

EVANGELISTIC BLOCK PARTY SUCCESS STORY

The evangelistic block party (EBP) strategy began only a few years ago. A California Southern Baptist church had participated in a secular block party in the nearby government housing project and saw the possibility of using this strategy to reach lost people, as well as help poor people.

At this church's first party, more than 250 people attended and more than 25 people received Christ. Everyone was fed a barbecue lunch, free clothing was distributed, and food was given away. The gospel was presented to everyone, and each person received a New Testament.

This church hosted another EBP at a crime-ridden public housing development nearby. It was well attended, and 75 to 100 people were saved. As a result, the church began to overflow with new Christians. The church instituted other types of evangelistic outreach and extensive follow-up. The prayer ministry began to increase tremendously.

A third EBP was held. Around 800 people attended and were fed a barbecue dinner. More than 200 people were converted, one ton of clothing was distributed, and thousands of pounds of food were given to poor people.

Thousands of people near the church were converted through intensive outreach efforts. In a two-year period, using marked New Testaments, door-to-door witness, and EBPs, 16,000 souls prayed to receive Christ!

Since that time evangelistic block parties have been held successfully throughout the United States. It is our prayer that this manual will encourage, equip, and motivate you to host your own EBP. At the EBP you will feed, clothe, and help people but always remember that without Christ, they have nothing. Give them Jesus. Witness in all you do. Make it your primary work.

WHAT IS AN EVANGELISTIC BLOCK PARTY?

Churches all over America are using the evangelistic block party (EBP) to introduce people to Christ. An EBP is part of the Special Evangelistic Event strategy of the North American Mission Board (NAMB). It involves identifying a neighborhood and providing a meal and program. In needier areas clothing is distributed. This creates a friendly climate for evangelism as trained witnesses share the gospel. The EBP has been used all over the United States as the perfect marriage between ministry and intentional evangelism.

The EBP is also part of the Total Church Life strategy for NAMB's Evangelization Group. It is designed to reach our nation for Christ through the total penetration of an area with the gospel. One neighborhood after another throughout our country can be identified and saturated with the gospel through EBPs. The EBP calls for the total participation of every member of your church in evangelism. It allows a large number of church members to be involved in evangelistic outreach.

Jesus hosted a type of block party when he fed 5,000 people. On another occasion He fed 4,000. These events did not take place in a church, synagogue, or temple. Jesus went to the hillside where people gathered. He proclaimed the Gospel and met their needs

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EVANGELISTIC BLOCK PARTY

The evangelistic block party is intimate.

Even though the evangelistic block party (EBP) is a mass evangelism event, its intimacy is enhanced by using a personal evangelism thrust. The church has too often cloistered itself behind institutional walls. EBPs provide churches with a ministry of presence and visibility as the church moves out of its building in Christ's name to feed, teach, clothe, and evangelize.

At most parties no "come forward" invitation is given, but at periodic times during the EBP a speaker will thank guests for coming and present a short testimony. He will also call attention to church members who are mingling among with the guests and giving them free marked New Testaments or evangelistic booklets. As trained witnesses distribute the Bibles or evangelistic booklets they explain the gospel. The EBP provides a non-threatening, intimate forum that can be used to enhance the sharing of the gospel.

The evangelistic block party is intentionally evangelistic.

Communicating the good news of Jesus Christ is the goal of every evangelistic block party. Evangelism should be the priority in planning any EBP. An EBP should include an interesting program, but entertainment is not the main point. It should include food, but feeding a crowd is not the ultimate outcome. Every element of the EBP should focus on people hearing the gospel and praying to receive Christ.

Block parties discussed in this manual are evangelistic harvest events. People who will be at your EBP will be at different stages in their spiritual understanding. Some will have no knowledge of God. Others will have a hazy awareness of a Supreme Being. Many, however, will be interested in hearing about Christ. Some will be ready to receive Him. EBPs provide a way to share Christ with those who are ready and to cultivate those who are further away from Christ.

The evangelistic block party is informal.

The outdoor get-together, the meal, and the friendly program personalities create a relaxed atmosphere of acceptance, so keep it informal!

The evangelistic block party is interesting.

It is important that you organize your party to be interesting and relevant. Include activities that keep the event moving. Give away clothes, serve food, and distribute

Scripture portions or witnessing booklets. A good sound system will enhance the appeal of the event. Play lively music the entire time. Talented people may be scheduled to sing or present other skillful entertainment. Choirs, talks, or clinics by famous athletes, puppeteers, or special groups may be used. Remember that people will be moving around constantly; entertainers should not expect exclusive attention during their presentations. Sometimes people are invited to share brief testimonies. Sermons are not usually included, but if a message is shared it should be short and simple and presented with enthusiasm. Keep the focus on Jesus and His great love for all people.

Planning a program that reflects the makeup of the neighborhood will create additional interest. For example, a predominately Hispanic neighborhood with many young children will certainly require a different type of program than one in an Anglo suburban area made up mostly of senior citizens. Plan your music, meal, activities, program, and evangelism strategy with the ages, education, and ethnic and socioeconomic makeup of the participants in mind.

To increase interest and involvement the EBP is best conducted locally. Your own church members should staff the EBP, prepare the meal, and most especially, provide those who will witness during the party. What if the scope of your EBP is so large that you cannot effectively do it alone? Involve another church in your planning and implementations, but involve as few churches as possible to make the job of assimilating these new persons into local churches easier. An inner-city church is an ideal location to do EBPs, but they may lack the resources to sponsor one on their own. It can team up with a suburban church that can provide the resources of money and personnel to distribute clothing and meals. This will free members of the inner-city church to witness during the block party.

The location of the EBP should be within your church's field of ministry. An empty lot in the neighborhood, an apartment clubhouse, or your church property are effective sites. The primary audience to invite to the party is local residents, not transients or tourists. Inviting local residents allows for good follow-up.

The evangelistic block party is imaginative.

Imaginative variations on the basic EBP theme have been tried in various parts of the United States. Following are some short descriptions of other types of evangelistic block parties.

VARIATIONS OF THE EVANGELISTIC BLOCK PARTY

Neighborhood Pasta Party

Christians in Boston have hosted a New England potluck supper. They prepare pasta for their entire subdivision. Neighbors are invited to bring their favorite sauces. This creates interest and involvement. As acquaintances become friends, the gospel can be shared more effectively.

Neighborhood Watch Block Parties

Recent surveys show Americans believe that crime is the major issue affecting our nation. Some churches have adopted as their community ministry ways to help neighborhoods, subdivisions, apartments, and mobile home communities set up neighborhood watch programs.

Your church should work with local law enforcement. Most police or sheriff's departments will be glad that a church would want to do this. Also, an apartment manager or homeowners association president would most likely appreciate a church helping with promotion of a neighborhood watch meeting.

The church should provide the site. The church building, if close enough, is an excellent place to meet. This will familiarize attendees with your church facilities in a nonthreatening atmosphere.

Additionally, your church should provide a meal. The pastor should welcome all participants and invite those present to future services. Introduce law enforcement personalities to present their program. Obtain names and addresses of all participants in the meeting. This can be accomplished through the use of a registration table as people arrive. After the meeting, give each attendee a witnessing booklet or marked New Testament and information about your church. Share the gospel with those who show interest and follow up with the neighborhood periodically, addressing any problems or issues that come up during the meeting.

The Neighborhood Super Bowl Party

You can use the Super Bowl as an opportunity to share the gospel. The Super Bowl is an event that friends frequently gather to watch together. This event has grown in popularity since it began in the 1980s. Invite neighbors to a Super Bowl Party. The party can be held in a home, at the church, or in a nearby gym. You may want to rent a big screen TV. The Super Bowl is viewed in a group setting. During commercials the pastor,

a well-known athlete, or another special speaker shares his or her testimony. You could show special evangelistic videos during half time. This event has grown in popularity since it began in the 1980s. Many people have come to Christ through this type of event.

