

THE ENRICHMENT PROJECT

Badge Program

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Science Center: Shop

A small shop can help offset the cost of materials used in the center. In addition, donations can help add a lot to your offerings.

SCIENCE CENTER: SHOP

Steps

1. Fundraising.

A shop can help offset costs. Before you decide to do this, look through the other steps of this badge program to determine what else you might provide that is unique to your Science Center.

2. Location.

Do you have a location for your shop? If you plan on putting it in a large entry room, be aware you'll have no control over sticky fingers. A contained room is a better idea. Near the entrance / exit is a great place.

3. Man the store.

Who will work in your store? The reason I ask is that while my girls were in elementary school, we did a Secret Santa shop each year. The first year, everyone put money in the box, pulled out change, etc. At the end, we realized over \$400 was missing. The second year, each shift had one person who controlled the money. It was checked twice a day to stop the sticky fingers from helping themselves. You need someone who is dependable and trustworthy.

4. Non-shop activities.

If you plan on having the shop handle all money activities, the person may be booking and collecting money for visitors or even checking out portable exhibits or experiments for a small fee. Be prepared with not only sheets (or even a piece of software or app) to track these activities separate from the shop. In addition, materials with information on policies, insurance, etc. can come in handy in an emergency.

STOCK THE SHELVES

5. Standard fare.

If you're planning on having a shop, you'll probably want standards like bottles of water or purchased books. Review online shops of a Science Center or two. What might you offer as "basics" in your shop?

6. Science surplus.

Buying items bulk for your shop will allow you to make more off each item. Check out surplus and bulk purchasing for your shop.

7. Rock candy and sun tea.

Let your experiments make items to sell. Be sure everyone can see your experiments. Rock candy and sun tea are easy experiments. What else might you make and sell?



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8. **Photo booth.**

Creating a photo booth with the theme of your museum can bring in a small amount as well. You can print-on-demand or send the images to an email address within a specified time frame.

You might want to do photos in locations other than a booth. Explore the possibilities.

9. **Paper toys.**

Paper toys that support your exhibits allow your participants to continue their experiences with you. This might be as simple as making paper airplanes and testing designs to board games and everything in between. Explore paper toys and games online. Can you adapt one for your Science Center? Can you create your own?

10. **Printables.**

Color sheets, postcards, bookmarks . . . there are a lot of printable materials that you can use to help stock your shop. Minibooks can feature information about your area or be used to identify animal tracks or local plants. All of these can also be used for your “little additions”. Start brainstorming possible printables.

11. **Local items.**

Check with local businesses, gardens, parks, etc. Do they print postcards or other items they'd be willing to donate to your shop? Not only will it bring in money for you, it will attract attention to local businesses and organizations.

12. **Screen my own t-shirts.**

Create a design for your Science Center and screen print a design on t-shirts, bandannas, etc.

13. **Crafted items.**

Check with local art galleries, craft clubs, craft stores and anywhere else you might find a crafter. Simple toys like hacky sacks or even household items like refrigerator magnets can be easily made. These would give your shop a local flavor while celebrating the crafters and artisans in your area. Brainstorm with others to determine what you and your friends might be able to make.

14. **Donated items.**

Perhaps a local restaurant wants to donate ice cream sandwiches. A beachcomber might have a collection of drift wood they no longer want. A rock hound may want to clean out some of their more usual rocks. People have an amazing array of hobbies that might benefit your Science Center.

15. **Beyond face value.**

If you receive a donation that's too large for the shop, look at what else you might do with it. A used popcorn machine would be something you could use for the shop. A quilt or free airplane ride would be better for a raffle. Check with the donor before raffling items to make sure they are okay with it.

16. **Low cost items.**

You'll want a lot of low cost items for kids with little money who want something. You might have cheap trinkets or even low-cost candy that you can easily buy in bulk.

17. **What else?**

Start with these ideas and continue brainstorming the ways you can add to your Science Center shop.



Sites to Explore

store.msichicago.org

www.sciencestore.com

www.sciplus.com

www.orientaltrading.com/teaching-supplies-and-stationery/curriculum-projects-and-activities/science-a1-551485-1.fltr

www.enasco.com/science

NOTE: Use science suppliers for ideas.

***Check out Larajla's Enrichment Project
to start your own adventure.***