

THE BIGGEST BIRTHDAY PARTY EVER.com

FAIRTRADE FASHION SHOWS



A PROJECT BY



INTRO

A fashion show is always *'en vogue'* and this event provides a great opportunity for a fun night out, bursting with creativity whilst also bringing to the forefront some of the major ethical issues of our time.

IDEAL TARGET GROUP:

Teens to Thirties females are where you will find most 'fashion enthusiasts' but this event can be tailored to suit many different demographics.

IDEAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE:

50+

AVERAGE COST:

£300+ (costs will depend on how much you can draw on local talent. Costs can be recouperated through ticket sales if desired)

THE AIMS:

- Promote ethical fashion, representing God's heart for justice to your local community.
- Christians from the church/churches involved get the opportunity to meet new people who live and work locally and invite them to a well established follow up event.
- People from the local community are able to experience a little bit of Christian community and have their perceptions of church altered.

WHO?

Fashion is often seen as the domain of the young female and you can definitely put on a good show aimed at this demographic but the event could also be tailored to a variety of different groups. The justice angle will also tap into the growing interest in fair trade, opening it up to a wider demographic than another fashion show might. The event will appeal to people who have limited or no connection with the church as well as those who are part of the Christian community. As the main purpose of this event is to build relationships between the church and the wider community, ideally the demographic who attend will be a good mix of both.

WHERE?

A recent survey of churchgoing in the UK identified that 60% of the UK are either un-churched (have pretty much never been inside one) or de-churched (have had a bad experience and don't intend to come back). For all of those people, churches can be scary places. This means that although we're hosting the party, there's good reason to hold events in a neutral space. We're opting out of our church buildings as often as possible so for this event you should try to find a local hall, library, function room, community centre or open space.

WHEN?

This event can be run at a date that fits with your church's current rhythm of mission, taking into consideration how the event might compliment or clash with your existing church programme. Think about when is right for the people you are inviting. In order to maximise your appeal, choose a time that is not in competition with other events in the community. For this event a week night would be advisable as restaurants are less busy and more able to accommodate such an event. If many people in your community commute to work make sure you give them enough time to get back for the event.

MAKING IT HAPPEN!

STEP 1. CREATE A TEAM

You could run this event as a small group, a church or a group of churches. Your team will need to include:

- someone who is happy to take overall control of the organisation of the event and manage volunteers
- someone who knows how to design high quality publicity
- someone who is able to source and manage models, and organise hair and makeup
- someone to organise the venue logistics including music and PA, decoration, catwalk etc
- someone to source outfits and coordinate the ethical aspect of the show, working with ethical charities
- someone who is confident enough to host the event, introducing models and sharing information about ethical fashion

A recommended core team size is therefore about 5 or 6 people although you will probably need a few more volunteers on the day and can still have lots more people involved!

STEP 2. DECIDE ON YOUR COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES

Clearly define who your event is aimed at. What geographical area will you be advertising to? Is it a street? A few streets? A postcode? Ideally, do not try to reach too large a geographical area as this increases costs in publicity and makes it more difficult to build lasting relationships through the event.

STEP 3. PLAN YOUR FOLLOW UP

Don't leave it to last to work out how this event will fit into the wider mission of the church. You need to have a plan in place for the following scenarios.

Scenario A: Someone comes to the event and they are already asking questions about faith and really want to know more. How will they find out more through this event or be invited into a context where they can discover more about the gospel. Is there an alpha course or similar option happening locally that they could be invited to?

Scenario B: Someone comes to the event without much knowledge of the Christian story and not particularly interested in finding out more. However, they love the event and are impressed that the church would put on something like this. Is there another event happening in the near future that you can invite them to?

Scenario C: Someone comes to the event without much knowledge of the Christian story and not particularly interested in finding out more. However, they are struck by the sense of community and would really like to hang out with people from the church more even though they are not yet interested in the Christian faith. Is there a social group (maybe a sports team, dance class or film club) that meets regularly they can be invited to become a part of?

STEP 4. BUDGET AND FUNDRAISING

If you do not have much finance you can find ways to keep costs to a minimum and could even charge a small entry fee. Either way, you will need some initial finance to help with cash flow. Potential costs include:

- Venue
- Decoration
- Musicians
- Models
- Hair and Make-up
- Food and Drink

The major cost will probably be a venue, although if there is a suitable pub/bar function room in the locality they may be willing to let you use it for free if people buy food and drink.