Children's Block Parties

One church in Florida had a block party especially for children. They enlisted an ice cream truck to drive around the targeted neighborhood, passing out free tickets to be redeemed for free ice cream at the block party. This attraction brought children and their whole families to the EBP. Another large Florida church rented an entire carnival and provided bus transportation for 2,000 people from nearby neighborhoods and apartment complexes.

Simultaneous Block Parties for Children

Some churches have a type of simultaneous EBP for children in subdivisions, mobile home communities, and apartment complexes. Use Backyard Bible Club (BBC) teaching materials and music available from LifeWay Christian Resources (LifeWay).

The clubs should meet simultaneously. BBC material is supplemented with arts, crafts, and refreshments at each club. Clubs can meet from Monday through Friday, from 9:45 a.m. (or whatever time your Sunday School begins; this time is significant, as you will see) until 12:15 p.m. Clubs can meet in the evening, if necessary.

Make sure that the gospel is shared effectively with children who attend the BBC. Use the "God's Special Plan" witnessing booklet for older children.

Commencement is held on Friday or Saturday evening. Have a special attraction that will draw children and their parents from the neighborhood clubs to the church commencement. Some churches rent a space walk, serve milk shakes, plan pony rides, or sponsor other activities of interest to children. It is important that you get the names of each person who attends, since some children and parents will attend who did not go to the BBC.

A 15-minute presentation can be held during Commencement to recognize each club. At the presentation, announce that you have a time like BBC at the church each Sunday at 9:45 a.m. (or whatever time your Sunday School begins), and invite the kids and parents to participate. Allow all the clubs to sing the music they have learned during the week. Give award diplomas to each child. Each club should set up table to "show off" each child's Bible-learned projects. After the commencement give the children their projects to take home. Most parents, even those from unchurched families, will come to

see their children at the church. The children will be proud of their projects and what they have learned. They will want to meet the children from the other clubs.

A few children from the clubs will not be able to attend the commencement. Give their projects to an outreach team to deliver to the child during your regular evangelistic visitation. The projects will provide a wonderful reason to visit and share the gospel.

Citywide Block Party

Some large churches that are located in smaller communities sponsor citywide EBPs which are designed to introduce people who attend to Jesus. Your church may rent a local city athletic field and provide a meal for the whole community. Set up a large sound system and feature popular Christian musical groups throughout the day. Church members can serve up food, create fun, and make music while they share the gospel. The receptivity of city residents to the gospel is often greatly enhanced by the party.

Sports Block Parties

Sports are an excellent attraction for many to come to a block party. Many people would come to hear a well-known Christian athlete speak, give a demonstration, or lead a sports clinic. The atmosphere of fun created by adding a sports strategy to your EBP will increase the receptivity participants.

SHOULD YOU HOST AN EVANGELISTIC BLOCK PARTY?

Evangelistic block parties can be conducted with all types of cultural groups in many different locations. It is unlikely that your EBP will contain every element of the following list. However, at least two or three of the following elements should be present to ensure the success of your event:

Ethnicity

In many ethnic cultures the outdoor market is a cultural meeting places. For some reason, Anglos go indoors to party!

Lower Socioeconomic Level

Evangelistic block parties tend to work better in lower socioeconomic areas. This may be because the meal and clothes distribution are more of an attraction to the needy. Block parties are tremendously effective in evangelizing poorer areas of our country. Find ways to continue ministry to these poorer areas.

Identifiable Neighborhood

Another indicator of an effective block party is neighborhood identity. A well-defined neighborhood gives your church the opportunity to concentrate its promotion, resources, and attention on reaching a particular community for Christ. It also provides the opportunity to custom-make promotional items to enhance neighborhood participation.

Children

Children are attracted to evangelistic block parties and are often receptive to the gospel. They become bridges across which the gospel can be shared with parents and other adults.

CONDUCTING AN EVANGELISTIC BLOCK PARTY

The Priority of Preparation

“Organize to evangelize” should be your motto as you plan. Preparation will determine the evangelistic success of the evangelistic block party. Preparation will ensure that the team doing the major portion of the work and leaders will have a good experience sharing their faith. The good experiences that preparation provides can make this event a strategy of your church for years to come.

Whatever location is selected for the event, necessary requirements, authorization, and procedures should be carefully considered. Sometimes you need to get permission and secure permits before events can be scheduled. Some places may require you to pay fees to secure the use of their facilities. Allow adequate lead time to ensure good calendar coordination. Consider safety and accessibility when selecting the place to conduct the event.

When using a street for the evangelistic block party, inform residents beforehand. Use proper signs and equipment for blocking off the street.

Plan for rest room accommodations and provide adequate direction signs. Clearly designate parking areas. Greeters should meet people in the parking area and direct them to the event location.

Give careful and thorough attention to the focus group. Consider the ethnic mix of the group. Anticipate special characteristics, including language needs, food selection, publicity, announcements, and cultural music styles for greater appeal. Leave nothing to chance.

Enlist, train, and coordinate a sufficient number of workers to conduct the block party. The number of workers needed to adequately staff the event will be determined by the number of people you expect to reach and the number of ministry actions included in the event. If the goal is to share with 100 people, everything should be planned with that number as a guide.

The Priority of Prayer

This is the most important thing you will do in preparations for an evangelistic block party. You are entering enemy territory when you seek the lost. Satan will try to

discourage and disrupt everything you do. Feed, clothe, help, and comfort a person and Satan will not bother you. But share the gospel of Jesus Christ and Satan will block you and oppose you from every corner. Prayer is necessary to pull down the strongholds of the Evil One. Through prayer the Holy Spirit is given control of our every effort. Prayer will give those witnessing at the EBP strength and confidence. Prayer is also a recognition of dependence upon God, who alone is able to bring the lost to salvation.

The local church should present the plans for the evangelistic block party in a prayer meeting with the entire congregation. The church should agree to reach out in this way. An EBP is not a special group activity. It should be a total church activity. Involve every member in this work, including praying for and encouraging workers. Pray also at this meeting that the right people will be chosen to assist the pastor in the EBP's leadership.

After approval by the church, praying for the EBP should be a priority at every church meeting. Each EBP planning session should also include a special prayer time. Conduct a special prayer meeting the night before your EBP. This should involve the entire church. Pray for witnesses and workers who will serve in each capacity. Pray for good weather and God's protection of everyone involved. Pray that the Holy Spirit will be in control of all that happens. Most special prayer meetings last about an hour.

Some churches have an all-night prayer meeting for special EBPs. Start your prayer meetings at 7:14 p.m. to emphasize 2 Chronicles 7:14 (KJV): "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Immediately following the EBP gather the workers and have a short victory prayer meeting and testimony time. Include prayers of thanksgiving for what the Lord did. Let some of the witnesses and workers share blessings that God gave during the day. These testimonies should be short and positive.

Do not plan an evangelistic block party unless you are sure that God wants this kind of outreach to be done. You will certainly need His power and blessing to bring it about successfully. Pray!

The Priority of Personnel

Selecting the leaders and workers is vitally important to the success of your evangelistic block party. Enlist responsible people.

Pastor

The pastor should be the leader of all the planning and implementation of an evangelistic block party. Everyone selected to head a work assignment or to work in a group must meet his approval. He should be an ex officio member of all groups, teams, and committees. If you ask outside help to assist you in conducting an EBP, the pastor should be the head of their work and planning also. He has the total responsibility for this effort. Since he is the overseer of the church, he must see that all is done scripturally and properly. Also assign leadership responsibilities to the minister of evangelism, church Evangelism Council, and/or Missions Development Council.

