

## Silent Auction basket ideas

### A couple of overall tips on basket auctions:

1. Keep them somewhat small for auctions - People are more likely to bid up a smaller basket - \$30 to \$50 or so - than to bid up a real expensive basket (worth hundreds). Or to bid on several baskets, instead of just one, which drives the prices up on all the baskets. Obviously there are exceptions, with really popular items (iPods, Gameboy, etc.) that will get high and heavy bids anyway.
2. Usually, knickknack things do not go well, or for what they are worth. Peoples' tastes in those kinds of things are very different. The exception to this may be something like Precious Moments or Disney, which have a bigger fan base and overall appeal and also a good resale value on a secondary market.
3. Keep with a theme (or a theme within a theme. If you go with a movie basket, maybe make it a certain kind of movie - i.e. kids movies, horror movies, etc.)
4. If you can put together a few items and then include a gift certificate (hairdresser, gym, grocery store, mall, etc.) you may be able to get the certificate or gift card donated and increase the value of the basket without adding extra expense.
5. Many of the things listed below can fit into many different baskets, be creative, keep your eyes peeled for ideas.
6. Shop end-of-season sales for the next Relay. Don't buy the junk, but the really nice stuff that may have been marked down. Shop sales in general, and keep your eyes out for bargains.
7. I don't usually cellophane-wrap my baskets. It looks pretty and makes an attractive package, but people are more likely to bid - and bid higher - on things they can see. A list won't do it. I do, however, also enclose a list.
8. A basket doesn't have to be a "basket" literally. It can be a tote or a tub, it can be a backpack or baby diaper bag, etc. My movie basket last year was a cardboard box covered in gold foil wrap with stills from movies I printed out on the sides and black and gold ribbon and black cardboard stars for accents.

A team can do a basket real easy without a lot of expense - pick a basket theme and then have everyone donate one item. Or if you have a lot of people participating, split into groups and make the basket with each person donating at least one item.

So here goes (these are just starter suggestions of items to include):

### **Food baskets:**

**Pizza basket:** For example, include a pizza stone, oven mitt, recipe book, fancy pizza cutter, parmesian cheese, any combination of pizza-related items.

**Spaghetti basket:** Noodles, cookbook, fancy sauce, Italian cookbooks, themed kitchen towels, plates, etc.

**Grilling basket:** Apron, grilling tools, grilling cookbook, mitt, seasoning mixes or marinades, chef's hat

**Slow-cooker basket:** Put in a slow cooker (crock-pot), cookbook, kitchen towels, utensils

**Sundae basket:** Put in an ice cream scoop, fancy ice cream bowls, a variety of toppings, sprinkles, cherries, etc.

### **Kids' baskets:**

**Baby baskets:** These are popular, but if you get too many of them in an auction, none of them will go for much. Include baby basics like outfits, diapers, wipes, baby blankets, homemade (crochet or knit) afghans, booties, bottles, diaper bag, toys, stuffed animals, CDs of lullabies, etc. You can also do a theme within a theme, such as baby's bath time, baby's bed time.

**Toy baskets:** Put together a theme - a Barbie basket, for example. Or whatever the popular toy theme may be for the year - we did a "Toy Story" basket one year when those toys were hot and it went for a lot of money. Include toys, games, coloring books, dolls or action figures, etc.

**Books:** Put together a basket of kids' books and pick an age group, i.e. preschoolers, little kids, young adult, sci-fi, Harry Potter, etc. You can include journals, bookmarks, etc.

**Game Boy or electronics baskets.** These are really popular, but expensive to put together unless you get items donated, but you can put in controllers, popular games (not close-outs), magazines, etc.

**Learning toys:** Pick an age group and include learning toys directed to that age group, including books, videos, electronics, workbooks, etc.

**Movies/videos:** Pick a theme. If Power Rangers are big, do some Power Ranger videos or DVDs. Disney is also good. Include popcorn, movie snacks, 3-D glasses (whether or not there's a 3-D movie included, they make a great visual), 2-liter bottles of soda (one caution, if your Relay is outdoors in the summer, chocolate candy may not be a great idea in really hot weather!)

**Back to School basket:** Backpack, pencils, pens, notebooks, folders, paper, glue, glue sticks, bookmarks, book covers, etc.

## Family baskets:

**Game night basket:** Include popular family games like Clue, Monopoly, Trivial Pursuit, Scrabble, Scene It, etc., but keep in mind ages - you may want to go for the kids' version of some games if you're aiming toward younger families. Include a brownie mix or microwave popcorn, popcorn bowls, ice cream bowls, anything that would tie in.

**Beach basket:** Beach blanket, games like horseshoes, badminton, etc., beach toys, sunglasses, umbrella, beach balls, sunscreen, cooler, etc.

**Movie basket:** Much the same as above, only family-type movies. Again, include movie snacks, microwave popcorn, even movie trivia games. I did an entire basket on "The Incredibles" when it came out on DVD that included the special edition of the movie, lithographs, a pin, some dolls, etc., that I'd ordered in advance from the Disney Store. Since some of this was only available with the preorder of the movie, not a lot of people had them and they couldn't just walk into a store and get them.

