give away.

– Robert Fulghum

Artist: Barbara LeGrange



A-5. Simple Gifts

My gift is small and simple... but it comes
from my heart. This gift has been sent in
your honor from someone who truly cares
about the world.

WHAT HOSTING AN ALTERNATIVE GIFT MARKET WILL DO...

For the World's Poor and Disadvantaged

- Bring an end to extreme poverty
- Promote gender equality for women
- Eradicate human slavery and forced prostitution
- Educate disadvantaged children
- Provide medical services for the sick and poor
- Send micro-loans to promote self-reliance

For the Environment

- Plant trees around the world
- Protect our water supply
- Develop agricultural sustainability
- Promote solar energy
- Restore livelihoods
- Promote recycling

For your Congregation, School, or Community

- Educate children and adults about challenges facing our global citizens
- Teach youth about social justice and helping others
- Unite your congregation, school, and community
- Build team work through service to others
- Provide hands-on projects for every age and skill level
- Foster community giving