

Your guide to a successful IN-PERSON BOOK FAIR

We love helping parishes bring our book fair to their communities. As a book fair administrator, you will be putting quality books and merchandise into the hands of the kids in your community. Best of all, you are strengthening their faith at the same time.

My name is **Loupio** and I am going to be your guide to this guide. You probably recognize me from my comic book series, *The Adventures of Loupio*. And now I'm the mascot for Ignatius Book Fairs! I'm going to show you what you need to do to make YOUR book fair successful. So, follow my lead and let's get started!



STEP ONE

- Choose the best company to provide everything you need to host a successful book fair – one that will support you every step of the way!

You've accomplished STEP ONE already. You have your dates set so read on to see how we can maximize your fair! Throughout this guide, you will find links in Orange to our beautiful **RESOURCES**, so make sure you click the links and check them out.

STEP TWO



Design Your Own Book Fair Experience.

As you prepare your fair, here are key practices that have worked well for us in running our own successful fairs.

1. Your community needs advance notice of the book fair schedule to plan their visit. Make sure to advertise often before, during and as your fair is getting ready to close.

Note about advanced notice to the community: a flyer should be shared the week before your Ignatius book fair opens letting your community know the opportunities for book purchases. Use [THIS LINK](#) to edit the backpack flyer with your organization's unique schedule.

2. We recommend keeping your book fair open one or more evenings and/or over the weekend. Consider hosting an evening event for your community to shop and enjoy a snack, a beverage and socialize, as they stroll the selections.

Consider being open all weekend, particularly around the Mass schedule. Consider how you could extend your advertising reach to include children and families in your community who may attend different parishes, non-religious schools or are homeschooled. Be creative with your events! Try to reach as many people as possible within your community.



STEP THREE



Create an online sign-up for volunteers.

Free services like [SIGN-UP GENIUS](#) work well. Ignatius Book Fairs will send nearly everything you'll need, except volunteers. So be sure to recruit help to make the lifting lighter! Volunteers can help you:

- Develop fun ideas to promote the fair within the parish
- Empty boxes and set up the fair
- Scan in boxes before the fair begins
- Bring in music to keep the space lively
- Clear and decorate the space
- Work the floor, suggesting books to children and parents
- Organize refreshments and treats for evening and weekend events
- Run a craft table to keep children occupied while parents shop
- Promote the fair on social media and in other outlets
- Run the check-out station
- Pack up and clean up



STEP FOUR



Determine the best room set-up for ease of browsing and sales.

We recommend that you arrange the tables away from the walls and set up in a space of at least 800 square feet.

We recommend you have 12-16 six-foot tables, or the equivalent, available for books and other items. The books will arrive sorted by category. Here's an example of how you might arrange your tables. (Smaller parishes will use the smaller number of tables while larger parishes will use the larger number.)

Early Reader: 1 table

Picture Books: 2-3 tables

Elementary books: 3 tables

Middle School books: 1-3 tables

Seasonal books: 1 table

Crafts and activities: 1 table

Comic Books: 1 table

Older Readers and Adults: 1 table

Toys and Trinkets: 1 table

Check-out station: 1-2 tables

If you are hosting events during your fair, you may need additional tables for snacks and beverages or spaces to entertain younger children while parents shop — for example, a table with **COLORING PAGES** pages and crayons.

As part of your set up box you will be receiving colorful tablecloths, table-top book stands, table category signs, and 5 posters to use as décor. These will arrive at the same time as your books.

Things you may need to supply: bags for purchases, a cashbox for cash sales, a sharpie marker, packing tape.

Join us for a live 3-part online workshop series for help with all aspects of hosting an amazing fair for your community.

STEP FIVE

- Make sure the book fair details (times/dates/location) are on all necessary calendars including the school and parish calendar.

Use our **ADVERTISING RESOURCES** for help with graphics.

STEP SIX

- Use social media and other marketing ideas to get the word out early and often.