Food and Clothing Coordinator

One person shall be chosen as food and clothing coordinator. This person should work with the pastor to see that all the details of the food and clothing aspects of the evangelistic block party are carried out efficiently. He or she will be in charge of gathering food, cooking, and serving. The cooking facilities, utensils, serving tables, and cleanup will be this coordinator's responsibility. This coordinator will be in charge of planning an efficient method of serving food to those who attend the EBP and distributing food and clothing. These tasks may be divided between two coordinators—one in charge of food and the other in charge of the clothing distribution.

The food and clothing coordinator should select and train a team to be in charge of serving the food. Kind and courteous workers should present the food in a pleasing and appetizing manner. Have workers serve the meal at the EBP instead of distributing it in a self-serve, buffet style. This will ensure cleanliness and fair portions for all. If bags of nonperishable food are to be distributed at the end of the party, enlist volunteers to prepare a bag of food to give to each person who attends.

The coordinator should also secure a good place to prepare the food with proper stoves and pans to cook in. An outdoor barbecue is the most popular EBP meal. Barbecue can be done indoors in an oven but is easiest and best done outside on a grill. In many towns large grills on trailers can be rented. If large grills are not available, several small grills will work as well. Few churches have large commercial-size pots and pans, so rent or borrow them from restaurants and larger churches.

Sometimes supermarkets and wholesalers give discounts when informed of the EBP strategy. If food is bought earlier than the day of the EBP make sure you have proper refrigeration.

Food for giveaway can sometimes be secured without charge. Ask for donations from church members, local supermarkets, wholesale grocers, the Salvation Army, and

local gospel missions. Bakeries may give you their day-old bread and pastries. Include in your plans an appropriate recognition of all contributors.

The coordinator will also select a team to be in charge of clothing distribution. This team should possess qualities of cleanliness, orderliness, and organization. Kindness, courtesy, gentleness, understanding, and firmness are additional attributes that team members should possess.

Secure clothing from the Salvation Army or gospel missions in your hometown. Your church members can also provide clothing.

The coordinator should schedule as many meetings as are necessary to ensure that materials and food are located early enough to avoid stress. Begin well in advance to work at a steady and pleasant pace to ensure that food and clothing are available two weeks before the block party. Gather clothing before the event. Accept only clean clothing in good condition. Separate the clothing into six groups—men, women, boys, girls, preschool, and babies. Arrange the clothing attractively on hangers or folding tables. Provide adequate room for needy people to “shop” and look over the clothing.

Finally, the coordinator should work with the pastor to appoint a group to be in charge of setting up for the party and cleaning up afterward. This team should also assist in parking and security matters, if necessary. Set up clothing and food tables and set out trashcans in the shade, if possible. Put up tarps or tents if there is very little shade.

Program Leader

A second person will be chosen as the program leader. This person will work closely with the pastor to invite music groups, puppet groups, clowns, speakers, or other people to lead the program at the block party. Be creative and think big as you plan the program.

The program should be appropriate for the people you want to reach. Music, for example, can include black gospel, contemporary Christian, or Hispanic Christian mariachi-type music, depending on the audience that will be present. Music can be a problem at an evangelistic block party. Many Christian workers prefer only one kind—their kind. Educate workers about unfamiliar music that will be used to reach the chosen group.

Taped background music can also be effective. It can be very effective to have a person act as a disc jockey. A microphone should be available for announcements and an informal gospel message.

Promotion Director

Select a promotion director. This person will be in charge of getting the word out about the evangelistic block party. Print attractive publicity flyers. If people of different ethnicities are present in the neighborhood you have chosen for the EBP, print flyers in their languages. Enlist a task force to distribute the flyers door-to-door no sooner than three days before the block party. Cover the area you want to reach. Door-to-door flyers, signs in front of the church, and posters in neighborhood stores also work well. Hang posters a week before the block party.

Witnessing Team Leader

A witnessing team leader is the fourth leader that the church should appoint. Select a person who is motivated, capable, and experienced in soul winning. The pastor may choose to head the witnessing team. The witnessing team leader will enlist witnesses, train them, and help secure witness materials. If there is no one in your church to handle this job, secure an experienced person from outside your church to fill this important position.

Additional Personnel

Enlist additional personnel for special needs. Enlist a sound technician to set up and operate the sound system. Enlist an emcee to introduce entertainment, gift recipients, and make any necessary announcements. Enlist an activities coordinator to plan and conduct games for youth and children, if possible. Avoid activities that may result in injuries.

Every person staffing the evangelistic block party should be a greeter. Greeters can give directions and information. They can give a balloon to each child attending; balloons are inexpensive and a delight to children. Do not give balloons to children under five years of age. There could also be a drawing for children's toys. Have all workers wear a nametag identifying themselves as greeters.

Summary

The basic evangelistic block party should include the following personnel: the pastor, food and clothing coordinator, program leader, promotion director, and

witnessing team leader. Use about six people for the cooking team. Enlist four people to prepare food tables and serve. Use four people to maintain the clothing tables. A team of at least four should set up, take care of the garbage, clean up after the EBP, and provide security during the EBP. Recruit an emcee, a sound technician, and an activities coordinator. Most important, secure a team of 20 trained witnesses to share one-on-one. Everyone should serve as greeters.

Enlist a team of around 46 people to staff a basic evangelistic block party. Some churches are able to do effective parties with fewer personnel. However, the above personnel plan is ideal and should be adhered to as closely as possible.

PASTOR/BLOCK PARTY COORDINATOR

The pastor should be the leader of all the planning and implementation of an evangelistic block party. Everyone selected to head a work assignment or to work in a group must meet his approval. He should be an ex officio member of all groups, teams, and committees. If you ask outside help to assist you in conducting an EBP, the pastor should be the head of their work and planning also. He has the total responsibility for this effort. Since he is the overseer of the church, he must see that all is done scripturally and properly. Also assign leadership responsibilities to the minister of evangelism, church Evangelism Council, and/or Missions Development Council.

Initial Training Session

At the initial training session, perhaps two months before the block party, inform volunteers of their duties and give them job descriptions. Duties of each position are listed under *The Priority of Personnel* in the chapter entitled “Conducting an Evangelistic Block Party.” This meeting should be an organizational meeting as well as an instructional one. The pastor should meet with all the volunteers.

At this session goals and a calendar of meetings and deadlines for securing materials should be determined. See the planning sheet for a suggested calendar of a basic evangelistic block party. Other planning meetings should be convened whenever necessary.

Planning Sheet for Your Evangelistic Block Party

	STEP	WHAT	WHO	WHEN	WHERE
	1	Prayer meeting to present block party proposal to church.	Pastor	6-12 mos.	
	2	Enlist block party leaders	Pastor/church	6-12 mos.	
	3	Secure block party site (and permits if necessary)	Person assigned	6 mos.	
	4	Enlist block party committees	Pastor/block party leaders	6 mos.	
	5	Initial training session	Pastor/others assigned	6 mos.	

