

high impact events

people reaching people

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table of contents

Executive Summary—How to Use this Manual	6
Section One—Inspiration	9
Why Do Events?	10
Section Two—How to do Events	15
Introduction	16
Spiritual Preparation Team	18
Effective Prayerwalking	20
Counseling/Follow-up Team	22
Creative/Worship Team	28
Promotion Team	30
Logistics Team	34
Budget Preparation	38
Section Three—Events	41
Evangelistic Block Parties	42
Seasonal Events	45
“It’s a Wonderful Life” Party	46
Birthday Party for Jesus	47
Christmas Gift Wrapping	48
Feast of Plenty	49
Hell House	50
Halloween Costume Party for Adults	51
Fall Festival	52
Easter Egg Hunt	53
Sports Events	55
Wild Game Dinner	56

3-on-3 Basketball/Football Tournament	57
Super Bowl Party	58
Sports Clinic	59
Sports Camp	60
5K or 10K Road Race	62
Other Types of Events	65
Sunday Morning Service	66
Marriage Vow Renewal	67
Friday Family Film Festival/Movie Debut	68
Single Mom Car-Care	69
Free Car Wash	70
Parents Night Out	71
Ladies' Luncheon	72
First Place Float	73
Dinner Theater	74
Revivals and Crusades	75
Section Four—Appendix	77

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executive summary



How to Use this Manual

An evangelistic event is a tool that facilitates believers building relationships with unbelievers. Those relationships lead to people receiving Jesus Christ. New believers lead to church growth when proper follow-up is done. Follow the logic carefully:

1. A well-planned event draws lost people.
2. Your church captures, via registration, the vital data on all who attend.
3. The gospel is shared at the event, leading to some immediate decisions for Christ.
4. New relationships are built with seekers.
5. All new believers are assimilated into the church for spiritual (and thus numerical) growth.

An evangelistic event is a tool that facilitates believers building relationships with unbelievers.

Intentionality is a huge factor in effective evangelistic events—being wise and well-organized strategists. The pastor must carry

the banner—if he is not behind it, it won't work. However, many pastors believe events won't work. Those pastors are usually ones who a) haven't tried them, or b) did the event poorly, mostly in the areas of preparation and follow-up.

While the rationale for evangelistic events is as simple as A-B-C (Attraction, Bridge, Communicate the gospel), preparation for evangelistic events has to be as thorough as A through Z. Failure almost always comes from poor strategy and execution.

A-B-C (Attraction, Bridge, Communicate the gospel)... Countless large churches across America are big in part because of evangelistic events.

Countless large churches across America are big in part because of evangelistic events. They began using events when they were

much smaller. The events resulted in prospects, which were turned into relationships, which led to new believers, spiritual growth, and then church growth. Evangelistic events are not the sole catalyst for church growth, but they are a good start!

There are two keys to an effective event.

1. A basic understanding of how people most often begin a relationship with Christ.
2. Great preparation.

This tool has been written to provide both of these.

How to Use This Tool

1. Read carefully and prayerfully the chapter on Why Do Events? pages 10–12. This chapter will help you understand how people most often begin a relationship with Christ.
2. Read carefully and prayerfully the introduction to Section Two on How to Do Events, pages 16–39. Not all of Section Two will apply to every event. We suggest that you read the introduction only, and then use the rest of this section as referenced by the events you choose.
3. Read through the potential events in Section Three. Choose the ones you feel led to implement. Simply follow the steps provided. The action plans for each event will guide you through the preparation process and refer you to the portion of Section Two that applies.



inspiration

section one



Why do Events?

Doug Sager has walked on water, flown via jet pack from balcony to stage and back, raised Lazarus from the dead and fed 5,000 people. He has played Moses as an adult and as a baby (complete with diaper). Sager has repelled from the First Baptist Concord (Knoxville, Tenn.) sanctuary ceiling more times than he can count, even into his late 60s—all in the name of Jesus and as a part of big-event ministry, a centerpiece of the church he has pastored for 15 years.

“The basic premise is simple—the reason 3,000 people came to Christ on the day of Pentecost is that there were at least 3,000 people there!” says Sager, who has seen the congregation quadruple in size. “One of the principles I’ve used for years is that wherever and however you can get a gathering of people and share the gospel, do it—because there will be people who make a positive response.”

From sportsmen’s dinners to concerts to holiday dramas to VBS extravaganzas, events can be a vehicle to reach lost people and a bridge to the community. “Big events can become signature

events,” says Sager, who has averaged baptizing more than 150 each year at First Baptist Concord, which is

From sportsmen’s dinners to concerts to holiday dramas to VBS extravaganzas, events can be a vehicle to reach lost people and a bridge to the community.

consistently in the top 100 churches for baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). “Those are the events that can identify a church in the community. Every church has to have an identity—some characteristics that help identify it and relate it to the community. In many cases in churches I’ve pastored, it’s been big events.”

Events are bridges to help people begin a relationship with Christ, either at the event or in the follow-up process. The bottom line of the

Christian faith is to fulfill the Great Commission, thus evangelistic events make sense and should be a staple of an ongoing evangelism strategy. Overwhelmingly the churches that are baptizing large numbers of people are doing two things. First, they are mobilizing their members to share Christ where they live, work, and play. Second, they dot their church calendars with creative, cutting edge harvest events. They equip their members to invest in relationships with lost people and then provide attractional events that meet felt needs. The result—their people reach people.

The early chapters of the book of Acts provide a strategy for reaching people that is as applicable today as it was in the first century. The early church obeyed the Great Commission by leaving the prayer room and intentionally sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ on the day of Pentecost. Additionally, they took advantage of the supernatural attraction God provided when the 120 spoke in languages they had not learned by having Peter compellingly share the claims of Christ with the whole city.

The event concept in Acts 1 and 2 is as simple as A-B-C

A is for attraction. The disciples went out sharing their Jesus stories in languages they didn’t know. Just imagine 120 Galileans speaking the languages of the world—the event captured the attention of the city. They wanted to know what was going on.

B is for bridges. The vertical bridge is the great prayer movement of the early church (see Acts 1:14), while the horizontal bridge is people reaching people. They saturated Jerusalem by mobilizing the church to do evangelism. The process is simple—people reach people.

C is for clearly communicating the gospel. This is done by someone who has the gift of the harvest. Peter was prepared and able and he spoke with power.

Acts 1 and 2 are an awesome biblical example of the place of event evangelism in helping people begin a relationship with Christ.

are told to wait for the Holy Spirit before moving out into the world. Acts 1:8 (NIV) gives us one of the five Great Commission passages: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

The disciples’ response to Acts 1 was “quick obedience and dependence on God.” In obedience they waited and prayed. Acts 1:14 (NIV) says they “joined together constantly in prayer.” Shortly thereafter, the Holy Spirit came with power and transformation and the disciples obediently shared. It has been well said, “The point of waiting for the Holy Spirit is that He wants to do it through us.”

Another mark of the disciples, who numbered about 120 at this time, was total dependence on God. They met every day to study God’s Word, according to verse 42 of Acts 2. “The disciples were learners,” Howard Hendrix says. “As long as you live, you learn; as long as you learn, you live. You stop learning about Jesus today; you stop living for Jesus tomorrow.” The disciples were learning, growing, changing, and passionate people.

3,000 began relationships with Christ!

a crowd, a moving of the Spirit, an obedient people resulting in a great harvest. The Holy Spirit comes. There is a supernatural voice (of God), a violent wind, a fireworks show (tongues of fire), and a recitation of the languages of the world—from mouths that could not previously speak them. What a spectacle! The people in the community heard about it and came running. Peter seized the moment and spoke eloquently, in the power of the Holy Spirit—and 3,000 began relationships with Christ!

Acts 1 and 2 provide a biblical example of event evangelism. In Acts 1:4-5 the disciples

Why did 3,000 respond? Was it because Peter was such an awesome communicator? No. Was it the ten-day prayer meeting? That had something to do with it, but no. They obeyed God’s plan.

The disciples prayed and waited for the Holy Spirit’s power, then the 120 in the upper room scattered in the city sharing what they knew about Jesus. On every street corner, at every hour, they saturated Jerusalem by the total mobilization of the church, so that when Peter preached the message, tens of thousands had already heard the individual stories of the 120. The result—harvest!

David Wheeler, professor of evangelism and church growth at Liberty Seminary, says he is regularly asked why a church should do events. His response sheds light on the genius of the Acts 1 and 2 process for reaching people:

I tell them it’s because events fit all three areas of strategic evangelism: **plowing** through prayer, **planting** through personal evangelism, and **harvesting** through the event. Effective events lead to people beginning a relationship with Christ, which is the first part of making disciples. It’s what we’re called to do! Even when the harvest doesn’t come *at the event*, churches have the opportunity to gather a lot of names and follow up with them. Events also give the larger body of the church—those who often won’t do one-on-one evangelism—easy access to outreach. They tend to re-invigorate church body.

I recently heard of a church in the middle of nowhere that did a block party. They had a good turnout and made a lot of great touches. It changed the whole perception for that body. It made them realize, “yes, we’re still viable.” So in that case, an evangelistic event created a climate of change for the church body.

Effective events lead to people beginning a relationship with Christ

Events work as a part of a total community reaching strategy. One would

never expect to harvest wheat in a field where wheat had not been planted. To effectively harvest wheat, one would need to plow the soil, plant the seeds, water them, and then harvest the field. The same is true of reaching people for Christ. One must prepare the soil through prayer, plant the seeds of the gospel through personal evangelism, and then harvest through an effective event. This process is even more important in today's pluralistic society. Charles S. Kelley puts it this way, "Southern Baptists are a harvest-oriented denomination living in the midst of an unseeded generation."

God still draws big crowds in the power of the Holy Spirit. Well-organized, prayerful churches—occupied by the Spirit—still draw a great harvest. It is one of the greatest means of evangelism when combined with plowing through prayer and planting through personal evangelism.

"Creative, cutting edge harvest events are making a dynamic difference in having an impact on the

"Creative, cutting edge harvest events are making a dynamic difference in having an impact on the community"

community with the gospel of Christ," says Thom Rainer, a researcher of effective churches

and president of LifeWay Christian Resources. "These events are not one-time shots with little or no lasting impact. Indeed, communities are changed for the better before the events begin and long after they are over." Larry Wynn has used countless events as a cornerstone strategy in building Hebron Baptist Church in Dacula, Ga. from 100 in Sunday School to more than 4,300 in approximately 30 years. During that time the church has baptized more than 9,000 people.

"Creative, cutting edge harvest events have been a key to the growth of Hebron Church and the impact the church has had on the

community," Wynn says. "Hardly a week goes by that someone doesn't stop me and tell me they came to Christ and were baptized because of a church-sponsored event."

Perhaps by now you're starting to see past the surface of the idea of event evangelism. Jim Coldiron, Consultant for Crusade and Revival evangelism for the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA), says that seeing what is beneath a big event is vital.

"Event evangelism is like an iceberg," Coldiron says. "The event you see is just about 10 percent of the equation. A successful evangelistic event is about 45 percent preparation, 10 percent proclamation, and 45 percent preservation. In the local churches, the ones that don't prepare are the ones saying event evangelism doesn't work. The ones that prepare are saying it works because they are reaping a harvest."

Churches that are reaching and baptizing a large number of lost people are using the same Acts 1 and 2 strategy. Sure, they may use different methods in personal evangelism, and some use traditional events (revivals) while others like Doug Sager are more creative. Regardless, they all effectively utilize:

- **Attraction:** They are dotting calendars with creative cutting edge events.
- **Bridges:** They understand that people reach people. They inspire and equip members to invest in relationships with lost neighbors and friends and then partner with them to provide "invest and invite" opportunities.
- **Communication:** They clearly communicate the claims of Christ at their events.