In order for your community to know about the fair dates, times and location you will need to advertise early, before the fair, and daily during the fair. We recommend sending a Save the Date announcement 4-6 weeks before the fair and then advertising it weekly leading up to opening day. Use our graphics for your newsletters, or in your social media posts: **ADVERTISING RESOURCES**. During the fair, post pictures of what the fair looks like and what's available. Before the last sales day, remind your community of their last opportunity to shop and support your parish by stopping by the fair.

Ideas for where to advertise to get the word out:

- Parish bulletin
- Parish Calendar
- Parish email list
- Announcement from the pulpit

- Invitation to local parishes in the same diocese.
- School newsletter from the principal or book fair coordinator if you are associated with a school
- School paper
- School and parish websites, Facebook pages, Instagram account, X
- Library Flyers
- Announcements to Homeschoolers, Co-ops and other area schools
- Neighborhood paper



STEP SEVEN

Join our live workshop.

Watch for email invitations to our 3-part live workshop series featuring task-specific topics to keep you on pace as you plan your fair. We encourage you to invite your volunteer team to join. Part 1 takes place within 90 days of your fair, Part 2 happens around 60 days out, and the final workshop occurs during the month leading up to your event. Even if you cannot join us live, please do RSVP yes for the workshops so that you will receive the recording after they are over.



STEP EIGHT

Determine how you will decorate your fair.

It's important that your fair looks beautiful, fun and inviting. You will be receiving all of the basics to make your fair look great. Anything you do on top of what we provide is going to be a bonus for your community. One week before your fair begins, we will deliver:

- All the books and items for sale plus 2 payment devices
- Table category signs in clear acrylic frames
- 50 book stands
- Rectangular tablecloths in the colors of mint green, yellow and orange.
- 5 decorative posters

The rest is up to you! Think of seasonal themes, book themes, art from your younger parishioners, anything to make it uniquely yours.

STEP NINE



Get ready for delivery!

One week before your book fair begins, Ignatius Book Fairs will deliver your books and other materials. Depending on the size of your organization, you will receive 20-38 boxes.

Books will be sorted and packaged into boxes according to the categories corresponding to the table signs: Picture Books, Early Readers, Comic Books, Elementary Books, Middle School Books, Crafts and Activities, Older Readers and Adults, Seasonal Selections, as well as Toys and Trinkets. The category is listed on the packing slip (the 4x6 label) attached to the outside of each box. This is the same label you will use to scan in your inventory.

For easy set-up, first find the box marked Open First. This will contain your payment devices. Plug them in to charge them fully. Next, find the marketing box. Set up your tables, put the tablecloths on, set the category signs where you'd like those books to be set up, and put 2-3 book stands on each table. Third, log in to the payment device using your unique code and scan in the boxes. This will load your payment devices with the inventory you received. Fourth, sort your boxes and place them in front of the tables where those book categories will be set up. Fifth, unbox the books and arrange them on the tables. Have fun with this process. Remember to arrange the books for maximum viewing possibilities – bring the tables away from the walls and make sure the titles can be seen from each side of the table.

For instructions on how to use the features on the Point-of-Sale devices, click [HERE](#).

What to keep in mind: Advertising early and often is essential and is the #1 way to earn more rewards for your parish, and to have a fun and positive experience!

These 4 things will help make your fair more successful:

1. Within 14 days of your fair: Email a letter home to your families explaining the dates/times and purpose of the book fair.
2. Within 7 days of your fair: Email a link to our general flyer and a sneak peek flyer so families can start to preview what will be offered.
3. Ensure that you are open for a good block of time each day to allow your community ample time to come in, take a look around, and make some fantastic choices.
4. Share on your social media channels. Follow the sample advertising schedule below.

6 weeks before the fair

Use this graphic: **SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR BOOK FAIR** to make a social media post on all of your social media channels, put a post in the parish bulletin, and include the information in your weekly newsletter/email or on the bulletin board.

