



# THE ACADEMY OF ARTS

P. O. Box 782 • Taylors, South Carolina 29687 • 864.268.9342

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*"Making the Bible Come Alive as Missionaries to America's Youth" since 1971*

## **How to Make a Drama Seminar Pay for Itself**

It has been the goal of The Academy of Arts from the beginning to have the Drama Seminar program pay for itself. In most schools or home school groups, this is already the case; that is, the Seminar generates enough income, so that *nothing* comes out of the school or group budget to pay for it. However, schools or groups that have had a Seminar and have had to *supplement* the income from school funds have been *pleased* to do so, because of the undeniable *benefits* to their students and to their school—spiritually, educationally, culturally and in public relations. They assure us that the Drama Seminar is a *bargain* at any price.

The following sections offer suggestions for helping you raise the money you need to host this *very valuable* ministry to your students and parents. You may use any or all these suggestions, depending on your circumstance.

## **Selling Tickets Produces More Income Than Taking an Offering**

You do *not* have to be a large school or group to generate enough income to pay for a Drama Seminar. Most schools or groups, no matter what the size, choose to *sell tickets* to the play rather than taking an offering. There are several reasons.

First, your school crowd is *not* always your church crowd and they may not be accustomed to giving in an offering. School crowds of 600 have been known to give an offering of *only* \$300. In fact, the average donation in this kind of situation amounts to a little over \$.50 per person.

Secondly, people are accustomed to buying a ticket for school functions (ball games, fall festivals, etc.), and they are certainly accustomed to buying tickets to go see a *play*. If you have a city auditorium and they present concerts and plays, the general public will pay \$25 - \$45 to attend.

Thirdly, people appreciate something more when they have to *pay* for it. Selling tickets to the play will not hurt your attendance but will actually increase the attendance.

Selling tickets actually attaches more *worth* to your production.

## **Good Attendance is the Key**

Our average crowd at a seminar performance is a little over 200. Such a crowd is usually made up of three-fourths adults and one-fourth children and based on that

Nicky Chavers, Founder and President  
Noah Stratton, Executive Director

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model, and based on selling adult tickets for \$10.00 and student tickets for \$5.00, your income from ticket sales will be as follows:

**200 in Attendance**

150 adults at \$10.00 each plus 50 students at \$5.00 each = \$1,750

**300 in Attendance**

225 Adults at \$10.00 each plus 75 students at \$5.00 each = \$2,625

**400 in Attendance**

300 Adults at \$10.00 each plus 100 students at \$5.00 each = \$3,500

Of course, you could sell tickets for more or less money than we are suggesting, so the numbers would change according to your price.

**A Ticket Sales Contest**

If your school or group has ever had a candy sale, a Christmas card sale or any other fundraiser, you know that the Elementary students always *outsell* the Jr/Sr High students. Their enthusiasm is almost unmatched, so we suggest that you *harness* this enthusiasm for the play. After all, they are not selling something to eat. They are getting people to come see a play with a very strong *spiritual message*. They are insuring you a crowd that will see the quality of students you have and the educational and spiritual philosophy you espouse. The seminar will be like a mini revival for your whole student body and will *unite* every age level around a common goal—the production of a *powerful drama* that is *true* and has *eternal value*. So, rather than send *actual tickets* home and taking a chance on losing them, send Ticket Order Forms home and let the students take *orders* for tickets and bring the names and the money back to school in an envelope, which the school provides. Hold the tickets at the door in the names of the patrons.

**The Patron Program**

Through the ages, *patrons* have always supported the arts. We would not have the music of Beethoven, Mozart and dozens of other *musicians* had it not been for their patrons—people of means who recognize the *value* of the arts to the general populace and who take it upon themselves to support those who can produce something of value. Many *visual artists* had patrons, and even today biologists, physicists other scientists rely heavily on *grants* from the government or from large foundations and even from some corporations, who stand to benefit from their research. On a smaller scale, you have people who *believe* in what your school or group is doing. A simple, *low-key* letter to this elite group, expressing appreciation for their past support, and explaining what the Drama Seminar is and why you want to have it, is all that is needed to get them involved. Invite them to participate on one of *three* levels: Gold Patron, Silver Patron or Bronze Patron.

### **Gold Patrons**

A Gold Patron is anyone who will give \$200 or more to help the school have the seminar. They receive free tickets for their immediate family, 5 additional tickets for guests and VIP seating, meaning they can come in at the very last minute and their “down front” seats will be reserved for them.

### **Silver Patrons**

A Silver Patron is anyone who will give at least \$100 to help the school have the seminar. They receive tickets for their immediate family, 3 additional tickets for guests and VIP seating.

### **Bronze Patrons**

A Bronze Patron is anyone who will give at least \$50 to help the school have the seminar. They receive free tickets for their immediate family.

All patron donations are *tax-deductible*. List the names of all patrons in your program as Gold, Silver or Bronze Patrons, but *do not* state how much they gave.

### **Sell Ads in the Program**

Look through your yearbook and obtain the names of businesses that bought ads. Send them a letter about the Drama Seminar and that you expect about 250 people there. Make up a little form, showing the size and cost of the ads and giving them a choice. Ask them to put up *posters* in their businesses, insuring a bigger crowd and thus giving *more exposure* for their ad. We had one school in Florida that paid for the entire Seminar with ads in the program, so that all the revenue of ticket sales went to the school! Also, parents love to do fun and encouraging things for their children. You could write up a small ad form that would allow parents to put ads in the playbill for a small fee that are personalized to their child. (EX. “Break a leg Emily! We love you – Mom and Dad” with a picture of “Emily beside it).

### **A Dinner Theatre Presentation**

Here is an example from a small school in Michigan. They advertised the dinner and the play with reserved seating for \$25 person. They told their patrons the dinner would consist of prime rib, baked potato, salad, rolls iced tea and desert, and that seating in their cafeteria was limited 125 people. They sold out very quickly. They assigned some mothers to do 125 baked potatoes, others to do the dinner rolls and others to do the salad with choices of dressings. The best part was the way they cooked the prime rib. They borrowed about 10 electric slow cookers from parents, plugged them in all over the building and let the huge hunks of prime rib cook almost *all day*. Then they had the patrons come through four lines, picking up their salad, their rolls and receive a healthy slice of beautifully cooked prime rib. Their iced tea and dessert was already on the table. After the dinner, (complete with pleasant dinner music and costumed characters

refilling their iced tea glasses) the patrons had time to freshen up, go to the restroom and then to the auditorium, where their *reserved seats* were waiting for them. The meal probably cost the school \$5.00 a person, so that their “profit” was almost \$3,000. They paid for the seminar “hands down,” their patrons had a wonderful evening, and the Seminar had its spiritual, cultural and educational impact and a lot of PR was spread around!

### **Conclusion**

There are probably many *other ways* to make a Seminar pay for itself. The common denominator is there is a benefit to *all* of those involved:

- (1) The benefit to the students is everything they will *learn*, which they could not learn any other way.
- (2) There is a benefit to the general public at the *performance*.
- (3) There is benefit to Patrons and they get *VIP treatment* and the satisfaction of helping the school or group.
- (4) The benefit to the businesses is the *promotion* of their business through ads in the program.
- (5) The benefit to your school or group is spiritual, educational, cultural and public relational.

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to call us. May God *bless* you and your efforts for the Lord and for your ministry there!

The Academy of Arts ~ PO Box 782, Taylors, SC 29687

*Office Phone: 864.268.9342 ext. 006*

**E-mail: [businessoffice@theAcademyofArts.org](mailto:businessoffice@theAcademyofArts.org)**