In summary, consider the benefits of including events in your Great Commission strategy: A) People won to Christ! Everything else is excess. B) Recognition in your community. C) The army in your church investing in relationships with lost friends and inviting them to creative events in your church to hear the claims of Christ—**you will see a movement of God!**



how to do events

section two



Introduction

With your eyes fixed on the shining iceberg jutting from the ocean of unreached people, you're ready to explore its hidden depths. As you relate to the iceberg so far, it is a dangerous tease, an attraction that could do harm if you do not understand how broad and large what lies beneath it is. The tip is your evangelistic event—what is submerged is the vast preparation and follow-up that will make your event a success or failure.

Consider a young couple having their first child. The mom thinks it is time, and they rush to the nearest hospital. It really doesn't matter which one—they do not have a doctor. Labor begins and the mother and father are scared. Nurses and doctors they've never seen coax the mom through the delivery, but it is frightening and stressful and not nearly as smooth as it should have been. The baby arrives safely nonetheless, and mom and dad head home a day or so later. Excitedly taking their

“Preparation is the secret to success”

unnamed child—they hadn't thought about a name until birth—into the house, they look

for a place to lay him. On their bed? The couch? They have no bassinet. No nursery. Dad scrambles to the store for some basics—such as diapers. They have nothing for this precious new life. They hadn't prepared for the baby!

Absurd, isn't it? Of course. So is an evangelistic event without detailed, careful, and prayerful preparation. You don't want to scramble at the last minute for response cards, counselors, or parking for parents with small children.

You don't want to lose the harvest because you didn't know how to process or respond to the people.

“Beneath the 10 percent that is the tip of the iceberg, I believe an additional 50 to 55 percent is preparation,” says Jim Coldiron, who has spent much of his ministry preparing churches and communities for evangelistic events through the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and the North American Mission Board, among other agencies. “Preparation is the secret to success.

Once you see the preparation happen, you gain a realistic vision for how the event can be done.” Larry Wynn credits much of his church's profound

A key role of the pastor or pastors is to enlist the top leadership

growth in his approximately 30 years to evangelistic events. Wynn

says, “There are two key factors in preparation: one, you can't leave any base uncovered. You've got to think down to the most elementary part. Two, remember that this detailed preparation you are doing is more than just hard work for a purpose—it is actually giving ownership of the event to the people. When you use the church members to carry out the event under the supervision of the pastoral team, you have a winning combination. I know what goes on behind the scenes—you've got to prepare and prepare and prepare some more. You can't leave it to happenstance. And when you succeed, you can't drop your guard. There's a real danger of thinking you've got things under control, then letting it slip.”

In the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit and man's preparation meet for effective, bold delivery of the gospel to lost people. This combination further results in an evangelistic harvest.

(Note: At the end of a bullet point or section calling for specific actions by ministry teams is listed the approximate amount of time before the event that the action should be done.

For large events, this reads LE: x months. For small events, it reads SE: x months. This is the suggested time frame and is given to help your teams set a scheduling grid. When the time frame is the same for both, no LE or SE designation is given.)

The Role of the Pastor(s)

A key role of the pastor or pastors is to enlist the top leadership of the event, whether it is staff or lay people. Seek people with evangelistic zeal and sound organizational skills. A combination

of those gifts in an individual is ideal, but at least both gifts must be represented with balance on a leadership team. The leadership team should consider an overall chairperson—this could be a staff member as well—and a leader for the various teams, suggested as:

- Spiritual Preparation Team
- Counseling/Follow-up Team
- Worship Team
- Promotion Team
- Logistics Team
- Budget Preparation Team

Be sensitive to the Spirit and thoughtful as to the precise teams you need. This manual is designed to help with all events, but a particular event may require additional teams or fewer teams. For instance, worship may not be a factor in a fall festival event, or some block parties. (LE: 11 months; SE: 4 months)

The pastor and/or other key organizers of the event should nurture and hold accountable the team leaders. The leaders in turn do the same with their teams. Regularly scheduled updates from your team leaders should advise you of their progress, especially any trouble spots.

*Fail to aim,
aim to fail*

Beware of keeping the preparation teams too small. A well-organized group leader can empower a lot of people, and the deeper you go involving the body of Christ in the organizing and planning, the greater the buy-in. Some event evangelism leaders suggest that the ratio of people involved in planning to attendance is about four or five to one. Indeed, at First Baptist Concord in Knoxville, Tenn., 500 volunteers are involved—many year-round—in preparation for their Vacation Bible School event that draws 2,200 in attendance.

Setting Goals

“Fail to aim, aim to fail” became a cliché for a good reason—it’s true. While success or failure is not firmly defined by the reaching of particular goals, goals remain valuable. It gives your leadership

a picture of what can be and a vision for prayer. Goals should be arrived at through prayer, thus framing what you believe God desires to do. Goals should be concrete and measurable. Careful planning and detailed execution in every area listed above will enable measurement. (LE: 9 months; SE: 3 months)

Goals to consider:

- Event attendance
- Percentage of unchurched attending
- Number of people mobilized for prayer
- Number of event workers (all-inclusive)
- Number of new church attendees derived directly from the event
- Community public relations “touches” via media

Leaders must be very careful not to impose predetermined goals on evangelistic events. God may speak powerfully through the laity, increasing and refining the goals. A pastor once went into a church wide business meeting and recommended the building of a 1,300 seat sanctuary. Many in the church spoke up, saying they felt led to make it bigger. They voted on the spot for a 2,400 seat sanctuary, blowing up

*You work hard; you get
what you can do. You
pray hard, you get what
God can do.*

the budget calculations before the campaign even began. The new building was paid for ahead

of schedule, and within a very few years of the decision the church’s growth completely justified the need for the larger facility. Let God speak through His people!

Success in the preparation for your event will not only ensure a successful event, but will lay the foundation for future successful events by encouraging the body of Christ. Individuals will be excited and empowered because they experienced God moving through them, and they’ll be eager, ready, and better prepared for the next harvest event.

Spiritual Preparation Team

Simple enough? Yes and no. The priority of prayer isn't hard to understand, but it is work. Prayer is glorious, fulfilling, productive work, but work nonetheless.

"If your evangelistic event is a success, you will have a fervent prayer team," Larry Wynn says. "It is very, very vital on several levels. We put a prayer team in every event. It's a team just like the welcoming team, a construction team, a follow-up team—prayer gets equal billing. We then bathe every event in prayer."

The Word of God says that prayer is evangelistic: "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in

Every idea and plan must be brought before God in prayer

authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness

and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:1-4, NKJV) and that "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16, NKJV).

Author and teacher on prayer, Paul Miller, says, "Prayer is the way I get things done." Miller means that he cannot directly cause to happen anything he is asking for, but requires the power of the Holy Spirit to bring about God's will through him. Through prayer, the Holy Spirit is given control of our every effort. Prayer is also a recognition of our dependence on God, who alone is able to bring the lost to salvation.

Prayer must precede every move. Prayer must accompany every move. Prayer must follow every move. Every idea and plan must be brought before God in prayer.

Although a prayer team chairperson will organize specific prayer events, the pastor must be a person of prayer. The depth of a pastor's prayer life and commitment determines the depth and compassion of the people in the church.

How to Pray

Regularly. Passionately. Systematically.

Begin at the top of your organization chart. The pastor(s) and staff should pray about whom to select as team leaders. Then they should pray daily for the team leaders. The team leaders should meet regularly to pray. The individual teams should meet regularly to pray, and the entire body should be afforded prayer opportunities, both guided opportunities on their own (prayer guides, etc.) and corporately. The frequency and length in weeks/months of these prayer efforts are dependent in part on the advance effort required for the event. (LE: 5 months; SE: 2 months)

The leader of the prayer team is responsible for organizing these opportunities and being the prayer champion (besides the pastor).

Specific organizational structures for prayer are valuable. You do not need to think you must do them all, and you may come up with some other types. The point is the same: be intentional.

Specific ideas include:

- A prayer guide printed and given to the congregation that suggests a specific aspect of the event to pray for each day. (LE: 1 month)
- Regular gatherings at the church or event location to pray. (1 week)
- Prayerwalking the event location, whether it be an auditorium, campus, park, or neighborhood block. Walk the location, pray specifically over individual seats or areas, the platform/staging, the counseling area, the adjoining neighbors, and so on. (See Appendix for Prayerwalking 101) (1 week)
- A service, evening, or even overnight, given to prayer for the event. Utilize various prayerful people and Scriptures to pray aloud, mixing prayer in solitude, prayer corporately, and praying Scripture. (1-2 weeks)

- Keeping the sanctuary, auditorium, or other accessible meeting place (the site of the event, if possible) open regularly for people to drop in and pray. (1-3 weeks)
- Neighborhood home prayer meetings could be organized one or more times in advance of the event, and should especially be undertaken if the event is focused on a particular neighborhood. (1 week)
- A prayer room for drop-by prayer could be established. (1-3 weeks)
- A mens' prayer breakfast and ladies' prayer luncheon could be utilized. (2 weeks)
- The pastor(s) should consider preaching on prayer in the weeks approaching the event, and announcing prayer opportunities in conjunction with the message(s). Alternatively, such an emphasis could be undertaken in small groups (Sunday School, etc.). Give them an outline. (2-4 weeks)
- Utilize various existing materials that facilitate prayer, such as "Praying Your Friends to Christ." Go www.namb.net/prayer (1-4 weeks)
- Utilize "Operation Andrew" bookmarks. (See Appendix) (1 month)
- Pray for many people to become followers of Christ, specifically asking for a certain number if the Spirit has led to such a goal.
- Pray for each ministry team leader.
- Pray for each member of each ministry team.
- Pray for the specific objectives of each ministry team.

"Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Matt. 9:38, NKJV)

- Pray for freedom of the Spirit to move at the event venue(s).
- Pray for more people to pray!
- Pray against the enemy, declaring victory in the venue and the community in the name of Jesus, who lives in you.
- Pray for the receptivity of the community to your event.
- Pray for the person(s) who will present the gospel at your event.

"Just like you can't be too organized for an evangelistic event, you can't pray too much"

What to Pray For

"Just like you can't be too organized for an evangelistic event, you can't pray too much," Wynn says. "We pray specifically about everything. Cover it all. Cover it again."

The specifics of your prayers will vary, of course, according to the type, location, and breadth of your event. Thus, the first counsel is to use your organizational guide—your logistics, your ministry teams, your targets, and so on as your prayer guide. By all means, however, "pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Matt. 9:38, NKJV).

Effective Prayerwalking

Three Steps to Prepare the Warrior

The first step is to acknowledge the enemy. The enemy is not one of flesh and blood. Read Ephesians 6:12 where Paul describes our enemy. Our battle is against Satan's forces. His forces are the rulers, powers, and world forces of darkness; spiritual forces of darkness in heavenly places.

The second step is to put on the armor of God. Read Ephesians 6:11-13. Christians need God's armor for spiritual battle. All items of the armor are defensive except for one.

Nothing is impossible for God

The third step is to engage the Lord in prayer. Read Ephesians 6:18-19.

Paul asked for prayer, so he would boldly proclaim the gospel; pray at all times in the Spirit; pray for boldness for other saints to share the gospel.

Prayer Warriors Stand in the Gap

Read Ezekiel 22:23-31. Verse 30 reveals that God searched for a prayer warrior who would stand in the gap. There are five characteristics of prayer warriors who stand in the gap:

They pray with hearts of compassion. Jesus was moved with a heart of compassion when He saw the plight of the multitudes (see Matt. 9:36).

They pray for the impossible as readily as the possible. Nothing is impossible for God (see Luke 1:37).

They pray with intensity. They aren't afraid to ask God to work in peoples' lives.

They pray about anything and everything. They understand the admonition in James 4:2.

They pray with authority. They pray in Jesus' name (see John 14:13, 14; 15:16).

Three Ways to Take Prayer to the Streets

1. Pray for the saved but uncommitted.
 - Pray for their apathy and complacency with God.
 - Ask God to convict them of sin, righteousness, and judgment (see John 16:8).
 - Pray they will become obedient to assemble (see Heb. 10:25).
 - Pray they will overcome a bad church experience.
 - Pray for those who live next door to you.
2. Pray for the unsaved in your community.
 - Ask God to remove the blindness from their minds (see 2 Cor. 4:4-5).
 - Ask God to bring light into the darkness they are experiencing (see Eph. 5:8).
 - Ask God to deliver them from the spirit of disobedience (see Eph. 2:1-2).
 - Ask God to reach through their blinded minds (see 2 Cor. 3:14).
 - Ask God to set the captives free (see 2 Tim. 2:26).