If you paid for everything on this list it would cost a substantial amount, which is why you will need to call in some favours. Who do you know with qualifications/talents in hair and make-up that could help? Do you know any DJs or musicians who would like to perform at the event? If you have these talents within your church community it's a really great opportunity to use them!

Food and drink is optional, may be provided by the venue and if not you could sell, rather than give away food.

Printed publicity will need to be paid for a month or so before the event.

There should not be a cost to bringing in the fashion wear as if you are promoting brands they will supply the clothes free of charge, or if you are using second hand clothes they will also be obtainable for free.

Decoration can cost as much or as little as you are able to spend. It is very important that the room is aesthetically pleasing for this type of event but there are many creative ways to do this!

You will probably need to have around £300 in the kitty to run this event, depending on the skills and resources available in your community.

Raising Finance

If your church or small group does not already have a mission fund that can help with some of the costs of this event you may have to look into some fundraising. This can be everything from cake sales and car washes, to council grants. Most local councils have small grant funds which faith groups can apply for, and as your event could be benefitting local business and raising awareness for a cause there's a good chance of you being able to raise some funds through this. Visit your local council website for more details.

STEP 5. DESIGN YOUR EVENT

Here are a few things you will want to decide before you start booking things in for your event.

How long should the actual fashion show be?

Industry shows normally last for up to half an hour. This is a surprisingly long time to fill and twenty minutes is probably a more realistic aim. Ideal numbers are about 20 models for about 50 outfits, but you can work with fewer models, they will just have to do more changes! Estimate about 30 seconds per outfit in order to work out exactly how many outfits you need to fill the time. You may want to have one long fashion show or two shorter sets with music in-between. This might help if you have a lot of complicated clothes changes as it will give models a break.

Further Content

You don't want your models walking down the catwalk to awkward silence so you will need to put together a playlist for the fashion show. You might also want to have some form of live music or entertainment before and/or after the catwalk show. You could get a local DJ or musician(s) to come and perform at the event. Have a look at our licensing guide for more info on music licences for your event. Make sure your event includes time for getting to know people in informal conversation. You could also have opportunities for tasting Fairtrade products or show a short film about ethical fashion.

Theme

The theme for your fashion show will need to have to do with ethical fashion but there is room to add further creativity. You could think about an international theme, or use recycled products to make cool decorations. Remember that atmosphere is really important so you need lots of ideas to make the room come alive! Here are a few we thought of.

- Use old material to make vintage bunting
- Use tin cans/jam jars/teacups as flower pots to create your own table centres
- Create popcorn decorations (string popped corn together and spray it different colours creating a tinsel like effect)
- Borrow a selection of lamps to create atmospheric lighting.
- Hang material from the ceiling to create a more intimate space.

Put together a rough running order for the event to ensure you have enough content and to give you an idea of what you will need to do to make it work.

STEP 6. BOOK YOUR VENUE

Possible places to look at for a fashion show are

- Town Hall
- Library
- Pub Function Room
- Social Club/Community Centre
- Student Union
- Sports Hall

The Right Location

Look for somewhere close to the heart of the community you are trying to connect with. Think about the aesthetics of the room and whether you can decorate it to create the kind of atmosphere you are looking for. Also think about the size of the room, imagine it with a catwalk down the middle and think about whether it is an appropriate size for your needs. Finally, remember you will need a dressing area – either a separate room or an area you can curtain off.

Meet the Manager

Arrange to meet the manager for a face to face meeting where you can chat through your vision for the event and how it would work logistically. Remember that this is about building relationships so take the time to get to know the manager if you can and let them know that you want to support his/her business and not just use his/her space.