	STEP	WHAT	WHO	WHEN	WHERE
	6	Start collecting clothing and food for giveaway bags	Food/Clothing Coordinator	6 mos.	
	7	Secure outside program personalities, musicians, speakers, and children's performers if necessary	Pastor/program leader	6 mos.	
	8	Arrange for equipment, decorations, menu, and other inventory items	Committees assigned	3 months	
	9	Order witnessing, counseling and follow-up materials	Witnessing team leader	3 months	
	10	Make hospitality arrangements (motel, meals, etc.) for outside program personalities if necessary	Program leader	2 months	
	11	Print publicity flyers, registration cards, and make posters	Promotion director	2 months	
	12	Place ads in newspaper (and on radio and T.V., if necessary)	Promotion director	6 weeks	
	13	Promote prayer in services, committee meetings, and organizations	Pastor and persons assigned	6 weeks	
	14	Begin promotion of EBP in church newsletter and bulletin	Promotion director	4 weeks	
	15	Witness training session	Pastor and witnessing team leader	4 weeks	
	16	Distribute flyers, hang posters	Promotion director	1 week	
	17	Reconfirm all arrangements, permits hospitality, food, clothing worker, and workers	Pastor and committees assigned	1 week	
	18	Pick up outside program personalities	Program leader	1 day before	
	19	Final physical arrangements	Committees assigned	Event day	
	20	Clean-up	Committees assigned	Event day	
	21	Begin follow up with new	Witness team	Immediately	

	STEP	WHAT	WHO	WHEN	WHERE
		converts	and trained witnesses		
	22	Visit and contact all prospects	Witness team leader and trained witnesses	Immediately	

TIMELINE

Planning Sheet for Your Evangelistic Block Party

	STEP No.	WHAT	WHO	WHEN	WHERE
	1	Prayer meeting to present block party proposal to church.	Pastor	6-12 mos.	
	2	Enlist block party leaders	Pastor/church	6-12 mos.	
	3	Secure block party site (and permits if necessary)	Person assigned	6 mos.	
	4	Enlist block party committees	Pastor/block party leaders	6 mos.	
	5	Initial training session	Pastor/others assigned	6 mos.	
	6	Start collecting clothing and food for giveaway bags	Food/Clothing Coordinator	6 mos.	
	7	Secure outside program personalities, musicians, speakers, and children's performers if necessary	Pastor/program leader	6 mos.	
	8	Arrange for equipment, decorations, menu, and other inventory items	Committees assigned	3 mos.	
	9	Order witnessing, counseling and follow-up materials	Witnessing team leader	3 mos.	
	10	Make hospitality arrangements (motel, meals, etc.) for outside program personalities if necessary	Program leader	2 mos.	
	11	Print publicity flyers, registration cards, and make posters	Promotion director	2 mos.	
	12	Place ads in newspaper (and on radio and T.V., if necessary)	Promotion director	6 wks.	
	13	Promote prayer in services, committee meetings, and organizations	Pastor and persons assigned	6 wks.	
	14	Begin promotion of EBP in church newsletter and bulletin	Promotion director	4 wks.	
	15	Witness training session	Pastor and witnessing team	4 wks.	

	STEP No.	WHAT	WHO	WHEN	WHERE
			leader		
	16	Distribute flyers, hang posters	Promotion director	1 wk.	
	17	Reconfirm all arrangements, permits hospitality, food, clothing worker, and workers	Pastor and committees assigned	1 wk.	
	18	Pick up outside program personalities	Program leader	1 day.	
	19	Final physical arrangements	Committees assigned	Event day	
	20	Clean-up	Committees assigned	Event day	
	21	Begin follow up with new converts	Witness team and trained witnesses	Immediately	
	22	Visit and contact all prospects	Witness team leader and trained witnesses	Immediately	

PRAYER TEAM LEADER

This is the most important thing you will do in preparation for an evangelistic block party. You are entering enemy territory when you seek the lost. Satan will try to discourage and disrupt everything you do. Feed, clothe, help, and comfort a person and Satan will not bother you. But share the gospel of Jesus Christ and Satan will block you and oppose you from every corner. Prayer is necessary to pull down the strongholds of the Evil One. Through prayer the Holy Spirit is given control of our every effort. Prayer will give those witnessing at the EBP strength and confidence. Prayer is also a recognition of dependence upon God, who alone is able to bring the lost to salvation.

The local church should present the plans for the evangelistic block party in a prayer meeting with the entire congregation. The church should agree to reach out in this way. An EBP is not a special group activity. It should be a total church activity. Involve every member in this work, including praying for and encouraging workers. Pray also at this meeting that the right people will be chosen to assist the pastor in the EBP's leadership.

After approval by the church, praying for the EBP should be a priority at every church meeting. Each EBP planning session should also include a special prayer time. Conduct a special prayer meeting the night before your EBP. This should involve the entire church. Pray for witnesses and workers who will serve in each capacity. Pray for good weather and God's protection of everyone involved. Pray that the Holy Spirit will be in control of all that happens. Most special prayer meetings last about an hour.

Some churches have an all-night prayer meeting for special EBPs. Start your prayer meetings at 7:14 p.m. to emphasize 2 Chronicles 7:14 (KJV): "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Immediately following the EBP gather the workers and have a short victory prayer meeting and testimony time. Include prayers of thanksgiving for what the Lord did. Let some of the witnesses and workers share blessings that God gave during the day. These testimonies should be short and positive.

Do not plan an evangelistic block party unless you are sure that God wants this kind of outreach to be done. You will certainly need His power and blessing to bring it about successfully. Pray!

PRAYER GUIDE

This is the most important thing you will do in preparation for an evangelistic block party. You are entering enemy territory when you seek the lost. Satan will try to discourage and disrupt everything you do. Feed, clothe, help, and comfort a person and Satan will not bother you. But share the gospel of Jesus Christ and Satan will block you and oppose you from every corner. Prayer is necessary to pull down the strongholds of the Evil One. Through prayer the Holy Spirit is given control of our every effort. Prayer will give those witnessing at the EBP strength and confidence. Prayer is also a recognition of dependence upon God, who alone is able to bring the lost to salvation.

The local church should present the plans for the evangelistic block party in a prayer meeting with the entire congregation. The church should agree to reach out in this way. An EBP is not a special group activity. It should be a total church activity. Involve every member in this work, including praying for and encouraging workers. Pray also at this meeting that the right people will be chosen to assist the pastor in the EBP's leadership.

After approval by the church, praying for the EBP should be a priority at every church meeting. Each EBP planning session should also include a special prayer time. Conduct a special prayer meeting the night before your EBP. This should involve the entire church. Pray for witnesses and workers who will serve in each capacity. Pray for good weather and God's protection of everyone involved. Pray that the Holy Spirit will be in control of all that happens. Most special prayer meetings last about an hour.

Some churches have an all-night prayer meeting for special EBPs. Start your prayer meetings at 7:14 p.m. to emphasize 2 Chronicles 7:14 (KJV): "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Immediately following the EBP gather the workers and have a short victory prayer meeting and testimony time. Include prayers of thanksgiving for what the Lord did. Let some of the witnesses and workers share blessings that God gave during the day. These testimonies should be short and positive.

Do not plan an evangelistic block party unless you are sure that God wants this kind of outreach to be done. You will certainly need His power and blessing to bring it about successfully. Pray!

FOOD (CLOTHING) COORDINATOR

One person should be chosen as food (clothing) coordinator. This person will work with the pastor to see that all the details of the food and clothing aspects of the evangelistic block party are carried out efficiently. He or she will be in charge of gathering food, cooking, serving, and cleaning up afterward. The cooking facilities, utensils, serving tables, and cleanup will be this coordinator's responsibility. This coordinator will be in charge of planning an efficient method of serving food to those who attend the EBP and distributing food and clothing. These tasks may be divided between two coordinators—one in charge of food and the other in charge of the clothing distribution.

The food and clothing coordinator will select and train a team to be in charge of serving the food. Kind and courteous workers should present the food in a pleasing and appetizing manner. Have workers serve the meal at the EBP instead of distributing it a self-serve, buffet style. This will ensure cleanliness and fair portions for all. If bags of nonperishable food are to be distributed at the end of the party, enlist volunteers to prepare a bag of food to give to each person who attends.

The coordinator should also secure a good place to prepare the food with proper stoves and pans to cook in. An outdoor barbecue is the most popular EBP meal. Barbecue can be done indoors in an oven but is easiest and best done outside in a grill. In many towns large grills on trailers can be rented. If large grills are not available, several small grills will work as well. Few churches have large commercial-size pots and pans, so rent or borrow them from restaurants and larger churches.