Why should we pray for the unsaved? Because they can refuse to go to church, refuse to listen to your witness, throw away your tracts, refuse

They pray about anything and everything

to let you in, but they can't prevent your prayers for Jesus to work in their lives.

3. How to intercede for the lost.
 - Present them to the Father in the name of Jesus.
 - Ask God to bring His Holy Spirit to bear on their lives.
 - Ask God to take away any false sense of security in their lives.
 - Ask God to exercise mercy and grace. Claim your community for Christ. This is the crowning step in putting feet to our prayers.

The Prayer Journey

We can pray as we walk, drive, roller blade, or bicycle

We can pray as we walk, drive, roller blade, or bicycle through our community

through our community. You get insight by being on site. Prayer teams should be

made up of two to four people. Walk through the community and be aware of what you see. Pray for those in every home, watching for prayer indicators. Support teams are made up of those who can't walk in the community—they stay at the church and pray.

There are certain things you should look for as you go through a community. Toys tell you there are children in the home. Possessions may indicate worship of the god of materialism. Beer and liquor bottles may indicate a drinking problem. Drug paraphernalia may indicate an addiction problem.

Look for Divine Encounters

Talk to those you encounter on the street. Tell them why you are there. Ask for prayer requests and pray for them on the spot. Try to share the gospel with any you encounter.



Counseling/Follow-up Team

The point of all your effort is to lead people into a personal relationship with Christ. That was Jesus' point too, as He stated that He came to seek and save those who are lost (see Luke 19:10). As vital as every detail of planning and preparation is, there is no more vital place for careful preparation than in counseling and follow-up. They must be the same, seamless motion. But first, there is a warning.

Beware of False Salvations

Because of some of the means churches have used over the years to get "decisions for Christ," we must be doubly careful to communicate the gospel in a way that does not manipulate. Emotional appeals with a rushed "sign me up for Jesus" approach have resulted in many people calling themselves Christians without any real understanding of what that means.

The intersection of opportunity and eternal spiritual transaction is an exciting but dangerous place. As you prepare counselors to share the gospel, great care must be given to the explanations offered respondents. "False decisions" cause great spiritual and emotional consternation later in life when some people have to reconsider the decision they thought they made years before. Or worse, a "false decision" can simply cause someone to think they know Jesus personally when in fact they do not.

God's integrity is impugned when our means are inconsistent with His character, and God does not need compromised methods to draw people into a relationship with Him. So prepare carefully, be patient, and trust the Holy Spirit.

Recruiting Counselors (LE: 4 months; SE: 2 months)

What type person are you looking for?

- A follower of Christ with good people skills, patience, and a very clear theological understanding of salvation. You must give him that understanding in training—never assume he has. We will cover

that later. Many events will involve formal invitations to receive Christ as Savior, but some events will not, and some are so intimate that the counselor and the event host are the same people. For instance, a birthday party for Jesus, or an in-home Super Bowl watch party.

- Someone willing to stick with the respondent. You don't want someone who is merely willing to give you an hour or two, and then disengage. The best follow-up is done by the person who counseled them in their salvation decision. Communicate

There is no more vital place for careful preparation than in counseling and follow-up

clearly to your counselors that it is expected they will do the follow-up, meaning they

may be engaging in several weeks, at least, of systematic, structured contact with the respondent.

Tips for finding counselors

- Enlist counselors from past evangelistic events.
- Enlist counselors you regularly use at the invitation time of your regular services.
- Enlist Sunday School and small group Bible study leaders.
- Enlist others your staff or top lay leaders recommend.
- Don't fail to get counselors of a wide age range, including late teens and college students, to utilize with those of similar age.

How many do you need? Expect God to move, so get more than you think you need!

"I suggest aiming for at least 20 percent of the goal you've set for event attendance," Jim Coldiron says.

Expect God to move

Your goal should be one-on-one counseling. A two-to-one ratio

is acceptable, but the counselor should be very careful to give proper attention to both parties and not assume one party's response stands for the other. You never want people having to wait long

If you are praying for 100 respondents, you need 50 counselors

respondent, because that dishonors the one who has responded and significantly increases the risk of a false decision. Hence, if you are praying for 100 respondents, you need 50 counselors.

If you are a family hosting a block party, birthday party for Jesus, Super Bowl watch party, or other more intimate, in-home or in-neighborhood event, you might recruit one or two more families from the church to be on hand, so that they can assist with counseling.

Coaching Counselors (LE: 2 weeks; SE: 1 week)

Vital guidelines for counselors:

- Train each witness to use the “Personal Commitment Guide,” available in several languages from the North American Mission Board. Order the guide by calling toll-free 1 866 407-NAMB (6262). 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. Another option is “My Commitment/Living in Christ” (see resources section at the end of this chapter).
- Introduce yourself, ask the person’s name, and use it throughout the conversation.
- Initially, talk less, listen more. Ask a respondent “What can I do for you today?” rather than an unintentionally leading question such as “Do you want to become a Christian?” People respond for a wide number of reasons. They may clearly understand that they want to become a follower of Christ, but they also may simply have another type of problem, be responding to an emotional urge, or any other number of scenarios. Ask.
- Be patient. A counselor should pretend that the one or two he is talking to are the only ones in the world, and that there

to be counseled, and you don’t want counselors feeling rushed to finish with a

is no time limit. This could be the biggest day of the respondent’s eternity, so take it slow and easy.

- Avoid asking questions that can be answered “yes” or “no” when trying to discern whether the respondent is already a follower of Christ or understands what is being explained. Gently prod with questions that cause the respondent to offer full-sentence explanations. This will greatly aid your discernment of where he stands.
- Use very simple language, particularly avoiding Christian lingo. This is very hard for long-time church members, and even experienced salvation counselors. Common church terms such as “getting saved,” “inviting Jesus into your life” and “coming to know Christ” may be very confusing to the unchurched. They are all “Christian lingo” for a total change of life experience. The “saved” we talk about is salvation from eternal separation from God, which

Use very simple language, particularly avoiding Christian lingo

is what all humans deserve because we are all sinners. But God intervened

by sending Jesus Christ to pay the price for our sins. Instead, use terms such as “becoming a follower of Jesus Christ,” and “asking God to forgive you and lead you the rest of your life.”

Theological Correctness

It is a vast understatement to say that a decision to become a follower of Christ is no minor thing. We must be very careful to be theologically correct in our explanation, yet considerate and down-to-earth in our dialogue. What follows is a theologically correct explanation in common language that a counselor can use for a guide. He needs to put this in his own words, as much as possible, and learn it, not read it to the respondent.

We must be very careful to be theologically correct

“Salvation” is not mere intellectual acknowledgement of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. It is, in essence,

giving your life to God and receiving His. Here's how you do it:

1. Turn from (we call that "repent") your sins. That means you decide to consistently, intentionally move away from sin and toward God. Will you be perfect at this? Of course not; we all sin. But "repentance" means that we are striving not to sin and striving to live for God. Another way of putting it is that we've chosen to be obedient to God, following His ways instead of sinning.

2. Ask Jesus Christ to lead your life. That means you decide to surrender your will to Him. You may have heard people refer to that as "getting saved." When you do that, Jesus Christ comes into your heart by the Holy Spirit. It's a supernatural act by which He actually lives in you. The Bible tells us He is our "companion," our "counselor," and that He will teach us. When someone becomes a Christian, he decides to let God lead his life. He consults His Word (the Bible), prays, and trusts the Holy Spirit's guidance about every key decision in life. One way to say this is that Jesus is "Lord of your life." He's in charge.

This sounds risky, but it really isn't! The Bible tells us that God is a loving Father who desires to give good gifts to His children, and that He has a purpose and plan for our lives. We're uniquely made and we fit into His purpose—being saved not only keeps us from hell, but it puts us on a path to receiving God's richest blessings eternally and to living a purposeful life on earth.

It is important to have counselors who are comfortable with children

If you decide you want to repent and ask God to lead your life, it's very simple.

If you are sincere, all you have to do is tell that to God. You tell Him by praying to Him. The words of the prayer aren't "magic"—you're just communicating your willingness to give Him your life. You would pray something like, "Dear God, I admit that I am a sinner, and I choose to turn from my sin. I ask Jesus Christ

to come into my life, and I choose to follow Jesus for the rest of my life. Amen."

Do you want to do that? Is this an independent choice by you, and do you understand what I have explained? (If yes). Great! Would you like to pray similar to what I just described? (Or, you give them the words and they can pray after you, phrase by phrase).

Counseling Children

It is important to have counselors who are comfortable counseling with children. The number you recruit depends on the type of audience you expect to have. What percentage of the total respondents do you think might be children? Some tips on counseling children.

- Children are more prone than adults to respond for the wrong reasons. Their reasons for responding will range from "my friend came," and "I thought I'd get a prize," to "I have to go to the bathroom." Of course, some will come because the Holy Spirit called them!
- If a counselor has any indication that the child has not come forward for the right reason, they should tell the child, in their own words: "This is a very, very important decision, and you should not say you're making a decision to become a Christian because your friend is making that decision. This is between you and God, not you and your friends, or your brother or sister."
- Beware of discouraging a child. If a child came forward for the wrong reason, or simply doesn't understand enough to make a decision, always send the child away encouraged! Counselors should say things like, "God is drawing you and He has a great plan for you! There will probably come a time soon when you make a decision to follow Him! Until then, keep talking to your mommy and daddy and Sunday School teacher (if they have such things; check carefully what the child has on his registration card, if you have it)

about Jesus, keep reading your children’s Bible, and keep praying,” then pray with the child, affirming in the prayer much of what you just said.

Counseling Arrangements/Set-up

The counseling set-up will be altered according to the type of event you have, so be flexible.

Some tips:

- If it is not an in-home or neighborhood event, it is important to have a designated location for counseling. The atmosphere should be one of reasonable calm and quiet.
- In the counseling process of many events, a “traffic cop” will be needed to match respondents with counselors. As much as possible, match respondents and counselors of like ages and gender.
- The location should be large enough to process at least one-third of the respondents at a time, with ample room for them to be able to speak quietly with the counselor without being overheard, and with comfortable seating set up in advance with groups of 2 or 3 chairs facing each other.
- Decision cards should be available to fill out during the counseling event. (The “Personal Commitment Guide” and “Living in Christ” include decision cards in the resource.)
- Bibles should be available to give those who do not have a Bible. Be sure to use an easily understandable translation of the Bible.
- A follow-up spiritual growth piece should be available for respondents to take with them. More on this in the Follow-Up section.

It is vital that you know who came to your event

Registration Forms

This is an aspect not to be taken lightly. With a goal of making disciples, it is vital that you know who came to your event, and as much about them as possible. Wording and precise categories are vital. Tips:

- Include space for name, age, address, phone number, e-mail, and church status.
- With regard to church status, ask the question on the card this way: Are you consistently active in a church? (yes/no) If so, which one? Do not merely ask “Are you a church member?” Many have a membership from childhood or past years and never attend. Do not merely ask “Do you attend church?” They may be mere once-a-year attendees. Asking if they are “consistently active” by no means guarantees you get an honest answer, but it may increase the likelihood because you are being specific in your request.
- If your event does not call for a come-forward invitation, include, with check boxes:
 - Today I have decided to become a follower of Jesus Christ.
 - I am rededicating my life to Jesus.
 - I have questions and would like a spiritual counselor to contact me.

The Role of the Holy Spirit in Decision Counseling

The Holy Spirit is the one who has to give the invitation

Counseling someone about such a vital decision as a relationship with Christ can seem

daunting. The great news is that the Holy Spirit—the ultimate Counselor—is in the meeting! Jim Coldiron says, “A speaker shares the message and makes the claims of Christ clear, but the Holy Spirit is the one who has to give the invitation!”