Things to discuss with the manager:

- Explain who you are and what you are hoping to do. Make clear that it is a church led initiative but not a church service.
- Confirm an available time and date, including set up and set down time of two to three hours either side of the event.
- You will want to have a dress rehearsal. Ask the manager if it would be possible to use the room on another occasion for this.
- Discuss cost. Be prepared to negotiate and highlight the benefit to the venue of your event. If they are an establishment that sell food and drink you may need to discuss a minimum spend (an amount they would need to get on the bar to make it worth them allowing you to have your event there). Try to keep this as low as possible. Ask what happens if you cannot meet it (reassure them you don't expect this to happen!)
- What PA /staging do they have in the venue? Are they happy for you to bring in equipment?
- Ask to take pictures of the room as this will help you with planning later.
- Are you allowed to put up banners and bunting?
- Can you bring in extra lighting if required?
- Would they be willing to have posters and flyers up advertising the event in the two weeks leading up to the event?
- Do they have another room you could use as a dressing room?
- Are there any age restrictions?
- What disabled access is available?
- Is it OK to sell clothes in the venue?

Get it in Writing

When you have found the right place and have decided the above details make sure you write a follow up email to the manager with everything that has been agreed clearly laid out. Ask the manager to reply saying that they are happy with this. It's really important that you do this as it ensures transparency and avoids problems arising from miscommunication later in the planning of the event.

STEP 7. SOURCE THE OUTFITS YOU WILL BE SHOWCASING

You will need to decide whether you want to showcase women's clothing, men's clothing, children's clothing, or a combination of all three. Look at the ranges of clothes available for each group and see which ones you think are most suitable for the demographic you are targeting.

There are several ways you can source outfits for your ethical fashion show.

1. Get in touch with some brands that sell ethically sourced clothing and ask them to send you a few outfits to showcase. You could then invite them to come and run a stall on the night or to send vouchers for you to put in goody bags so that people can buy from them online. If you opt for this, check out the document below for a list of ethical traders who are willing to lend you clothes for free. This document will also give you information on ethical clothing that might help you to answer people's questions on the night. http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2009/f/ft_fashion_action_guide2010final.pdf
2. Alternatively or additionally you could focus on recycling clothes in conjunction with a local charity shop and put together outfits that are entirely second hand.

STEP 8. GET HAIR AND MAKE UP SORTED

If you don't already know someone who's handy with curling tongs and a blusher brush a great place to look is your local college(s). Students on hair and beauty courses are always looking for some experience and you could offer them a great opportunity! Make sure you communicate your theme well so that they can ensure they create looks to match. They may need a budget for buying products if they do not want to use their own or do not have the range of products necessary. Models could be encouraged to bring their own make up too if that helps. You will want to get this sorted as soon as you are able so that you know the costs and time implications it will have on the event.

STEP 9. FIND YOUR MODELS, VOLUNTEERS, PHOTOGRAPHER.

This event needs a lot of goodwill so make sure you start looking for volunteers at least 6 weeks before the event. You will not need to spend lots of money hiring models. Talk to the people in your church and advertise on community notice boards to find local aspiring models. If you are going to have more take up than you require you may even want to hold auditions. Whilst the list we have provided includes some retailers that will provide a range of sizes, some will only be able to provide standard sample sizes, so you will need to make sure your models and the sizes of clothes you select are compatible. Remember that if you want to show off clothes for men, women and children, you will need to find models for each of them!

Remember that your models are not professionals so it is imperative to make sure they can all make it to a rehearsal before the event for a run-through. Let them know it is going to be fun but you are also looking for their commitment to putting on a high quality event.

You will also need a few volunteers to help on the night and one or two people who are handy with a camera to capture the beauty and creativity of the event. Ask your church members or local churches to help with this.

Make sure you remind your church members that they are not just there to have a good time with people they already know but should be trying to meet new people and make them feel welcome throughout the event.

STEP 10. PLAN VENUE SET UP

For a fashion show the layout of the room is really important. Here are some things to think about.

- You need a catwalk! If, as is most likely, your venue does not come with a ready made catwalk you will need to create one going down the centre of the room. You could see if anyone you know has stage blocks to create a raised platform, but failing that you can just mark out a catwalk on the floor with some masking tape. You will then want to have seating either side of the catwalk.
- If your venue does not have a changing area you will need to create one of these too. How are you going to curtain one off and where in the room will it be?
- Make sure the room is set so that people get to the toilets/bar/exits during the show without invading the catwalk.
- Decide where will the music (DJ/live) be played from. If you are bringing in your own PA think about where this will be set up. If you are having live music decide where the band/artist will perform from.
- Think about lighting, including any extra lights you are bringing in.
- Don't forget to check where the plug sockets are and whether you will need extension leads.