Sometimes supermarkets and wholesalers give discounts when informed of the EBP strategy. If food is bought earlier than the day of the EBP make sure you have proper refrigeration.

Food for giveaway can sometimes be secured without charge. Ask for donations from church members, local supermarkets, wholesale grocers, the Salvation Army, and local gospel missions. Bakeries may give you their day-old bread and pastries. Include in your plans an appropriate recognition of all contributors.

The coordinator will also select a team to be in charge of clothing distribution. This team should possess qualities of cleanliness, orderliness, and organization. Kindness, courtesy, gentleness, understanding, and firmness are additional attributes that team members should possess.

Secure clothing from the Salvation Army or gospel missions in your hometown. Your church members can also provide clothing.

The coordinator should schedule as many meetings as are necessary to ensure that materials and food are located early enough to avoid stress. Begin well in advance to work at a steady and pleasant pace to ensure that food and clothing are available two weeks before the block party. Gather clothing before the event. Accept only clean clothing in good condition. Separate the clothing into six groups—men, women, boys, girls, preschool, and babies. Arrange the clothing attractively on hangers or folding tables. Provide adequate room for needy people to "shop" and look over the clothing.

Finally, the coordinator should work with the pastor to appoint a group to be in charge of setting up for the party and cleaning up afterward. This team should also assist in parking and security matters, if necessary. Set up clothing and food tables and set out trashcans in the shade, if possible. Put up tarps or tents if there is very little shade.

A food and clothing coordinator should stock the following for an EBP involving an expected 500 people.

Nonfood Items

- 200 marked New Testaments
- 200 witnessing booklets
- White paper tablecloths enough to cover every table
- One box plastic food handling gloves
- 60 pounds charcoal briquettes
- Lighter fuel
- 500 paper plates
- 500 napkins
- 500 plastic cups (hot and cold type)
- 500 forks, spoons, and knives
- Large plastic garbage bags
- Two rolls of paper towels
- Two twenty-five gallon cooking pots
- Four steam table-serving pans
- Serving spoons
- Serving forks
- Three large folding tables
- One pot each for serving punch and tea
- Nametags for all workers
- Clothing clean and ready for immediate use
- Registration forms
- Direction signs to registration, rest rooms, and parking

Folding chairs, if possible
Church promotional brochures
Gifts to be given at designated times during the event
Sound system
1,000 plastic or paper bags for giveaway food and clothes

Menu Items

The meal is of utmost importance at an EBP. Barbecue chicken, rice, and beans have almost universal appeal. Hot dogs should be available for children. A description of a delicious and cost-effective meal for an evangelistic block party involving 500 people is included below. Comprehensive recipes are not provided, but some general hints will help you as you prepare:

Barbecue Chicken :

200 pounds chicken (frozen or fresh)
3-4 gallons barbecue sauce
1 pound Cajun spice to season chicken
2 sets grill utensils
3 barbecue brushes
2 steam table serving pans

Wash the chicken thoroughly in cold salt water before cooking. Consider using a meat thermometer to ensure the chicken is cooked thoroughly before serving. Rent or borrow a large trailer-type barbecue grill. If you cannot find one then the small backyard type will do, but it will take more time to cook. You will need about 10 small grills.

Beans

40 pounds pinto beans

Wash and soak the beans all night before cooking. Put seasoning meat such as a ham hock into the beans. Add two #2 cans of stewed tomatoes and six small cans of tomato paste to the beans. Season beans with chili powder, garlic powder, salt, and pepper.

Rice

30 pounds rice (long grain—cooking time is 10-15 minutes if placed into boiling water).

After washing the rice, cook with butter and salt.

Drinks

25-30 pounds crushed ice
5 gallons of punch syrup
2 pounds of powdered tea
5 pounds of sugar for tea

EVANGELISTIC BLOCK PARTY INVENTORY

A food and clothing coordinator should stock the following for an EBP involving an expected 500 people.

Nonfood Items

- 200 marked New Testaments
- 200 witnessing booklets
- White paper tablecloths enough to cover every table
- One box plastic food handling gloves
- 60 pounds charcoal briquettes
- Lighter fuel
- 500 paper plates
- 500 napkins
- 500 plastic cups (hot and cold type)
- 500 forks, spoons, and knives
- Large plastic garbage bags
- Two rolls of paper towels
- Two twenty-five gallon cooking pots
- Four steam table serving pans
- Serving spoons
- Serving forks
- Three large folding tables
- One pot each for serving punch and tea
- Nametags for all workers
- Clothing clean and ready for immediate use
- Registration forms
- Direction signs to registration, rest rooms, and parking
- Folding chairs, if possible
- Church promotional brochures
- Gifts to be given at designated times during the event
- Sound system
- 1,000 plastic or paper bags for giveaway food and clothes

Menu Items

The meal is of utmost importance at an EBP. Barbecue chicken, rice, and beans have almost universal appeal. Hot dogs should be available for children. A description of a delicious and cost-effective meal for an evangelistic block party involving 500 people

is included below. Comprehensive recipes are not provided, but some general hints will help you as you prepare:

Barbecue Chicken :

200 pounds chicken (frozen or fresh)
3-4 gallons barbecue sauce
1 pound Cajun spice to season chicken
2 sets grill utensils
3 barbecue brushes
2 steam table serving pans

Wash the chicken thoroughly in cold salt water before cooking. Consider using a meat thermometer to ensure the chicken is cooked thoroughly before serving. Rent or borrow a large trailer-type barbecue grill. If you cannot find one then the small backyard type will do, but it will take more time to cook. You will need about 10 small grills.

Beans

40 pounds pinto beans

Wash and soak the beans all night before cooking. Put seasoning meat such as a ham hock into the beans. Add two #2 cans of stewed tomatoes and six small cans of tomato paste to the beans. Season beans with chili powder, garlic powder, salt, and pepper.

Rice

30 pounds rice (long grain—cooking time is 10-15 minutes if placed into boiling water).

After washing the rice, cook with butter and salt.

Drinks

25-30 pounds crushed ice
5 gallons of punch syrup
2 pounds of powdered tea
5 pounds of sugar for tea

Hot Dogs

If you choose to have hot dogs for the children, you will need the following:

20 packages hot dogs, or about 10 pounds

20 packages of hot dog buns

1 large bottle mustard

1 large bottle ketchup

1 large jar relish

Cover the tables with a paper or cloth tablecloth for the serving line. Servers should wear plastic serving gloves while serving food.

You will also need for the clothing and nonperishable food items you will be giving away. Place giveaway clothing and food tables away from the serving line.

PROMOTION DIRECTOR

Select a promotion director. This person will be in charge of getting the word out about the evangelistic block party. Print attractive publicity flyers. If people of different ethnicities are present in the neighborhood you have chosen for the EBP, print flyers in their languages. Enlist a task force to distribute the flyers door-to-door no sooner than three days before the block party. Cover the area you want to reach. Door-to-door flyers, signs in front of the church, and posters in neighborhood stores also work well. Hang posters a week before the block party.

In the promotion of the evangelistic block party, people need to know:

- What it is
- Where it is
- When it occurs
- What time it starts
- Who is sponsoring it
- That it is **free**

Advertising the evangelistic block party is important. The best method of getting the word out is the door-to-door flyer. In some areas this can be followed by a mobile loudspeaker system going around the neighborhood reminding people that the block party will be held in the next two hours. Radio, television, and newspaper advertisements are generally not as successful, but can be used in some areas. Public service announcements are preferred over paid advertisement to keep overall costs down.

Do not promote the event too far in advance. People tend to forget. One week before the event should be adequate time. Some churches see their best results by distributing flyers on the day before a basic evangelistic block party and even on the morning of the block party. Also, you should have some volunteers walking through the neighborhood during the block party, urging people to come.