Some points about the work of the Holy Spirit in counseling:

- The Holy Spirit draws lost people to Himself. Hence, you don’t have to!
- The Holy Spirit guides your conversation. As you speak with someone about spiritual matters, literally be conscious of the Spirit’s presence and be quietly, in your mind, inviting Him to guide.

- In doing the above, the Holy Spirit will give the respondent the right questions, and the well-prepared counselor the right answers!
- Remember that the Holy Spirit is your discerner. When you are trying to determine whether a respondent—adult or child—understands, trust the peace or disruption of peace the Spirit gives you.

What Now? Follow-up is Not an Afterthought

Follow-up must be prompt

A key thing to remember: the event is not over when the event is over! Indeed, the spiritual growth of those whom God has brought into the kingdom is just beginning. And the continued nurturing of those drawn closer to the kingdom must continue.

Beware of a lag of emotional and physical energy among your people when the event is over. To avoid that, and to properly systematize follow-up, have your counselors ready to continue follow-up beyond the event.

Follow-up must be prompt, especially with those who responded to the invitation to become followers of Christ, or who sought any form of counsel. “Can you imagine bringing a baby home from the hospital and asking it to take care of itself for the first 48 hours?” asks Jim Coldiron. “Of course not. These are babes in Christ.”

And the enemy—Satan—is not happy with their decision. He will plant doubt and discouragement, allure them with their weaknesses, and create as much havoc as possible. It is vital that someone of strong faith in Christ walk alongside the new believer, either staying the course with him or transitioning him to a body or small group of other

Administrative tracking of the respondent's information is crucial

believers who will nurture him. Administrative tracking of the respondent's information is crucial! A “lost card” is a lost personal appointment to speak into someone's life!

A poorly filled out card might limit or prohibit effective follow-up. A card found in someone's desk nine weeks later is probably a lost opportunity. Just as a “traffic cop” was necessary for counseling assignments, an administrative point person is vital for the follow-up and assimilation process. He might be the same person; regardless, the same level of skill applies.

Contact can be made with respondents by phone, e-mail, or letter, though a phone call is more personal and preferred. Immediate follow-up of respondents should come from these parties, tailored for each situation as it applies to your event.

Counselor follows up with those he counseled: (24–72 hours)

- The best follow-up is done by the individual who did the counseling at the event. Getting into the home within 48-72 hours of the decision is very important. Have the event counselor continue the relationship by helping the new believer study the four lessons in the “Living in Christ” book or the six lessons in the “Beginning Steps” booklet over four to six weeks.
- If the event was hosted by an individual or family in a home or neighborhood, a note should be written to all attendees, with specific phone follow-up offered depending on needs indicated and decisions made. (24-48 hours)
- Church pastor writes a letter to (1-4 days):
 - Those who made a decision to follow Christ.
 - Those who made any other type of response (asked for guidance, etc).
 - All who attended that do not fit in the above categories.
- If funds allow, sending a discipleship piece (such as *Decision* magazine by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association) or a devotional is an encouraging action. You might also offer a weekly e-mail devotional, produced by a staff member or any of the many such devotionals available online. (1 week)
- Note that follow-up is the area where the biggest mistakes are made, and where

the most benefit in the kingdom of God is lost. “Research shows that of people who didn’t come to church after a year of visiting, 93 percent said it was because they did not find one friend in that period of time,” Coldiron says. “The counselor needs to be the friend, and the small group needs to be the follow-up.”

- After contacting respondents and meeting their immediate spiritual needs, assimilating them into the body of Christ is the next, vital step. They will not be disciplined any other way! A staff member, Sunday School director, or other person responsible for tracking Sunday School and/or small groups should take the data on respondents and match them as to a group that appears to fit. Then ask a member of that group to contact the respondent with an invitation to visit the group, and with an offer to pray for them in any way. If your church is doing a big event and expecting a high number of respondents, it is a good time for Sunday School classes/small groups to have social events planned for a week or two after the event, a ready-made invite to respondents.

Coldiron says of following up and assimilating, “The ones with no background that come to Christ, most of the time we have to work with them in a special way, giving extra help.” Besides foundational curriculum, special new believers’ classes or foundational discipleship groups may need to be ready to begin right after the harvest.

“The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association trains a number of people to lead small groups where there wasn’t a church or they didn’t have a church background,” Coldiron says, recommending “Discipleship Exercises” from BGEA as a strong resource. Go to http://www.billygraham.org/SH_ThirtyDiscipleshipExercises.asp to obtain this resource.

A key thing to remember: the event is not over when the event is over

Resources

NAMB Resources:

- *Personal Commitment Guide*—A counseling booklet. (NAMB)
- *Beginning Steps for New Believers*—A study guide for new believers. (NAMB)
- *World’s Greatest Adventure*—Beginning steps for children. (NAMB)
- At some events, utilizing the *Evangelistic Response Center* (1.888.Jesus2000 and www.thegoodnews.org) might be wise. Consider putting this data on registration cards and follow-up letters/e-mail.

To order (NAMB) North American Mission Board resources go to www.nambstore.com or call 1 866 407-NAMB (6262).

BGEA Resources:

- *Living in Christ*—Student/adult immediate follow-up tool. It includes: decision card, the Gospel of John, and a four-week introduction to the Christian life.
- *Jesus Loves Me*—Children’s version of the above.
- *Steps to Peace with God*—Witnessing booklet for use by encouragers during the 30 days leading up to the celebration.
- *My Commitment*—Counseling guide for every anticipated decision.

You will need one “My Commitment” for every anticipated decision. You will need one “Living in Christ” for every student and adult anticipated decision. You will need one “Jesus Loves Me” for every child’s anticipated decision. These resources are produced by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and can be purchased at a greatly reduced rate by contacting www.billygraham.org.

Creative/Worship Team

Many evangelistic events involve creative arts or worship components. Prayerfully consider whether this fits with your event. Musical or artistic entertainment for its own sake is needless. If creative arts and/or music make sense as part of the A, B or C of events, then plan accordingly. Resist the religious ideas that music must be part of every activity, and resist overlooking music and art as a means of reaching others.

Resist the religious ideas that music must be part of every activity

If music or creative arts is any part of the event, it should seamlessly flow with the style and purpose of the event, pointing people to Christ and to a crescendo effect when the one who delivers the gospel takes the platform.

Music for the sake of music should not be a rationale. Music with a purpose should be, and music in a spiritual context should lead to worship.

If music is part of the plan, it is vital to carefully consider what type of music. Some churchgoers once complained about a NASCAR-themed outreach event near one of the major raceways on race weekend. They had gone to the outdoor event on the raceway grounds and found a band playing country music and people with occasionally foul language in attendance.

Some church members complained to the evangelistic organization that put on the event, to which the event manager responded: "That's exactly who we were trying to reach!" The gospel had been shared. Many people had given their lives to Christ. That's the bottom line.

The Worship Team

(LE: formed 11 months out; SE: formed 4 months out)

The leader would likely be the worship pastor, if applicable. Accompanists and other musicians are logical members as well. Be open-minded to include one or more (depending on the size of the team) people who are not involved in music ministry *but intimately understand the purpose of the event and can help the worship team work in step with that purpose*. The team will work together with the overall leadership of the event to consider and prepare the best presentation of the gospel through music.

Functions of the Team

- Provide music that will attract your target audience.
- Begin with the end in mind. Who are you trying to attract? (Those who do not know Christ). What age group, socioeconomic group or genre of life? (For instance, young families, parents about 30 years old, young professionals, hip, trendy). Consider music that appeals to this group without being offensive to Christians. Remember that only lyrics are "Christian" or "non-Christian."
- Remember the story above, and who you are trying to please—not the church body! What the church body likes and what will attract or hold the attention of your target audience may be vastly different, so resist trying to please the wrong people. Your team must determine the style of music suitable for the event and who is best to lead it. For the above example, you would not want a 50-ish quartette singing Southern gospel, but a 30-ish individual or band performing in the style of Green Day or U2. Your local Christian bookstore can help you match the styles of contemporary secular artists to the styles of Christian artists, helping you define what type of music to use.

- Set up all travel and contract logistics with any worship leaders/bands brought in for the event. (LE: 6 months)
- Work with the event director to consider the exact times when music will play or be performed and what its purpose is. The theme of the event must be understood and considered when choosing music. (3 months)
- Work with the logistics team and—as applicable—the church technical team, to secure all appropriate set-ups. (1 month)
- Utilize an effective outdoor music strategy.
(1) Consider the volume, (music levels should allow witnessing conversations).
(2) Schedule music breaks to enhance witnessing opportunities.
- If a church choir is involved, work with the worship leader to set up practices and prayer meetings. Enlist a deeper level of support from the choir by challenging them to keep a list of people they are inviting to the event and praying for them to receive Christ. (6 weeks)



Promotion Team

The goal of promotion and marketing is to increase attendance by facilitating enlistment. In simple

People bring people

terms: people bring people. While some of your marketing may be aimed at the people you want to reach, beware of over extending the marketing to that group. The road is narrow in the kingdom of God and in marketing—your most targeted marketing should be aimed at *your people*, to motivate them to bring others.

“About 80 percent of the people who attend an evangelistic event come by personal invitation, and about 70 percent come in the actual vehicle of the person who invited them,” says Jim Coldiron.

Now take it one step further. Coldiron says that among the churches that use Operation Andrew, “the ones who bring the 70 and 80 percent are

About 80 percent of the people who attend an evangelistic event come by personal invitation

overwhelmingly the ones who were involved in Operation Andrew.” Operation

Andrew is a covenant based on John 1:40-42 between the individual and God to bring unchurched people to the event.

Promotion of your event will be vital, but you can't judge effective promotion merely by how big a crowd you draw. The question isn't, “Did we draw the number of people we expected?” It is, “Did we draw the *right* people?” A full house of believers isn't evangelism, it's fellowship. And in terms of your evangelistic goals, it's failure!

A very famous NFL coach, who is known to have a strong walk with Christ, will not speak in churches. Why? Because he assumes most are filled with followers of Christ (never mind debating that point). However, prove to that coach by your detailed planning and promotion that you can draw lost people to a non-churchy event, and he will prayerfully consider speaking. Why? Because he *intentionally* targets. He knows who he wants

to speak to and why, and he adapts accordingly. You must do the same.

Promotion of the event must be targeted, varied, and culturally sensitive. The first thing you'll need is a number of promotions directors and promotions teams.

Qualities of a Director and Team

- Seek a director who has some level of experience in media, preferably a writer who has dealt with secular media before. An advertising background would work as well. In addition, he must be administratively skilled. In a large church, this director could be a staff person specifically gifted and equipped to promote the functions of the church. (LE: 11 months; SE: 4 months)
- Support this person with a team that has strengths the director does not have. For instance, if your director has experience in writing but not advertising, look for someone who can advertise to certain markets.
- As you consider the types of people you want to draw to the event, represent those groups on the team so they can help gauge the effectiveness of the various public relation vehicles used.
- Have enough people—and this would depend on the breadth and size of the

Operate within a budget

event—to divide tasks among them evenly, with the oversight of the director.

Duties of a Director and Team

- List every group or sub-group of people you want to reach in the event. Example: unchurched children from our community, children from surrounding day care centers, children living in subdivision XYZ, parents of unchurched children, and so on. (LE: 9 months; SE: 2 months)

- List the various ways you will be able to communicate to your target group(s). Obvious examples are radio, TV, newspaper, etc., but be as specific as possible. Example: neighborhood “shopper” newspaper, flyers in local cafés, brochures distributed to day care centers. You are thinking of communication means *specific to the target group*. (LE: 9 months; SE: 2 months)
- After subdividing the responsibilities, tackle each PR means and targeted group. One group may be writing flyers; one may be writing and executing newspaper ads, and so on. (LE: 8 months; SE: 7 weeks)
- Produce special promotional events, if appropriate for your event. For instance, for a summer event for children (such as a VBS extravaganza), you might offer a free dinner at a central location for the area day care directors. (Dinner, not lunch, because they’ll be doing day care!) There you would praise their work, bless and encourage them verbally, and perhaps give a small gift, and inform them of your event, its benefit to their clients, and the facts about the event. Be brief, professional, encouraging, and informative. The outcome will not only be attendees, but improved community relations. (LE: 1 month; SE: 2 weeks)
- Operate within a budget given you, or develop one for submission to the overseeing person or body.