STEP 11. REHEARSAL

You will need to have a dress rehearsal to make sure clothes fit, practise timings and music and make sure models all know what they need to do on the night. You should have organised a date when you booked the venue. Ideally a rehearsal should be within the week before the event so that there is time to adapt to any problems that arise, but everyone will still remember what needs to be done on the day of the event.

STEP 12. TICKETING

People are less likely to pay for a fashion show than other events so if you are going to charge entry you will need to keep prices minimal. However, if you are selling tickets here are the options for a manageable ticketing system.

- Register with an online ticketing agency. There are several websites which allow you to sell tickets through their system for a small registration fee. This allows for a fully functional system with minimal admin and means that people can book tickets online. Most of them require you to register with them before you can begin selling tickets, so if you wish to do this make sure you give yourselves time to get it all set up.
- Have a dedicated phone line and sell tickets on the door. If you have an office or work number people can call to book tickets you could have a system where they phone up to register and you either take card payment (if you have the facility) or take payment on the door. It's important that there are a reasonable number of hours per day that someone will be available to take calls. People could also register by email but they would have to pay on the door. The limitation of this system is that many people will register without paying which will mean you cannot guarantee numbers. If people pay in advance they are much more likely to turn up!

STEP 13. PUBLICISE

For an event of this size, publicity should probably be released between 2 and 3 weeks before the event, although you would be well advised to let your church(es) know before this. Allow time for designing and printing of at least two weeks. Make sure you get the flyer designed by someone who is able to produce a professional standard of work. The quality of the flyer will indicate to the recipient the quality of the event they are attending. Examples and help with flyers are available on our website.

Make sure the flyer clearly states the date, time, location and price of the event. Make it clear what is included in the price. If there is a website or social media platform for the event make sure this is also included on the flyer. Be sure to communicate who is running the event.

Make sure the flyer is a true representation of the content of the event. This means do not advertise the event just as a fashion show if you also intend to include a 30 minute preaching slot. It is important to be honest with the public and let them know exactly what they are signing up for!

Places to distribute flyers/posters

- Door-to-door. Get a group from the church to post them in houses in the local area. Avoid doors that say “no junk mail”. Even though I’m sure you do not consider it to be “junk”, it’s important to respect their right to disagree!
- Ask local shops if they are willing to put a poster in their window or to keep some flyers by the till.
- Put flyers/posters up on community notice boards
- Ask local schools if you can put flyers in children’s folders for their parents.
- Send some to any local arts groups or colleges that teach art.
- Get local churches to put the event in their news bulletin and give out flyers. Encourage church members to bring friends to the event.

Other publicity

- Use the internet, it offers you free publicity! If you have access to any local/church websites make sure the event is listed there. Also upload the event to any online local community calendars you can find - your council probably hosts one and there may well be others too.
- Use social media, set up a Facebook group or get local tweeters tweeting about your event.
- Let the local press know. Write a short press release about what you will be doing (see Communications doc online). Send it to your local papers or local news websites. Within 24 hours of the event send another press release about how the event went and include pictures. This will help promote the positive work the church is doing in your community.
- Make sure you’ve registered your event properly so that it appears on *thebiggestbirthdaypartyever.com*. Don’t forget to make use of the t-shirts and publicity we will send you as part of your registration pack to make a real visible presence on the day.

STEP 14. ON THE DAY

Here’s a list of things to do on the day to ensure a smooth running event.

- Visit or call the venue early in the day to make sure they’ve remembered the event is happening!
- Contact hair and make up artists to ensure they have remembered too!
- Arrive at the venue around 3 hours (depending on the amount of set up required) before the event to set up PA, lighting, catwalk and decorations.
- Risk assess the venue using the form on our website.
- Make sure you have an efficient set up for verifying tickets as people arrive.
- Arrange to meet with models, volunteers and host for the night 2 hours before the event to talk through the schedule and answer any questions they might have.
- Give everyone a running order with exact timings and highlight the importance of sticking to them.
- Make sure you clearly communicate the follow up opportunities you have planned.
- At the end of the night be sure to thank the models, volunteers and the venue and ask for any feedback they are able to offer on how the event went.