Printed Materials

Posters and flyers can be used interchangeably if the size is small enough. Flyers can be copied onto heavy, colorful cardstock. Post them in shop windows, bus stops, and other visible areas. Put them in places where the many people will see them. Ask permission before you place the posters. This will foster good relationships within the community.

A banner or large outdoor sign near your church or the place you have chosen for the evangelistic block party is a must. Make it colorful and attractive.

How Much?

Here is a good rule of thumb: If you want 100 people to come, put out 1,000 flyers door-to-door. If you want 50, then put out 500. Usually, one person will attend for every 10 flyers you place at the doors. If you add posters, the number of people responding will increase. Also, if you add a loudspeaker announcing the EBP in the neighborhood on the day of the party, your numbers will be larger. The main object of advertising is to let people know about the EBP in a clear and inviting way.

Do not be afraid to design your own flyers. Make them as attractive and professional as possible. Some ads and press releases are included for your newsletter.

PROMOTION OF THE EVANGELISTIC BLOCK PARTY

People Need to Know

- What it is
- Where it is
- When it occurs
- What time it starts
- Who is sponsoring it
- That it is **free**

Advertising the evangelistic block party is important. The best method of getting the word out is the door-to-door flyer. In some areas this can be followed by a mobile loudspeaker system going around the neighborhood reminding people that the block party will be held in the next two hours. Radio, television, and newspaper advertisements are generally not as successful, but can be used in some areas. Public service announcements are preferred over paid advertisement to keep overall costs down.

Do not promote the event too far in advance. People tend to forget. One week before the event should be adequate time. Some churches see their best results by distributing flyers on the day before a basic evangelistic block party and even on the morning of the block party. Also, you should have some volunteers walking through the neighborhood during the block party, urging people to come.

Printed Materials

Posters and flyers can be used interchangeably if the size is small enough. Flyers can be copied onto heavy, colorful cardstock. Post them in shop windows, bus stops, and other visible areas. Put them in places where the many people will see them. Ask permission before you place the posters. This will foster good relationships within the community.

A banner or large outdoor sign near your church or the place you have chosen for the evangelistic block party is a must. Make it colorful and attractive.

How Much?

Here is a good rule of thumb: If you want 100 people to come, put out 1,000 flyers door-to-door. If you want 50, then put out 500. Usually, one person will attend for every

10 flyers you place at the doors. If you add posters, the number of people responding will increase. Also, if you add a loudspeaker announcing the EBP in the neighborhood on the day of the party, your numbers will be larger. The main object of advertising is to let people know about the EBP in a clear and inviting way.

Do not be afraid to design your own flyers. Make them as attractive and professional as possible. Some ads and press releases are included for your newsletter.

PROGRAM LEADER

A second person will be chosen as the program leader. This person will work closely with the pastor to invite music groups, puppet groups, clowns, speakers, or other persons to lead the program at the block party. Be creative and think big as you plan the program.

The program should be appropriate for the people you want to reach. Music, for example, can include black gospel, contemporary Christian, or Hispanic Christian mariachi-type music, depending on the audience that will be present. Music can be a problem at an evangelistic block party. Many Christian workers prefer only one kind—their kind. Educate workers about unfamiliar music that will be used to reach specific groups.

Taped background music can also be effective. It can be very effective to have a person act as a disc jockey. A microphone should be available for announcements and an informal gospel message.

WITNESSING TEAM LEADER

A witnessing team leader is the fourth leader that the church should appoint. Select a person who is motivated, capable, and experienced in soul winning. The pastor may choose to head the witnessing team. The witnessing team leader will enlist witnesses, train them, and help secure witness materials. If there is no one in your church to handle this job, secure an experienced person from outside your church to fill this important position.

Witness Training Session

The witness training session is the most important of the training sessions. Plan the witness training session four weeks before the block party. Schedule additional witness training times, if necessary, to ensure that enough witnesses will be equipped to share Christ at your EBP. Few, if any, people will receive Christ if no witness training is held. Teach trainees to share Christ boldly in a friendly, caring, compassionate, yet brief manner. Several training options are included later in this chapter.

Using Witnessing Booklets

Witnessing booklets are an effective way to communicate the gospel at an EBP. Many, however, are much too long and detailed for a brief witness. A list of excellent witnessing booklets is available for street and open-air evangelism, however. Use them in the following manner:

“Hello, Mr. and Mrs. Williams. I’m Monty McWhorter. I’m working with this church today on this block party. We are doing this because we want you to know that we care for you, but better than this, Jesus cares about you. We’d like to give you a booklet. It is free and tells how to know Jesus Christ personally. Here it is; would you like it? Great! May I show you how to use it? It will only take a few minutes.”

Note that the term “booklet” is used instead of “tract;” it seems to be better accepted. Witnessing booklets are less expensive and easier to use than New Testaments. A witnessing booklet, however, usually has little or no follow-up, and the new Christian does not go away with a New Testament in his or her possession.

Using Marked New Testaments

The marked New Testament method of witnessing is very effective at a block party. Eight powerful Scripture verses have been selected and organized in an efficient way to witness. The presentation ends with an invitation to pray and accept Christ as Savior and Lord. You can mark your own Bible or order already marked New Testaments to give away. Use it in this manner:

"Hello, Mr. Torres, I'm Bill Sims. I'm working with this church today. We want you to know that we care for you, but even better, Jesus cares about you. We'd like to give you a free New Testament. Here it is; would you like it? Great! May I show you how to use it? It will only take a few minutes, and I will only read eight verses to you.

*"In the Introduction it says to turn to page 144. We turn there and we read the bold print at the top of the page—it says **REALIZE YOU ARE A SINNER**. Now look at the underlined verse. It says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." At the bottom of the page we are told to turn to page 146.*

*"We turn to that page and the bold print says, **YOUR PENALTY FOR SIN IS DEATH**. The underlined verse by the arrow says, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." I admit both those pages told us something bad. But the bottom of this page tells us to turn to page 217—now comes the good news.*

*"The top of this page says, **CHRIST PAID YOUR PENALTY**. The underlined verse says, "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit." The bottom of the page tells you to turn to page 113, where we read the first of three things God wants you to do in order to inherit eternal life.*

*"First, **YOU MUST REPENT**. The underlined verse says, "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing shall come from the Lord." The note on the bottom says to turn to page 180 for the second thing God wants you to do in order to inherit this eternal life.*

*"The top of this page says, **YOU MUST ACCEPT CHRIST BY FAITH**. The underlined verse says, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." The bottom note says turn to page 149. This notes the last of the three things God wants you to do in order to inherit eternal life.*

"The bold statement says, YOU MUST CONFESS HIM AS LORD. The underlined verse says, "That if you will confess with your mouth "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

"Oh, the next and last verse is so beautiful! It simply says, "for 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'" That means you and me, Mr. Torres. Would you call upon the name of the Lord and be saved? In the back of this New Testament is this little prayer,

'Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I know you died on the cross for me. I now turn from my sins and ask you to forgive me. I now invite you into my heart and life. I now trust you as Savior and follow you as Lord. Thank you for saving me. Amen.'

"Mr. Torres, pray that little prayer with me right now, mean it in your heart, and God will give you eternal life. I'll read it to you slowly and you can pray it silently in your heart. Let's bow our heads."

At this point, lead the person to pray and receive Christ. After they pray begin immediate follow-up.

Does this method work? Yes! It has been used hundreds of times in California, Arizona, Texas, and many other states. It has been used in the inner city, in the country, in suburban homes, and in streets, parks, beaches, and at special events. The marked New Testament is inexpensive and people can easily be trained to use it. Adults, youth, and even older children have been taught to witness successfully using this method. More people accept the free Bible than accept a witnessing booklet. The block party guest has a New Testament to read, study, and use for years to come.