What People Need to Know and How to Tell Them

- People want to know the facts of the event and the immediate benefits for participating. It’s almost as simple as that. In flyers, ads, personal or corporate communication, tell them when, what, where, why, how and how much. Go big on the WHY. What is the hook? The entertainment value? The take-away value? Think with the end in mind.

For instance, why should an unchurched community member attend your church’s Christmas drama? Because your drama will bring together the community to celebrate

the season in expressions of warmth and love through gifted singing and acting. You *are* telling them about Jesus, but that is not the *hook*. The hook has value in and of itself and is not manipulation, but you are praying and planning as if it is a bridge to communicate deeper truth and to begin a deeper relationship with that community member. Be smart about your approach—think like an unchurched person.

- Unchurched people don’t know the Christian lingo—or if they do, they have negative associations with it. So skip it. Stress the value added to them, in their language. Remember, Paul said he became all things to all people that he might win some. He wasn’t saying the same old thing the same old religious way—he was teaching the truth in fresh language people understood.

Be Media Savvy

- Work hard to find cost-effective media means. Many media agencies are good at helping you bundle media touches (radio minutes on various stations; reduced packages, etc.) but then you are paying for the agency expertise. Work well in advance. A good business person can work good deals with the newspapers, local “shopper” publications, and radio. Since you are a non-profit, ask about free non-profit spots or reduced rates. (LE: 6 months; SE: 3 months)
- Because you want lost people at the event, do not spend most of your money on Christian radio. Have a business person on your team do the market research to see what the “target audience” is of the popular local radio stations. Try to advertise on that station that targets your target audience. Just five spots a week from the event, though perhaps very costly, can make a huge impact if the station is one of the more popular ones in the area and has a target audience that overlaps yours. And remember, don’t make an ad sound churchy or religious.

- Christian radio ads should be tailored to the audience, so they should not be the same as the secular ads (unless it is the 10-second who, what, when, where ad). Christian radio ads should stress the opportunity to invite unchurched friends to an event that promotes community fellowship. You're trying to get them to reach out *and* attend, not just attend.

When to Promote

- Beware of spending advertising dollars and effort too soon. Even in our most rural communities, people live fast-paced lives. great flyer for a great event landing in a home or on a desk three months out is junk mail. The same flyer one month out is an opportunity. (LE: 1 month; SE 2 weeks)
- General rule of thumb for promoting a large event:
 - Four weeks before the event: general promotion
 - Two to three weeks before the event: double the level of promotion
 - One week before the event: double the promotion efforts again

Beware of spending advertising dollars and effort too soon

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 many people will see them. Ask permission before you place the posters. This will foster good relationships with the community. (LE: 6 weeks; SE: 2 weeks)
- A banner or large outdoor sign near your church or the place you have chosen for the evangelistic event. Make it colorful and attractive. Again, be target-group sensitive, avoiding Christian lingo.

How Much?

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

Usually, one person will attend for every 10 flyers you place at the doors

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 evangelistic block party in the neighborhood on the day of the party, your numbers will be larger. The main objective of advertising is to let people know about the event in a clear and inviting way.

One-to-One: Do the Internal Promotion so the External Promotion Gets Done

The bottom line remains that most of the people at your event will be personally invited by church members. A massive media blitz can't change that, so if your budget and overall resources are limited, remember to focus on getting your people informed and motivated to invite others. (LE: 6 weeks; SE: 3 weeks)

Here are some tips on promoting the event to the church:

- Promotional flyers and posters strategically located in the church building or meeting area
- Flyers, posters, and emails thoroughly distributed through:
 - Small groups
 - Sunday School classes
 - Parents of after-school or day care children
 - Church family homes
- Frequent, positive promotion from the pulpit. The pastor should regularly communicate the purpose, goals, and

general details of the event to the church. His communication should be designed not only to inform, but also to personally enlist their support to be involved. He must tell them directly, “the success of this event hinges on you inviting and bringing unchurched people”.

- Strong emphasis on prayer before the event. Prayer communicates to the congregation the importance of the event.

Final Word

Remember, internal promotion is as vital as external promotion. It is your people bringing people that will make the event a success!



Logistics Team

He wasn't looking for a church home, just a fun, safe place for the kids to hang out on Halloween, and maybe a place for the children to go to church. But he wasn't into it. No way. So the man and his family checked out Hebron Baptist Church's fall festival with another 5,000 or so people. Later, he would e-mail Pastor Larry Wynn:

"When I walked on campus, I was greeted warmly. No one hit me with hard sell about church. The events I took my child to were well run. Even when we were standing in line, they were handing out candy. I've got to be honest, I was not a church person. I was just looking at churches because of our children, but I told my wife when I left, 'This is where we will come to church because they cover their bases.'"

Wynn adds, "That man came to Christ within a couple of months."

If you weren't convinced before of the need and value of superb logistical preparation, you should be now. So what do you need to do? This list cannot be comprehensive, because each event is different, so adapt as needed.

Logistics Leader

No doubt you know some "type A", big picture, creative types who come up with great ideas, but don't do details well. Word to the wise: don't let one of them lead your logistics team! For success, you must sweat the details. Here's a place where someone who obsesses over every detail can be helpful!

You are looking for:

- In addition to a great organizer, a strong encourager, as there will be many people to disperse to many tasks in an orderly fashion. This person is essentially a traffic cop with a smile and firm-but-gracious demeanor.
- People with the spiritual gifts of service, then encouragement.

- People who work in service industries, logistics, and/or who manage large numbers of people (hands-on, from mid-management, not CEO level).

Remember, depending on church size and event location, certain ministerial and/or non-ministerial staff will necessarily be involved in logistics, particularly whoever is responsible for facilities management.

Logistics Teams and Responsibilities

Size of teams varies per event; always over-estimate the need.

If you don't know who attended, it almost doesn't matter that they did

Registration Team

If you don't know who attended, it almost doesn't matter that they did. This team is vital!

- This team's responsibility is to find appropriate, sometimes creative, means to capture key data on all event attendees.
- What you need to know: name, age, e-mail address, physical address, phone number, regular church attender?, (if so, where?); names/ages of children.
- You need a "hook" for getting this data. It may be that the registration card is required in order to a) be fed, b) be eligible for door prizes. Those are the two most common ways. Regardless, find a way. Many people don't voluntarily register.
- This team must work carefully alongside the counseling and follow-up teams, to cross-reference data for follow-up.
- You may add additional areas to the registration card. For instance, "Check here if you'd like to speak with a pastor," "Prayer requests," or "Check here if you'd like to receive more information about

our ministries” (this can highlight specific ministries of the church that will meet the needs of the target group).

- If your church has a data system such as Shelby Systems, ACS, or merely uses Excel spreadsheets, carefully consider how you might merge the data you gain with the system and how you search the system for data, prospects and follow-up information.

Facilities Team

- Make sure the needed rooms or areas of the church ground or event location are secured, setup, and clean. (24 hours)
- See to it that any special city or county permits needed for events are secured. For instance, if you’re putting a tent on a property in a town with ordinances about appearance, size, and so on. (LE: 6 months; SE: 3 months)

Parking Team

- This is another area that may require special permits or extra policed help, depending on size and location of event.
- You need parking attendants (wearing matching bright vests, preferably strategically positioned, with a detailed traffic flow plan, and with a clear leader to resolve flow issues.
- Attendants should be gracious, smiling, ready to answer questions, and direct people in a kind tone.
- Depending on event size, target group, and facility specifics, you may need special parking for parents with small children in addition to standard handicap parking.

Give your guests the best and shuttle the rest

- If the event is on the church site and the whole body plus guests are invited, make sure ample visitor parking is marked off. You will need more visitor parking than normally set aside. Give your guests the best and shuttle the rest! Even small and medium-sized churches have to think about this because your building(s) may be

land-locked and you may have to surrender all or most parking near it to visitors and shuttle members from a nearby business, school or so on, where you have previously arranged to park.

- If the event is in a home or neighborhood, advise the neighbors there will be a crowd and thank them for their patience.

Usher Team

- No matter the size or nature of your event, wherever people go, they should be within 60 seconds of being able to find someone to answer a question or solve a problem.
- Find your most gracious people, with the best people skills, and identify them with big badges (with their first name large and “Ask me for help” below it, or the more staid “Usher”).
- Ushers should be neatly dressed, highly visible, and constantly looking for someone to help.
- Make sure the ushers (also called “greeters,” “hospitality team” “help team”, etc.) know everything there is to know about the event. Give them an efficient, laminated cheat sheet that answers every conceivable question about the event (location of child care, length of event, normal church service times, location of first-aid room, etc.) Have them study the cheat sheet so that they have to use it minimally. (1 week)

They should be within 60 seconds of being able to find someone to answer a question

- If the event was free but ticketed, and capacity isn’t an issue, supply the ushers with additional tickets for those who lose them or need an extra.
- When giving directions to somewhere not in sight or one turn away—or if the guest seems confused by directions—the usher should take him where he needs to go, then return to their post. Hence the need to saturate with ushers—assume they’ll have to leave their post to escort.

- If the event is ticketed, the usher team may serve the ticket-taking function as well. In that case, have ushers near the ticketing area to escort and answer questions, so that those who are collecting tickets do not have to leave their post to find help.
- Depending on the nature of the event, be sure to cover seating procedures for late comers. (i.e., don't enter during prayer or certain theatrical aspects where lighting is sensitive, when the gospel is being presented, etc.)

- Staff it with at least a nurse, and possibly a doctor, from within the body of Christ.
- Have basic first aid equipment on hand, including a defibrillator.
- If you project your event to involve 100 people or more, advise local emergency response teams (your local fire/EMT station, for instance) and police of the event, and of any special parking arrangements or set-up they might need to be aware of in order to respond effectively to a 911 call. Agree with them on a clear location for emergency response vehicles to respond to, and keep that area clear of parking, and so on.

Security Team

- Depending on the nature and the size of the event, you will want a small but well-trained team of people to help in this area.
- Look for police officers (current or retired) in the church body to do this role.
- You want quick-thinking people who don't overreact.
- If the event is large enough, it is good to hire one or more uniformed officers to work the event and be the go-to person for serious issues. (1 month)
- Often the same officer(s) can work the traffic flow and then be in the facility during the event.
- Give the security team radios—or at least have cell numbers—for each other or any hired officers, and one or more staff liaisons.
- If a significant personality is part of the event, assign a security person to them. The goal of the security person is not to be a "visible bodyguard" but a discreet presence ready to step in for crowd control or handle any situation.
- All other security personnel should simply be discreetly roaming the event site.
- The security team should include a sub-team for first aid. Set up a first aid station at or very near the event facility.

Sample Registration Card

(Note: For all events, full completion of card must be required for admission, to eat, or some other reason because these follow-up opportunities are your most vital function in the event!)

Name _____

E-mail _____

Phone No. _____

Mailing Address _____

Are you an active member of a church? Y/N

If so, which one? _____

Would you like to know more about the ministries of (name the church or sponsoring organization)? _____

Optional elements, depending on nature of event

How did you hear about the event? _____

Names/ages of children? _____

Mark here if you made a decision today to: follow Jesus Christ _____; rededicate your life to Christ _____. Or, if you would like a pastor to call you _____.

Please note any prayer requests below.

Event Specialist Team

- There will be functions not related to the above lists that are specific for each type of event. The particulars are so broad that it is virtually impossible to describe but they could include things like
 - In an area-wide crusade, someone would be responsible for working with the local schools to find appropriate ways to get the speaker/youth evangelistic personality into the schools. That is a type of function nothing above covers.
 - In sports-related events, someone would need to gather adequate sports equipment, and perhaps sports “giveaways” or “prizes” from area sporting good distributors.
 - In an outdoorsman’s event, someone would need to be able to identify and coordinate with the various area outdoor enthusiasts groups.