Sample wording: We are excited to announce that we are hosting an Ignatius Book Fair on: (include start and end dates of fair). Ignatius Book Fairs offers a variety of beautiful, fun, engaging books and activities that will be your children's favorites. Supporting the book fair with a purchase will help us purchase new books for our various groups and missions. Please mark the dates down! Online shopping is available too! Be sure to choose our parish from the drop-down menu so that your purchase counts towards rewards for St. Michael's. Free shipping to our office is available during the dates of the fair. Free shipping anywhere is available when your item total is over \$15.

5 weeks before the fair

Share [THIS VIDEO](#) on social media and include the link in a newsletter or email to parents.

Sample wording to accompany the video: Our book fair is in 5 weeks! We are excited to be partnering with Ignatius Book Fairs! Click [HERE](#) to create an account, link up with our parish so that St. Michael's receives the benefit from your purchase.

[HOW TO CREATE A PARENT ACCOUNT AND CONNECT YOUR PARISH](#)

4 weeks before the fair

Post another save the date informational post. Use [THIS GRAPHIC](#) to remind your community about the dates of the book fair.

3 weeks before the fair

Select a few titles from the website that you, your staff, or your parishioners are reading and let your community know that these books are available in person or on our website. Explain how all sales will benefit your organization.

2 weeks before the fair

Have the pastor send an invitation out to the community, letting them know of the opportunities to shop in person during the fair.

1 week before the fair

Find the marketing materials that arrived with your books and put some Sneak Peak flyers out in the narthex, or post inside the bulletin to remind families that the fair is almost here, and what they can expect to see during the fair.

The evening before the fair

Use [THIS GRAPHIC](#) to post on social media.

[HOW TO CREATE A PARENT ACCOUNT AND CONNECT YOUR PARISH](#)

[BENEFIT YOUR PARISH WITH EVERY ORDER](#)

First day of the fair

Kick off the first day of your book fair by introducing the [READING CHALLENGE](#) to your families.

2nd day of the book fair

Use [THIS GRAPHIC](#) to post on social media.

Sample wording: We are on day 2 of our book fair. Shopping is available in-person at these times [TIMES], in this location [LOCATION]. All purchases help us with our goal of getting new books for our parish. Free shipping to our parish is available during the fair dates for those who prefer to shop online. Use [THIS LINK](#) to place your order. When creating your account, be sure to select our parish as the one you'd like to support.

3rd day of the book fair

Social media post: Have you checked out our book fair? If you're unsure what books might be a good fit for your children or yourself, there are reading recommendations by age and grade level both on-site and online.

4th day of the book fair

Social media post: We took a peek at the numbers and these five titles have been the most popular with our parishioners so far. (Use the point-of-sale device, or your opinion of what has been selling best to let your community know which titles have been the most popular with customers).

5th day of the book fair

Social media post: An easy way to foster a love of reading is to model a love of reading in your home. Consider setting aside 20 minutes as a "Stop, Drop and Read" habit each day. Each member of the family stops what they are doing and reads independently, but in the same room. Or a parent can read to the children at the same time. Or, set aside 5-10 minutes in the morning before school for reading a daily devotion together. Or enjoy the next 2 pages in a family book. This can be incorporated as part of down time in the evening as the family is preparing for bed. When children are learning how to read, or learning how to be better readers themselves, it is so beneficial for the children to be read to, no matter how old they are. Independent reading allows them the opportunity to practice and strengthen their skills.

6th day of the book fair

Social media post: Tomorrow is the last day of our book fair and we want to thank everyone who stopped by! We are excited about adding new titles to our library and we are so grateful for your support through your purchases. If you have book recommendations for other parents, please share them below. We are excited to see what you have selected! (Ideally, the volunteer team of the book fair would respond to this post with a few titles they purchased—or are interested in purchasing—to help other parents choose).

7th day of the book fair

Today is the last day for the book fair. We are close to reaching our goal of being able to purchase new books for our parish. Your purchases earn us a percentage of the net sales back to spend on free books for our parish. It has been so fun to watch everyone come in and find a few new favorites as well as some classics. We appreciate you!



FINAL STEP



Have a wonderful Ignatius Book Fair!

Please reach out to your Book Fair Manager should any issue arise. We are here to cheer you on and give you advice and support along the way!