Those who continue as evangelistic block party witnesses should take further training in witnessing. The NET is an excellent evangelism training process available from NAMB. Schedule The NET training for your church soon.

Involve evangelistic block party witnesses in Sunday School outreach and church visitation before they attempt to share Christ at the block party. This gives team members practice and builds their confidence and effectiveness. Find areas where your EBP witnessing team can practice before the event. Parks, sporting events, and street witnessing are good training grounds.

TRAINING FOR THE EVANGELISTIC BLOCK PARTY

Two training sessions are necessary for the evangelistic block party – an initial training session and a witness training session.

Initial Training Session

At the initial training session, perhaps two months before the block party, inform volunteers of their duties and give them job descriptions. Duties of each position are listed under *The Priority of Personnel* in the chapter entitled “Conducting an Evangelistic Block Party.” This meeting should be an organizational meeting as well as an instructional one. The pastor should meet with all the volunteers.

At this session goals and a calendar of meetings and deadlines for securing materials should be determined. See the planning sheet for a suggested calendar of a basic evangelistic block party. Other planning meetings should be convened whenever necessary.

Witness Training Session

The witness training session is the most important of the training sessions. Plan the witness training session four weeks before the block party. Schedule additional witness training times, if necessary, to ensure that enough witnesses will be equipped to share Christ at your EBP. Few, if any, people will receive Christ if no witness training is held. Teach trainees to share Christ boldly in a friendly, caring, compassionate, yet brief manner. Several training options are included later in this chapter.

Using Witnessing Booklets

Witnessing booklets are an effective way to communicate the gospel at an EBP. Many, however, are much too long and detailed for a brief witness. A list of excellent witnessing booklets for street and open-air evangelism is contained in Appendix B at the end of this manual. Use them in the following manner:

“Hello, Mr. and Mrs. Williams. I’m Monty McWhorter. I’m working with this church today on this block party. We are doing this because we want you to know that we care for you, but better than this, Jesus cares about you. We’d like to give you a booklet. It is free and tells how to know Jesus Christ personally. Here it is; would you like it? Great! May I show you how to use it? It will only take a few minutes.”

Note that the term "booklet" is used instead of "tract;" it seems to be accepted better. Witnessing booklets are less expensive and easier to use than New Testaments. A witnessing booklet, however, usually has little or no follow-up, and the new Christian does not go away with a New Testament in their possession.

Using Marked New Testaments

The marked New Testament method of witnessing is very effective at a block party. Eight powerful Scripture verses have been selected and organized in an efficient way to witness. The presentation ends with an invitation to pray and accept Christ as Savior and Lord. You can mark your own Bible or order already marked New Testaments to give away. Use it in this manner:

"Hello, Mr. Torres, I'm Bill Sims. I'm working with this church today. We want you to know that we care for you, but even better, Jesus cares about you. We'd like to give you a free New Testament. Here it is; would you like it? Great! May I show you how to use it? It will only take a few minutes, and I will only read eight verses to you.

*"In the Introduction it says to turn to page 144. We turn there and we read the bold print at the top of the page— it says **REALIZE YOU ARE A SINNER**. Now look at the underlined verse. It says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." At the bottom of the page we are told to turn to page 146.*

*"We turn to that page and the bold print says, **YOUR PENALTY FOR SIN IS DEATH**. The underlined verse by the arrow says, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." I admit both those pages told us something bad. But the bottom of this page tells us to turn to page 217—now comes the good news.*

*"The top of this page says, **CHRIST PAID YOUR PENALTY**. The underlined verse says, "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit." The bottom of the page tells you to turn to page 113, where we read the first of three things God wants you to do in order to inherit eternal life.*

*"First, **YOU MUST REPENT**. The underlined verse says, "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing shall come from the Lord." The note on the bottom says to turn to page 180 for the second thing God wants you to do in order to inherit this eternal life.*

“The top of this page says, YOU MUST ACCEPT CHRIST BY FAITH. The underlined verse says, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.” The bottom note says turn to page 149. This notes the last of the three things God wants you to do in order to inherit eternal life.

“The bold statement says, YOU MUST CONFESS HIM AS LORD. The underlined verse says, “That if you will confess with your mouth “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

“Oh, the next and last verse is so beautiful! It simply says, “for Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” That means you and me, Mr. Torres. Would you call upon the name of the Lord and be saved? In the back of this New Testament is this little prayer,

‘Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I know you died on the cross for me. I now turn from my sins and ask you to forgive me. I now invite you into my heart and life. I now trust you as Savior and follow you as Lord. Thank you for saving me. Amen.’

“Mr. Torres, pray that little prayer with me right now, mean it in your heart, and God will give you eternal life. I'll read it to you slowly and you can pray it silently in your heart. Let's bow our heads.”

At this point, lead the person to pray and receive Christ. After they pray begin immediate follow-up.

Does this method work? Yes! It has been used hundreds of times in California, Arizona, Texas, and many other states. It has been used in the inner city, in the country, in suburban homes, and in streets, parks, beaches, and at special events. The marked New Testament is inexpensive and people can easily be trained to use it. Adults, youth, and even older children have been taught to witness successfully using this method. More people accept the free Bible than accept a witnessing booklet. The block party guest has a New Testament to read, study, and use for years to come.

Those who continue as evangelistic block party witnesses should take further training in witnessing. The NET, an excellent witness training program from NAMB, is a good place to start.

Involve evangelistic block party witnesses in Sunday School outreach and church visitation before they attempt to share Christ at the block party. This gives team members practice and builds their confidence and effectiveness. Find areas where your EBP witnessing team can practice before the event. Parks, sporting events, and street witnessing are good training grounds.

FOLLOW UP DIRECTOR

Many people will show up for your evangelistic block party. Some will show a real interest in your church, and many will be saved. How do you get them to come to church? How do you get them to make their decisions public? How do you give new followers of Jesus further training to mature them in Christ? This is what follow-up is all about.

Evangelistic block parties provide an excellent strategy for follow-up. Most of the participants will live in the neighborhood you have chosen. They will have an address close to the site of your party. They will probably be within your church's field of ministry.

Effective follow-up begins the moment people come to your party. You must register every guest and record every decision made at the party. This will enable you to be ready for future follow-up visits, telephone invitations, or communication by mail.

A well-defined, highly visible, and easily accessible registration area should be established and staffed. Each family should be identified and each person individually signed up. Registration materials may be produced locally. Names, addresses, telephone numbers, age classifications, church affiliation, and other helpful information should be on the forms. You may register people who attend by "funneling" them by the registration table on the way into the party area. Also, a door prize provides a non-threatening reason to register guests. The gifts to be given at the drawings may be contributed by local business operators. A boom box, a football or baseball signed by a professional athlete, or a gift certificate are excellent gifts.

You should be especially friendly at the EBP, welcoming guests to the event as well as inviting them to church on Sunday. You may want to provide a creative "bridge" to your Sunday service which will probably be the next day, since most block parties are on Saturdays. A bridge could be a special children's activity at Sunday School, a free ticket for ice cream after the Sunday night worship service, or a recognition honoring those who attend the EBP at the Sunday morning worship service.

Train each witness to use the "Personal Commitment Guide," available from the North American Mission Board. This guide provides information about salvation, assurance of salvation, church membership, rededication to Christ, and commitment to church vocation. It also has a commitment card in the back that can be used for registering the decisions made. Use the section called "Toward Christian Maturity" as an introduction to your church's follow-up program.

Emphasize to counselors the importance of getting accurate information about each respondent. Train counselors to begin to assimilate respondents into the total church program. The best way to do this is to make sure the witness is involved in the church's Discipleship Training and Bible study programs.