In short, think of any function that would not be part of any other type event except that event; such functions belong to the Event Specialist Team.



Budget Preparation

You must be creative and thoughtful on the issue of funding evangelistic events. Don't merely think traditionally. Funding options include:

- Church budget—The most traditional route, and one that should be part of the package in some form. Intentionally evangelistic churches will include events in their budget.
- Individual/corporate sponsorship—You may have an avid outdoorsman in your church who is financially blessed and would cover a sportsman's day event; or a car dealer who would sponsor an event. When planning events, pray about who in the body may have a heart for such an event and may step up to pay for it. Approach them directly.
- Partnerships—With other churches, denominational associations, parachurch ministries or evangelistic associations. It's kingdom work—don't necessarily go it alone.
- The event itself—Remember, some events such as sports clinics and camps, sportman's days, and so on, can completely or partially pay for themselves.

Don't merely think traditionally

Here is a suggested budget worksheet for you to use in developing a budget for an event.

Preparation Worksheet

Travel, lodging, and meals for special guest or guests \$ _____

Honorariums for special guest or guests \$ _____

Have each team develop a budget:

Spiritual Preparation Team \$ _____

Counseling/Follow-Up Team \$ _____

Creative Arts/ Worship Team \$ _____

Promotion Team \$ _____

Logistics Team \$ _____

Income \$ _____

TOTAL EVENT BUDGET \$ _____



events

section three



Evangelistic Block Parties

Evangelistic block parties are a special, highly effective, and flexible sub-set of evangelistic events. Within each variation of a block party—and variations are as expansive as the imagination—you will find an **A**ttraction, **B**ridge, and means to **C**ommunicate the gospel. The following is a comprehensive explanation and coaching on doing effective evangelistic block parties.

The evangelistic block party moves the church out of its building

Evangelistic Block Parties

Attraction

The evangelistic block party (EBP) is an intimate, highly effective mass evangelism event enhanced by using a personal evangelism thrust. The evangelistic block party moves the church out of its building and provides the church with a ministry of presence and visibility.

Bridge

There are many variations of a block party where believers can connect with unbelievers to communicate the gospel. See some of the types below. Fellowship, fun, food, and specific ministries provide numerous opportunities for sharing Christ in a nonthreatening setting.

Communicating the Gospel

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

Communicating the good news of Jesus Christ is the goal

receive Christ. 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 with the guests and giving them free marked New Testaments or evangelistic booklets. Trained witnesses explain the gospel in a nonthreatening, personal forum to enhance the sharing of the gospel.

Types of Block Parties

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.

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). 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.

Citywide Block Party

Some large churches that are located in smaller communities sponsor citywide EBPs which are designed to introduce people 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 of participants.

Event Specific Preparation

Block parties require much preparation. Prayer meetings, leader/committee enlistment, securing the location, and getting the necessary permits are important in the initial phase of planning. Depending upon what type of block party you are doing, materials such as food, giveaways, equipment, and program personalities should be planned early. If you are using clothes distribution, begin collecting items several months in advance. Flyers, ads in newspapers, and other promotional items should be distributed. Witness training sessions should be conducted for all those involved.

On the day of the block party, all physical arrangements should be done and all volunteers present. Have a brief meeting before the block party so any last-minute details are taken care of. Insure that each volunteer knows the location of all witnessing materials and what to do with the registration cards once filled out.

Block parties require much preparation



seasonal events





"it's a wonderful life" party (christmas)

Attraction

The classic Frank Capra film, "It's a Wonderful Life", starring Jimmy Stewart and Donna Reed.

Bridge

A light-hearted, fun, neighborly event provides a relational bridge. Fellowship created by the gathering will encourage interaction.

Communicating the Gospel

After the party, the host and/or hostess takes the opportunity to make a few comments about the teachable moments in the movie and explain why, in their personal view, "it's a wonderful life."

A light-hearted, fun, neighborly event provides a relational bridge

Event-Specific Preparation

- The film "It's a Wonderful Life" tells the story of George Bailey and the angel-in-training, Clarence Oddbody, who shows George what life would be like for family and friends if George had never been born. George, who had been considering suicide, decides that it really is a wonderful life. The video is available for purchase or rental at many video and discount stores. The original film was black and white.
- Systematically ask families in each neighborhood represented by your church to host a party.
- After showing the movie, the host or hostess could say something like, "A movie like this reminds us that many perfectly normal people experience a lot of pain and hardship in life, but that the struggles we face aren't all that bad when put in context. There is always a chance for redemption when we fail or struggle. My life is a wonderful life because the Lord Jesus Christ gave me a 'second chance' and caused life to be purposeful and joyful. I'd love to tell you more about my relationship with Jesus, or to pray for any of you, any time."
- Use a specific invitation and carefully invite neighbors, friends and coworkers who don't know Christ. Mix into the group one or two individuals or couples who do know Christ and understand the purpose of your party.

My life is a wonderful life because the Lord Jesus Christ gave me a 'second chance'

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
- Spiritual Preparation Team



birthday party for Jesus (christmas)

Attraction

A children's party celebrating the reason for Christmas.

*Focus on quality
over quantity*

Bridge

Your children will be hosting a party for Jesus' birthday. While it's fun to have church friends as well, the emphasis is on children who may have never heard the real Christmas story. The atmosphere should be that of a party—fun and festive with a purpose!

Communicating the Gospel

If your children are old enough and capable, they should share why Jesus came to earth. If they have asked Jesus to guide their life, have them say so and tell about it. Parental coaching will be required. If the children are too young or can't do this, a parent should briefly, but with clarity and joy, share why Jesus was born.

Event-Specific Preparation

- Systematically ask families in each neighborhood represented by your church to host a party. Making this a churchwide, same-day multi-site event is a good strategy and allows for advance training as a group. Aim for multiple parties and unchurched guests and do training in a simulated party atmosphere two-to-three weeks before the event.
- Keep it intimate—a guest list beyond 8-to-10 kids will make sharing time more difficult. Focus on quality over quantity.
- Make sure when, where, and RSVP information are included. A brief overview of the activities for the parents is also helpful.
- Because children are involved, it may be a good opportunity to walk with your children as they deliver the invitations and briefly share with the parents something similar to this: "Our family has really enjoyed having a birthday party for Jesus each Christmas. It's helped the kids remember what the holiday is all about. This year we thought it would be fun to have a big party. We'll do a craft, have some fun food and hear the story of Jesus' birth. We hope your kids can come, and moms and dads are welcome too!"

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
- Spiritual Preparation Team
- Effective Prayerwalking



christmas gift wrapping

Attraction

A needed service offered at no cost.

Bridge

By giving someone a service they need and getting a few minutes of relational time in the process, the opportunity is open for sharing the gospel or making an invite to an evangelistic event.

Communicating the Gospel

This is a quick encounter, so a gospel tract and/or invitation to a holiday evangelistic event is the best means.

Event-Specific Preparation

- You'll need to begin work 6 months beforehand to find a retail business that does not normally do gift wrapping but is willing for you to do it at no cost. Look within the church body first—given your motive, you'll almost certainly be looking for a Christian business person.
- The church must provide and pay for all the needed materials and begin recruiting work teams to do the wrapping 3 months in advance.
- Have a "wrapping training" session in advance—it is vital that your group does a good job.
- While this event is good for sharing the gospel, it is just as effective as a sort of pre-evangelistic effort, i.e., an opportunity to invite people (via well-produced, hard-copy invitations or tickets) to a Christmas evangelistic event (drama, musical, etc.). Hence this event is the "touch before the touch."

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Logistics Team
- Spiritual Preparation Team
- Promotion Team
- Effective Prayerwalking
- Budget Preparation



feast of plenty (thanksgiving or christmas)

Attraction

Free food and fellowship in a community that needs encouragement.

Bridge

A nonthreatening, relational event such as this makes it easy to share the gospel.

All church members attending must be trained in relational evangelism

Communicating the Gospel

After the meal, a brief time of reflection on the season and its meaning should be given by the pastor or another leader. Our thankfulness to the Father should be expressed, as well as a clear explanation of why the Father sent the Son to earth. A gospel invitation should be given in some form.

Event-Specific Preparation

- This is a great event to target a neighborhood which needs evangelistic presence and hope. For instance, a housing development, low-cost apartment complex, or low-cost trailer park.
- Work with the management of the various developments to stress that your church wants to make a positive impact in the community and is doing the event at no cost.
- The event must be done on-site—in a clubhouse or even in a tent put up by the host church (if seasonably possible).
- The event capacity/church-member-attending ratio must be about three to one or four to one so that there is a) ample room for the community you're trying to reach; b) enough church members on hand to counsel, encourage, and build relationships with the community.
- All church members attending must be trained in relational evangelism.
- Prepare handouts/flyers for the community describing church programs for kids and adults.
- Consider taking a program to the community (starting a Bible study there, doing ESL classes, financial planning classes; etc.)

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
- Logistics Team
- Spiritual Preparation Team
- Promotion Team
- Effective Prayerwalking
- Creative/Worship Team
- Budget Preparation



hell house (halloween)

Attraction

A redemptive twist on the “horror house” idea, this house tells a frightening story but ends with eternal redemption.

Bridge

The issues of life, death, heaven, hell, judgment, and mercy make people think about eternity. This theme plays off the macabre atmosphere of Halloween, but not in an offensive manner. The drama is entertaining but thought-provoking, raising a question of where someone will spend eternity.

Communicating the Gospel

The options to the question are displayed in the drama—heaven or hell? The solution to the question is given in the last scene, with a clear gospel presentation that includes an invitation by response card or by talking to a counselor.

The issues of life, death, heaven, hell, judgment, and mercy make people think about eternity

Event-Specific Preparation

- Scene possibilities are endless, and there are ample helps for how to produce this, especially from Judgment House, whom you can contact via www.judgmenthouse.org.
- The drama is a room-to-room (possibly including outside scenes) presentation of a story in four to six stages, culminating with a crisis and salvation.
- Move people through the scenes in relatively small groups (10 to 20, depending on facility size)
- Attendees have seen the “crisis moment” and seen someone in the drama respond to a clear gospel invitation. In the follow-up room, which is the final stop for all participants, the hook of the presentation is used as a bridge to a brief, clear gospel invitation.
- Hint: many potential scenes include accident or police-related drama. Partner with local fire/police officials to use their vehicles, in addition to possibly needing their assistance in security.
- Be real without being grotesque—reality and good drama is important. Pray and consider carefully the fine line between realistic and offensive/disturbing.
- This is a great outreach to teenagers in particular. Many of the actors can be teenagers. You need full buy-in from the youth ministry.
- Advertise aggressively. This event can be a big draw. Depending on space limitations and actual physical arrangements, you might want to give away or sell tickets in advance, but leave allowance for walk-ins.

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
- Spiritual Preparation Team
- Promotion Team
- Effective Prayerwalking
- Creative/Worship Team
- Logistics Team
- Budget Preparation

A great outreach to teenagers



halloween costume party for adults

Attraction

“Why should the kids have all the fun?” could be the tag line for this party, in which adults dress up as characters or other people.

Bridge

The costumes and the theme of acting like someone else should provide ample bridge to share the gospel.

“Why should the kids have all the fun?”

Communicating the Gospel

The host is crucial. He or she should be prepared to share the gospel from the hook of his own costume, but also be sensitive to other costumes that provide easy transitions. About half- or three-quarters of the way through the party—before people start to leave—the host should gather everyone, praise the various costumes, and spend three to four minutes sharing about how their true identity is found in Christ and how others can know Him.

Event-Specific Preparation

- This event is good for a neighborhood or your work friends.
- Consider doing it on a night other than Halloween, as adults will likely be involved with their kids.
- This is a good tandem event with a kids’ event, IF you partner with a Sunday School class to have them do the party for the children of parents at your party, then switch and you do a party for their kids while they do one for adults. This tandem is a dual-outreach effort that not only reaches people but enhances partnership in the church body.
- Hosts and Christians who are invited must be very tasteful with their costumes.