How to share the meaning behind the party!

You’ll want to make sure that people don’t just go away having enjoyed the event but that they’ve also been challenged or intrigued about the Christian faith. However you choose to present the gospel, it must be short and informal and should not leave anyone feeling like they have been tricked into coming to be preached at! Here are a few ways you can share the meaning behind the party on the night.

1. Get the host to introduce the party with a little bit about why the event is taking place

Welcome to our fashion show brought to you by <insert church name(s) here>. We’re here tonight in celebration of the biggest birthday party ever – the birthday of the Worldwide church. We thought we’d celebrate with an ethical fashion show because we believe God is a creative God but that he also cares passionately for the poor and for the oppressed! We hope you enjoy the creative fashion we have on show this evening!

2. Use the recipe in your party pack to make a birthday cake. At the end of the evening give everyone a piece of the cake and explain to them that you are holding this event to celebrate The Biggest Birthday Party Ever – the birthday of the worldwide church.

3. Make use of your party bags to give people some fun stuff as well as The Biggest Birthday Party Ever booklet telling them a little bit more about why we have so much to celebrate.

Ideas to fill the party bag:

- A voucher from one of the clothes lines on show this evening.
- A compact mirror
- A fair trade chocolate bar
- Lovehearts
- The Biggest Birthday Party Ever gospel booklet

4. Invite a Christian musician with a heart for justice to come and perform. Ask them to share a little about the meaning and inspiration behind their songs and how their faith has encouraged them to be passionate about justice.

STEP 15. WRAP UP AND IMPLEMENT FOLLOW UP

It's important that this event fits into a wider context of mission. Therefore, get feedback from everyone involved about how they thought the event went. You could ask them to respond to three simple questions:

What did you like about the event?

What did you think could have been done better?

If we were to run the event again what changes would you suggest?

Also, ask them if they would like to leave their details so you can let them know about further events or when the band is next planning to be in the area. Have a plan in place for your next event so that you can build on the good work you've begun.

WHAT IF...?

I WANT TO HOLD THE EVENT OUTSIDE?

This could be great! Here are a few extra things to think about for an outdoor fashion show:

- Use our "council applications" resource to find out about booking outside space.
- What will you do if it rains? You may want to consider some sort of marquee to make sure you don't have to cancel in case of rain,
- PA – do you have the facility to provide music outside that is loud enough?
- Have an information table so people can come and find out more if they want to
- You will need lots of volunteers who are happy to chat with those who attend and passers by to make sure you make the most of the opportunities this event creates.

I NEED MORE IDEAS OF THINGS TO DO ON THE NIGHT?

Here are a few of our favourite ideas to really add something special to our fashion show.

Charity auction: These can be a great laugh as well as good money raisers. You could partner with a local charity shop to auction donated clothes. See how much you can get people to pay for second hand goods! Alternatively get local businesses to donate cool stuff which you can auction to raise money for a charity that promotes ethical trade.

Quiz: Do a quiz to see who's got the best knowledge when it comes to fashion. Include a few questions about ethical fashion just to keep everyone on their toes!

Design Competition: For a younger audience you could just get in some t-shirts(ethically sourced) and some pens and let them go crazy. Alternatively, if you have a local designer/boutique that would be interested in having a locally designed garment, people could enter a competition for a design to go on a t-shirt to be printed and sold for charity.

MORE ABOUT SHARE JESUS INTERNATIONAL



SJI is passionate about communicating the good news about Jesus in our ever-changing times. SJI's work covers three main areas:

1. Missional Leaders – leadership development has long been a focus for SJI. Over the past ten years, our leadership development programmes have seen in excess of one thousand young people trained to serve God in their communities. Find more details on the FRESH programme here
2. Missional Festivals – in 2008 we hosted London's first Pentecost Festival with over one hundred events, many of them free, in the heart of London. Since then the Festival has grown by collaborating with a wide range of organisations and churches. Now we are also training churches to run local festivals in their communities
3. Missional Churches – planting missional expressions of church locally, SJI is working to equip churches across the UK to be missionally focussed

For more information please visit our website: www.sharejesusinternational.com

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