Gather all personal commitment cards and enrollment forms and give them to the pastor or his designee. If the writing on some of the cards and forms is not legible, locate the witnesses and make corrections on the day of the block party rather than a later date.

Arrange for a follow-up visit with each person who accepts Christ. Ideally, the person who counseled the new believer should be the one to make this contact. If this is not possible, distribute the name of the person who receives Christ to an experienced follow-up team member to visit within two weeks of the EBP. Deliver materials to help this new believer grow as a Christian.

The witness should invite those he or she shares with to come to church. He or she should be willing to pick them up, meet them on Sunday morning in front of the church, introduce them to the proper Bible study class, or sit with them on the first day of class and worship. Do anything necessary to get them to church! You have introduced them to Christ; now introduce them to your church, His body.

The work of follow-up should be bathed in prayer.

Make prayer a priority. This will determine the long-term success or failure of your block party. All witnessing efforts and hard work of the evangelistic block party will be sustained if you take the job of follow-up seriously.

FOLLOW UP OF AN EVANGELISTIC BLOCK PARTY

Many people will show up for your evangelistic block party. Some will show a real interest in your church, and many will be saved. How do you get them to come to church? How do you get them to make their decisions public? How do you give new followers of Jesus further training to mature them in Christ? This is what follow-up is all about.

Evangelistic block parties provide an excellent strategy for follow-up. Most of the participants will live in the neighborhood you have chosen. They will have an address close to the site of your party. They will probably be within your church's field of ministry.

Effective follow-up begins the moment people come to your party. You must register every guest and record every decision made at the party. This will enable you to be ready for future follow-up visits, telephone invitations, or communication by mail.

A well-defined, highly visible, and easily accessible registration area should be established and staffed. Each family should be identified and each person individually signed up. Registration materials may be produced locally. Names, addresses, telephone numbers, age classifications, church affiliation, and other helpful information should be on the forms. You may register people who attend by "funneling" them by the registration table on the way into the party area. Also, a door prize provides a non-threatening reason to register guests. The gifts to be given at the drawings may be contributed by local business operators. A boom box, a football or baseball signed by a professional athlete, or a gift certificate are excellent gifts.

You should be especially friendly at the EBP, welcoming guests to the event as well as inviting them to church on Sunday. You may want to provide a creative "bridge" to your Sunday service which will probably be the next day, since most block parties are on Saturdays. A bridge could be a special children's activity at Sunday School, a free ticket for ice cream after the Sunday night worship service, or a recognition honoring those who attend the EBP at the Sunday morning worship service.

Train each witness to use the "Personal Commitment Guide," available from the North American Mission Board. This guide provides information about salvation, assurance of salvation, church membership, rededication to Christ, and commitment to church vocation. It also has a commitment card in the back that can be used for registering the decisions made. Use the section called "Toward Christian Maturity" as an introduction to your church's follow-up program.

Emphasize to counselors the importance of getting accurate information about each respondent. Train counselors to begin to assimilate respondents into the total church program. The best way to do this is to make sure the witness is involved in the church's Discipleship Training and Bible study programs.

Gather all personal commitment cards and enrollment forms and give them to the pastor or his designee. If the writing on some of the cards and forms is not legible, locate the witnesses and make corrections on the day of the block party rather than a later date.

Arrange for a follow-up visit with each person who accepts Christ. Ideally, the person who counseled the new believer should be the one to make this contact. If this is not possible, distribute the name of the person who receives Christ to an experienced follow-up team member to visit within two weeks of the EBP. Deliver materials to help this new believer grow as a Christian.

The witness should invite those he or she shares with to come to church. He or she should be willing to pick them up, meet them on Sunday morning in front of the church, introduce them to the proper Bible study class, or sit with them on the first day of class and worship. Do anything necessary to get them to church! You have introduced them to Christ; now introduce them to your church, His body.

The work of follow-up should be bathed in prayer.

Make prayer a priority. This will determine the long-term success or failure of your block party. All witnessing efforts and hard work of the evangelistic block party will be sustained if you take the job of follow-up seriously.

MINISTRIES THAT CAN RESULT FROM THE EVANGELISTIC BLOCK PARTY

An evangelistic block party unites evangelism and ministry. Jesus practiced this kind of evangelism. He fed, blessed, healed, taught, and cared about people and their problems. He was always involved with the people to whom He ministered.

As you plan and execute your evangelistic block party, you will see many people come to Christ. Other things frequently happen as the result of a successful EBP. Although evangelism is the primary goal of an evangelistic block party, the following are some ministries that may result from your EBP. Some are followed by further explanation and resources.

- Worship attendance
- Sunday School and Bible study attendance
- Discipleship programs Start a pastor's basic Bible class for new Christians. Give every new church member and new convert a *Survival Kit For New Christians*. After studying the kit, you may choose to begin *MasterLife*, which is a more comprehensive discipleship program. Both are available from LifeWay Christian Resources.
- Food pantry
- Clothes closet
- Language ministry—Some churches will realize the need for a service in the native language of some of the neighbors they have met in their party. You can start language Bible classes and worship services for a particular language group.
- English-as-a-Second Language Classes Using the English-as-a-Second Language (ESOL) method of teaching you can teach English to someone without knowing his or her language.
- Literacy classes
- Special services for the homeless
- Drug and alcohol substance abuse aid
- Family crisis counseling
- Food to the elderly
- Child care

- Medical care
- New churches Block parties provide a tremendous way to start a church. People from the same area congregate in one location. They hear the message of Christ. The host church can use the EBP to establish a core group of interested people to form a mission congregation.

These are only some of the many ministries you could become involved with in your church. You will probably discover many more needs at your EBP. God will help you envision ways to meet these needs. Pray and ask God to show you His strategy to reach out in love and compassion.

New Churches

A church planter's initial activity among an unreached people group is evangelism. A church planter identifies a group of people who do not have a church. Having identified the people group, the church planter or church-planting team begins developing relationships that communicate Jesus' love, and intentional evangelism takes place.

The evangelistic block party can be part of the overall church-planting strategy. Its place in the strategy can be one of the relationship-building activities that establish credibility with the people group being targeted. Using an evangelistic block party can result in accelerating the number of relationships formed through a church-planting effort. In addition to people who experience a focused commitment to Christ during the block party, others may acknowledge Christ as Lord of their lives as a result of relationships begun during the evangelistic block party.

The church-planting strategy similar to the following should be developed:

1. Study and Research

- Identify the unreached people
- Study demographics
- Conduct interviews with people among the unreached focus group

2. Cultivate the Focus Group

- Build relationships among people in the focus group
- Carry out ministry activities to meet needs identified in the interviews
- Cultivate those who make positive responses
- Initiate and conduct community activities as appropriate
- Begin intensive cultivation

- Begin Bible study groups
- Conduct Backyard Bible Clubs for one or two weeks in various locations
- Hold an evangelistic block party

3. Worship in a Larger Group Setting

- Provide worship opportunities in a style compatible with the target group
- Involve new Christians in planning and conducting worship activities

In this strategy, the evangelistic block party is a significant bridge from cultivative activities and separate Bible study groups to a larger corporate body. It provides a unique opportunity for the newly emerging church to gain an identity in its own community. Also, Christians can express their faith in their own context. Their witness will be more meaningful than a witness imported from outside the target group.

TAKING THE INITIATIVE IN AN EVANGELISTIC BLOCK PARTY

Successful witnessing has been defined as taking the initiative to share Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God. This definition of witnessing stresses several important ingredients, but at the beginning is "taking the initiative."

Keep the spirit of the evangelistic block party alive in your church. Do not stop caring and lose your burden for the lost. The harvest is truly plenteous. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send more laborers. Will you take the initiative to share Christ through an evangelistic block party soon?