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
- Spiritual Preparation Team
- Promotion Team
- Creative/Worship Team
- Budget Preparation



fall festival

Attraction

Many families are looking for safe alternatives to Halloween.

Bridge

Another relational bridge. People are easier to approach when having fun in a nonthreatening family setting.

Communicating the Gospel

Time can be set aside during the event to pause and have someone share the gospel, perhaps with the evil aspects of Halloween shown in contrast to the love and salvation of Christ. Christian tracts, including ones with Halloween themes, can be presented as prizes with candy. Games can incorporate Bible trivia or Bible facts.

Event-Specific Preparation

This is almost always a huge win. This is organization, organization, organization. You must:

- Register every guest with a detailed registration card that gives you means to follow up.
- Highly engage your church body to be relational witnesses during the event.
- Promote through the secular media. This event in a large church can draw 6,000 people in a small church even several hundred. Experience shows that at least 50 percent will not be from your church!
- This is an event that builds momentum—commit to it for years as it becomes “known” in your community.
- It is vital to have enough event stations, and plenty of variety. Besides classic carnival games, renting inflatables, having music outside, and roaming clowns, jugglers, and musicians is wise. Create a true “carnival” atmosphere.
- Carefully read the Introduction and Spiritual Preparation sections of this manual.
- Utilize the Budget Work Sheet.

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
- Logistics Team
- Spiritual Preparation Team
- Promotion Team
- Effective Prayerwalking
- Creative/Worship Team
- Budget Preparation

The evil aspects of Halloween shown in contrast to the love and salvation of Christ



easter egg hunt

Attraction

Almost everyone with at least one child under age 10 is looking for an Easter egg hunt—give them a great one.

Location is vital

Bridge

Relational. Blessing children blesses parents, and the setting is an easy one for casual conversation.

Communicating the Gospel

Make sure everyone is “registered” and has a prize number for special give-aways, so that at some point in the event you can bring everyone together. This will be the time for someone to share the real reason for Easter. It can be the pastor or other designated host. He should share briefly and clearly what Easter really is, and how to receive Christ. A response area can be designated for people to go to immediately afterward if they choose to ask Christ to lead their life.

Do age-appropriate hunts

Event-Specific Preparation

- Location is vital. A park is ideal, where a lot of people can gather but there is plenty of space to roam and hide eggs. Finding a location must begin at least 6 months in advance. Even if you have the space on campus, it is good to get off-site as you try to draw the unchurched.
- Be creative. Have special “characters” on hand (traditional and Christian) in costume. Have special “super eggs” hidden with prizes in them.
- Do age-appropriate hunts, either sectioning off various ages of kids in certain areas, or giving smaller kids at least several minutes of head start. Allow parents to assist smaller children (under age 6).
- You need lots of volunteers wearing badges that identify them and invite questions.
- Giveaways can come from local merchants who will give you some things and offer discounts on others. Begin procurement six months in advance.
- LifeWay sells “Salvation Eggs” that have the way of salvation inside the eggs. This would be a good giveaway for each person.
- Make sure you have ample, quality information to give to parents about children and parent ministries at church. As in some other events that draw unchurched families, perhaps plan this a few weeks before a major childrens’ event, family event, or parent conference.

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
- Spiritual Preparation Team
- Promotion Team
- Effective Prayerwalking
- Creative/Worship Team
- Budget Preparation



sports events





wild game dinner

Attraction

Primarily a men's outreach during a hunting season, but particularly effective near Thanksgiving (in advance preferably, as schedules fill up at this time of year). Men gather for a wild game dinner of elk, buffalo, alligator, even rattlesnake. It is an informal time of fellowship, food, and testimony from a popular speaker.

Bridge

In this nonthreatening environment, men will be open to hearing the gospel and making connections with men who know Christ and share some of their interests.

Communicating the Gospel

The speaker does this in the course of his talk, and individual church members should be ready and willing to share the gospel with their guests.

*This is not a
dress-up affair*

Event-Specific Preparation

- Though the returns are great, this is organizationally a big task. Be willing to start small. Gather a committee of administratively skilled people to lead in planning the details. Get the hunters in your church to provide as much of the wild game as possible. The rest can be purchased from companies (such as Denver Buffalo Company [303-293-3061] and Broadleaf Venison Inc. [800-336-3844]).
- Be low-key on the decor and dress—this is not a dress-up affair.
- Schedule a personality popular with men to speak. This must be done well in advance. Athletes (active or retired) make good choices, but choose carefully, making sure they have a strong testimony and the ability to deliver it.
- Stress to your men that this is an outreach. They should purchase tickets (perhaps entire tables) and give them to their lost friends. The pastor must stress from the pulpit: "The tickets are for the unchurched; don't bring your church friends."
- The "Wild Game Dinner" concept can be replaced by or used in conjunction with a NASCAR-themed dinner event—the two mix well. In either case, videos, booklets, tracts, and so on in the theme of the evening are attractive and useful bridges. There are racing and hunting-themed Christian materials available from various companies. Search the internet for instructions, videos, or printed materials to help in conducting this event.

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
- Spiritual Preparation Team
- Promotion Team
- Effective Prayerwalking
- Creative/Worship Team
- Logistics Team
- Budget Preparation



3-on-3 basketball or flag football tournament

Attraction

Thanksgiving is a big time for sports. Football is on television all weekend. Basketball season is just under way.

Bridge

Sports are a great medium for sharing Christ because they are nonthreatening and create fellowship and unity.

*Sports are a great
medium for
sharing Christ*

Communicating the Gospel

A devotional or the plan of salvation can be shared at half-time of each contest or before each game. If only a devotional is shared, a gospel invitation should be given at a predetermined time when all participants are present (awards time, banquet, etc.)

Event-Specific Preparation

- While you will attract athletes of all types, serious athletes will expect good officiating and good organization, so recruit good officials and be well organized.
- Budget for trophies and/or other giveaways (jerseys; Sports Spectrum magazine, etc.)—everybody should get something. Athletic apparel and equipment companies might be willing to donate or give cut prices to charitable events.
- Athletic tracts and discipleship materials abound—research them in advance and have plenty on hand.
- Conduct the tournament on the Friday and Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend, with competition rounds in the morning, afternoon, and (depending on venue) evening, if necessary.
- Cut the field into divisions according to age and/or competition level.
- If there is a popular Christian athlete in your area, consider asking him or her to be present for one round of competition and to share his testimony.
- Advise local sports parachurch ministries such as Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Athletes in Action of your plans, and seek their guidance or assistance.

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
- Spiritual Preparation Team
- Promotion Team
- Effective Prayerwalking
- Creative/Worship Team
- Logistics Team



super bowl party

Attraction

The Super Bowl is the most watched sporting event in America and a catalyst for in-home fellowship each year.

Bridge

In-home parties create an informal, highly enthusiastic, and relational atmosphere.

Communicating the Gospel

Sports Spectrum (www.sportsspectrum.com/power towin) produces an evangelistic half-time video filled with highlights and utilizing a top-name NFL star to share the gospel. A clear gospel invitation is given by video. The video is 12 to 13 minutes long, and half-time is about thirty minutes long, leaving ample time for food refills and bathroom breaks.

Remember, a room full of Christians isn't an evangelistic party

Event-Specific Preparation

- This can be one of the most effective events, but is also one of the most misused, in particular because of lack of intentionality. Remember, a room full of Christians isn't an evangelistic party!
- Utilize the detailed "Power to Win" evangelistic plan and process; it is effective.
- The event is best held in a home, where 8 to 20 people (depending on home size) join the hosts to watch the game. Intentionally invite unchurched work or neighborhood friends. If capacity is large enough, try to make sure several Christians are on hand, too, and understand the purpose of the event.
- Clearly advise guests, either in the written, e-mailed or verbal invitation, that a special half-time video will be watched. You want to alert them that half-time won't merely be a break, and that you won't be watching the half-time show.
- If not doing the event in a home, try to do it in a non-church neighborhood facility. It is less threatening to the unchurched and thus much more likely to draw viewers. However, doing a churchwide, large-scale Super Bowl event (large screen required, of course) runs the higher risk of a poor Christian/unchurched ratio. Renting out a restaurant can be effective. If doing a larger (40-plus) event, utilize door prizes as a means to get people registered.
- Utilize a churchwide strategy of having several in-home events in several neighborhoods, setting evangelistic goals and doing advance training just as if having one large on-site event. This builds momentum and empowers the full resources of the church body and staff in follow-up.

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
- Spiritual Preparation Team
- Promotion Team
- Effective Prayerwalking



sports clinic

Attraction

Quality sports instruction and play, possibly with a sports personality.

Quality instruction is job one. Your goal is to share the gospel

Bridge

Sports are the easiest relational bridges across which to share the gospel.

Communicating the Gospel

If a sports personality is involved, he will share the gospel during a break in the clinic instruction. If a personality is not involved, the station-to-station rotation of instruction will include a devotional station where the gospel is shared.

Event-Specific Preparation

- This event can pay for itself. If the church can't afford to totally underwrite—or just as a means to show value to the community—charge a nominal, competitive fee (\$10-15).
- Quality instruction is job one. Your goal is to share the gospel, but give the people what they came for, a quality clinic. It's a matter of integrity and building relationships.
- Scan the church body for quality coaches, i.e., high school, local college, ex-pros or even long-time youth league. Use your church's people resources to connect to coaches outside your congregation—high school, local college, ex-pros—who might participate.
- If possible, enlist a popular sports personality of at least local fame to help be a draw and to share the gospel if he is equipped (see appendix for "Guidelines for Dealing with Christian Athletes as Speakers").
- Use an administratively gifted coach, former coach, or athletic administrator to structure the clinic. A good format is using skill stations. Break down the four or five primary skills of the particular sport and teach them in 15 to 30 minute segments at fixed stations, dividing the participants into equal groups and rotating them through.
- Don't let lack of church-owned facilities keep your church from doing this type of event. You can rent city/county-owned facilities, or even partner with other entities to host the event.

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
- Spiritual Preparation Team
- Promotion Team
- Effective Prayerwalking
- Creative/Worship Team
- Logistics Team
- Budget Preparation



sports camp

Attraction

This is a week-long, multi-sport “day camp” in which expertise is offered and sports equipment is given away. Sports attract all segments of life, especially children. And parents are seeking activities for their children in the summer.

Bridge

This is a very relational event that creates an environment in which it is easy to share the gospel. Sports are the ultimate barrier-buster.

Communicating the Gospel

Each day there should be a devotional led by a different speaker who shares his or her faith. The gospel is also shared during the Sunday morning service, which is an awards service in which the participants receive their gear.

*Sports are
the ultimate
barrier-buster*

Event-Specific Preparation

- This free event is not for children of church members. This is important—you don’t want to fill up an “evangelistic” camp with saved kids.
- The target group is children who live in the projects, where day care needs are great and financial resources are low.
- The church transports kids to and from their homes.
- Local coaching and athletic “talent” is utilized for special instruction as available.
- Each child receives sports equipment, a camp shirt, a sports themed New Testament, and quality instruction.
- Begin soliciting equipment from various businesses nine months before the event.
- Be careful to have all liability forms filled out by parents.
- Open the camp to kids in the following order: underprivileged children; other community children; children in the church.
- If your organizational team is sound, well-networked and thorough, this will not have to be a high-budget event!

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
- Spiritual Preparation Team
- Promotion Team
- Effective Prayerwalking
- Creative/Worship Team
- Logistics Team
- Budget Preparation



5k or 10k road race

Attraction

Running is a vastly popular sport. Local road races need a large number of volunteers, or you can create your own race.

Have a designated charity to receive any profits

Bridge

A relational event, with many volunteers mixing with the community, makes it easy to share the gospel.

Communicating the Gospel

This depends in part on whether you are creating your own race or supporting a community race. In the former case, share the gospel at awards time and via written material. In the latter, it may be a one-on-one effort by your volunteers and/or via written materials.