**Picnic basket:** Picnic blanket, picnic basket, plates (melamine or really nice disposable) utensils, cooler, freezer blocks, (wine if you're allowed by the site and going for an older audience), soda, simple outdoor games like frisbee, nerf football, etc.

## Adult baskets:

**Coffee basket:** A selection of gourmet coffees in sample sizes (i.e. Starbucks, Caribou, Harry & David, etc.) coffee mugs, coffee-themed towels, coffee scoop, coffee canister, coffee grinder - all kinds of stuff.

**Chocolate-lovers' basket:** Again keep in mind the weather/heat. A few gourmet chocolates or cocoa, any number of chocolate-related items, including towels, T-shirts, etc.

**Exercise basket:** Trial gym membership, towels, jump rope, small hand weights, fitness magazines, T-shirts, leg warmers, water bottles,

**Pampering basket:** Spa or massage gift certificate, scented candles, bath pillow, bath beads, luxury bath robe, lotions like Bath & Body works (trial size),

**Kitchen basket:** Based on a theme, i.e. sunflowers, roosters, Disney, patriotic, etc. Kitchen towels, candles, air fresheners, potholders, recipe cards, recipe box, sponges, cutting boards, fancy knives or utensils, spoon rests, refrigerator magnets

**Garden basket:** Works best if your Relay is early, even mid, summer. Garden tools, seeds, watering can, fertilizer, gardening gloves, kneeling pads, small plants or flowers, etc.

**Wedding basket:** Bride & Groom items like hats (Disney does some great ones, but I think they're only available in the parks), picture frames, handmade afghan with heart pattern, anything for the newlyweds, etc.

**Baking basket:** Cookie sheets, pie tins, cake pans, baking utensils, spatula, cooling racks, cookie mixes, cake or brownie mixes, frosting, sprinkles, hot pads, potholders, timers, cookbooks, etc.

**Relay or Awareness baskets:** Put together a breast cancer awareness basket or a basket of Relay for Life items like key chains, lanyards, blankets, handmade afghans (we had a pink ribbon quilt last year go for nearly \$100 - someone donated it to our team in memory of their aunt), hats, jewelry or charms, T-shirts, picture frames, water bottles, photo albums, etc.

**Music basket:** Gift certificate, portable CD player, music note notepads, music themed items such as jewelry, totes, pictures, frames, etc.

**Pet baskets:** I've seen some cat-themed baskets go for a lot of money. Not items FOR pets, but items for humans about pets. Totes with cats or dogs on them, books, coffee mugs, hats, jewelry, key chains, notebooks, pens, etc. Some stores, such as PetSmart, carry many different items for pet lovers, especially around Christmastime.

**Photo baskets:** Disposable cameras, gift certificates for processing, photo albums, picture frames, picture cubes, etc.

**Tool basket:** Maybe have a tool chest and a variety of tools or gadgets to go with it.

**Business baskets:** If you know someone who does Longaberger baskets who would donate a basket you could fill; Pampered Chef basket with assorted items; Mary Kay cosmetics; Tupperware; any number of home-based businesses that could put together a basket and also promote their business at the same time.

If you know some talented people who sell their stuff for a living, it's a nice perk for their business and makes money for your team.

### **Hobby/Craft baskets:**

**Scrapbooking:** Find a Creative Memories dealer and either have her or you put together a cute little basket of basic supplies, or pick up supplies at your local craft store. Include an album, some stickers, some ribbon, craft scissors, stencils, embellishments. Sometimes you can go with a theme (universal one like travel, back to school, Christmas, Halloween, etc.)

**Sports:** Favorite sports team stuff, game tickets, hats, T-shirts, sports equipment—Ducks or Beavers are really popular.

**Knitting/Crocheting:** Knitting is really popular right now. You can put in some basic pattern books, some yarn, needles or hooks, how-to books, kits, project totes, etc.

**Fishing:** If fishing is popular in your area, you can put together a tackle box, reels or poles, lures, fishing hat, cooler, etc. I'm not a fishing person, but I know there are tons of stuff you can find.

**Writing or letter writing basket:** Journal, stationery, pens, pencils, dictionary, thesaurus, stickers, sealing wax, etc.

**Sewing basket:** Include a sewing box with standard items (you can even buy some of these already stocked) books, patterns, gift certificate to sewing/craft store or for sewing lessons, thread, ribbon, buttons, etc.

If you or someone on your team is creative, they can put together something handmade and either make that the auctioned item or part of a basket. Last year, a handmade pink ribbon quilt we had donated to our team for the silent auction made a LOT of money, but it was gorgeous.

## **Holiday baskets:**

Christmas, Halloween, etc: Pick a theme within a theme, such as decorating, baking, angels, kitchen, party and pick items appropriately to go in the basket. For Christmas, specifically, you can focus on tree decorations and include some fancy ornaments, lights, star or angel to go on top, etc. For Halloween, you can focus on trick-or-treats and include a candy basket or bowl - maybe one that lights up or makes noise - fun size candy (it doesn't matter if it makes it to Halloween), things to light up outside your home, etc. There's also Easter, Fourth of July, you get the idea.