Event-Specific Preparation

- This will probably take several years to develop some momentum unless you can sponsor or use a large number of volunteers at an existing event, such as a “series” event, which is a points race that many local running clubs have where runners accumulate points over a 10 to 15 race season. You can inherit a ready-made race by sponsoring an existing event or if the local club is looking to expand the series and you can sponsor a new race.
- A key is to get to know the local running club and coordinate with them.
- This event can almost pay for itself, as runners are used to paying \$15-25.
- A race is dependent upon volunteers to staff the aid stations (water, Gatorade, gel), registration tables, mark the course, direct traffic, and so on. A church is the perfect organization to provide volunteers. These volunteers need to be trained in relational evangelism.
- You will have all the data on runners, but will need to collect data for families, friends and fans, and have significant giveaways/drawings so you can get them to register.
- Do not go cheap on the runners’ medals and technical T-shirts. If you are not the prime sponsor, you may not be able to affect this, but if you are, then you need to make it nice. People will be wearing these shirts all year (make sure your church logo is prominently displayed) and they remember the races that have good shirts. If you are the prime sponsor, hire a graphic artist to design the shirt—don’t let an amateur do this!
- Hopefully, you can have the race start and end on your church property. If not, make sure you have a large canopy set up with music (worship band, choir) and food. Make sure registration for other church-related events (VBS, financial planning, weight-loss seminar, revival, etc.) is available in the same location, enhancing the bridge to your church. For the same purpose, have tables set

up promoting other ministries of the church, if you are able to get them in your building or on-site, or have a large tent.

- If you have to create your own race, you are going to need to hire a race director. This is someone who has all the timing equipment and the experience to help you have a good race. Most races are run for a charity.
- People do not see the church as a charity, so you need to have a designated charity to receive any profits. It can be disaster relief or a crisis pregnancy center or something not seen as an internal part of the church. You don't want it to be the youth group or choir that is receiving the profits.

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
- Spiritual Preparation Team
- Promotion Team
- Effective Prayerwalking
- Creative/Worship Team
- Logistics Team
- Budget Preparation



other types of events





sunday morning service

Attraction

The Sunday morning service and message is geared toward helping unchurched people answer or deal with life's issues. A website, bill boards, posters, or flyers should be distributed to advertise the Sunday main event.

The service is a nonthreatening event

Bridge

The Sunday service and website could be used to offer biblical answers to felt needs and life's issues. The service is a nonthreatening event because people are being invited to hear a speaker who will deal with life issues. This speaker may or may not be your pastor; a Christian personality, politician or author/speaker with cultural relevance can attract the lost.

Communicating the Gospel

During the Sunday morning event the guest speaker or pastor will present the gospel. Also, church members should reach out to lost and unchurched people in follow-up with their guests.

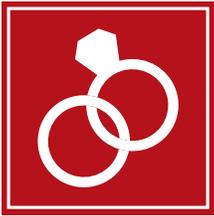
Event-Specific Preparation

- Don't overlook this idea—many churches do a “big event” each Sunday. The key in this instance is gearing it toward the unchurched, whereas on most Sundays it is geared to the body.
- Preparation key is educating and motivating the church body to invite unchurched guests for this particular Sunday or series. Give them the “hook” and rationale and help them understand how to conversationally communicate it to the lost. This coaching must come from the pulpit in the weeks leading up to the event.
- Do at least some level of media campaign in the community that focuses on the felt need this event will address. You are giving the community a fresh reason to consider attending.
- Your follow-up and counseling procedures must be enhanced. Particular effort to register guests must be made, whether by normal means with increased emphasis from the pulpit, or creating a guest registration card if one is not regularly used.
- Consider preparing a high quality (in appearance and text) take-away piece that communicates a summary of the message or additional, complementary points and helps. Of course, have church ministry information in this piece or readily available in others.
- Carefully read the Introduction and Spiritual Preparation sections of this manual.
- Utilize the Budget Work Sheet.

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
- Logistics Team
- Spiritual Preparation Team
- Promotion Team
- Creative/Worship Team

Invite unchurched guests



marriage vow renewal

Attraction

For many people, the most “spiritual” time of their life was their wedding. Some have not seen a church since. Some did not have a church wedding but wish they did. Hence, this event attracts many people for a variety of reasons. This is a group event, involving 10 to 50 couples, depending on venue size.

Bridge

An emotional bridge is always a good one, and this one is the commitment of each person to the other through vows. Weddings bring back warm memories and cause people to reconsider their steps, providing a natural bridge for sharing God’s purpose for marriage.

Weddings bring back warm memories

Communicating the Gospel

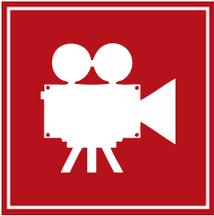
A natural progression has been built to the point of sharing how a person can know Jesus as his personal Savior. The pastor, in his charge to the couples, has set forth the biblical foundation of marriage. After the wedding vows, it is a natural time for the pastor to share the way of salvation, stressing to the couples that perhaps they would like to now “start over” (rededicate) with God, or perhaps they would now like to commit their marriage to God by accepting Jesus as their personal Savior.

Event-Specific Preparation

- In follow-up, consider offering (for sale or free) marriage-building resource materials. Scheduling a marriage-building discipleship class to begin the week after the renewal service would be timely.
- Make the event special by dressing it up. Some churches have made marriage licenses suitable for framing. A table can be set up where the pastor meets each couple and signs their “renewal” license.
- Keep the details of the actual service quiet. The element of surprise in some of the music and pastor’s comments is very important. Therefore, involve as few people as possible in the actual planning of the service.
- Do just the opposite for the reception, however. Involve many creative people. They will have great fellowship putting together the event, and that will motivate them to invite more unchurched couples and to invite others to do the same.
- Be prepared for an outpouring of professional counseling needs—such a time of renewal will cause much review and reconsideration that stirs up issues couples want or must have to deal with.

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
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- Promotion Team
- Effective Prayerwalking
- Creative/Worship Team
- Logistics Team
- Budget Preparation



friday family film festival/movie debut (movie night out)

Attraction

This could be either a drive-in movie night, or bring a lounge chair or blanket movie night. The focus is to reach unsaved and unchurched families and get them to come to the church campus and experience a safe environment. The event will build momentum every week because of word of mouth communication in the community.

Bridge

Another relational bridge event, with the Christians equipped and trained in relational evangelism. The movies need to be carefully selected to motivate conversation that easily bridges to spiritual issues, thus becoming another bridge.

Communicating the Gospel

One of the ministry teams should be in charge of assembling gift bags for the visitors to receive at a welcome booth. The bag could include a map of the venues on the campus, a church brochure with worship, and Bible study times, a Starbucks® gift card, a thank you note from the pastor, a gospel presentation booklet, or a web site they can go to for a gospel presentation. Regularly, if not each week, someone should take a few minutes at the end of the movie or during an intermission to share the way of salvation, hopefully via a hook from the movie.

Event-Specific Preparation

- Depending on venue and weather patterns in your city, you might consider this a spring event for several weeks, or a summer-long weekly event.
- Select a "G"-rated movie. Licensing for the movie is covered under the church's license to copy or project music. Or you can go to ccli.com and obtain a license to show the movie.
- Acquire a transmitter to transmit the sound on the car's radio. Or you can use a speaker system.
- If you use the "drive-in" format, have ample church members with good people skills moving through the parking lot greeting before the movie. Another way of increasing interaction between church members and guests is to have hosts moving from car to car during the movie or an intermission offering refreshments.

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
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- Promotion Team
- Effective Prayerwalking
- Creative/Worship Team
- Logistics Team
- Budget Preparation

*Select a "G"-
rated movie*



single mom car-care event

Attraction

Filling a practical need—changing the oil and checking over the vehicle of single moms who frequently don't have the time, money or expertise to handle it themselves.

Bridge

Godly men are the hands and feet of Jesus by meeting the ladies' needs.

Have car-savvy men do a several-point vehicle check.

Communicating the Gospel

Female co-hosts sit in the waiting area with the moms as the vehicles are being worked on and develop relationships, sharing the gospel on the spot if the opportunity is clear. Registration is required for all single women who come to this event, and the info is used for follow-up by ladies (preferably other, spiritually healthy, single moms).

Event-Specific Preparation

- Ideally, it is preferable to partner with an auto repair business owner in the congregation or Christian community who will let you use a couple of bays on Saturday morning, which is the best time for the event.
- Pre-registration will be required because you'll need the filter type/size to order them in advance.
- Have car-savvy men who will do a several-point vehicle check, advising the ladies of current or soon coming needs.
- Have a list of cost-effective repair places available for certain types of needs, and perhaps be prepared to consult with church(es) benevolence teams or single parent family ministries if a need is a safety issue and current.
- Advertise within the church, expanding perhaps to nearby area churches, and asking church staff at those churches to pass the info on to single parents.
- Advertise in coin laundries (including laundry rooms of apartment complexes), day care centers, and other places many single moms frequent.

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
- Spiritual Preparation Team
- Promotion Team
- Effective Prayerwalking
- Logistics Team
- Budget Preparation



free car wash

Attraction

Sometimes the simplest event can be the most effective. People want their car washed. They are used to seeing youth or college groups doing it.

Bridge

Matching a need with an opportunity at no cost.

This is an act of servanthood

Communicating the Gospel

While a group is washing the vehicle, someone else gently engages the driver/passengers in conversation and shares the gospel with them. How much easier could this be?

Event-Specific Preparation

- Don't take money. Literally refuse! This is an act of servanthood. You are doing the car wash for the opportunity to share the gospel.
- Saturday mornings are best. Find a highly visible location. Advertise with simple posters and signs at the intersection or near the road.
- Have tracts available.
- Do a great job! A lousy car wash damages credibility.
- If possible, get each driver to fill out a brief registration card for follow-up purposes.

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
- Spiritual Preparation Team
- Promotion Team
- Effective Prayerwalking
- Logistics Team
- Budget Preparation

A lousy car wash damages credibility



parents' night out

Attraction

A date night for parents who are not from your church.

Bridge

By doing a great job of caring for children in a wholesome, attractive environment with friendly greeters and care-givers, you'll build a relational bridge. It's a strong first touch for your church.

Communicating the Gospel

This is a seeding event, for the most part, though by all means the gospel can be presented in the handouts you'll give.

This is a seeding event

Event-Specific Preparation

- This is not for your people. It's a great idea to have this ministry for your people, but in this case you must be clear to the body that we are serving the community.
- Detailed medical info on the children must be acquired, such as you have on file for your church's children. Make sure this is available and that your administrative sign-in process is detailed enough that no child could slip through without the parents providing proper paperwork.
- In the process of that paperwork you will have gathered parents' names and contact info needed for follow-up. Make sure that gets recorded separately later for follow-up purposes. Request e-mails as well.
- Have attractive info (flyer, etc.) available for the families telling them about what the church offers children and families. Perhaps time this event a few weeks before a family-friendly event, major children's event, or parenting seminar. Give them this info as the child is picked up, so that it is less likely to be immediately discarded.
- Advertise for this event via local secular radio, local "shopper" newspaper, flyers in high-traffic areas (grocery stores, bookstores, etc.), and by word of mouth from the church body.
- If you have capacity for a large number of children, you can make this a church and non-church event by telling couples you will keep their children and the children of one unchurched family whom they invite out.
- Recruitment of care-givers for this event must begin eight weeks in advance. Recruit from singles, college students, after school care, and/or day camp workers if you have such, and capable senior citizens. Always communicate the point of the event, as this will motivate Great Commission minded people.

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
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- Promotion Team
- Effective Prayerwalking
- Creative/Worship Team
- Logistics Team
- Budget Preparation



ladies' luncheon

Attraction

Fun, food and fellowship among ladies in an attractive setting.

Bridge

Church members invite unchurched friends; the pleasant, relational environment makes sharing the gospel easy.

Pleasant relational environment makes sharing the gospel easy

Communicating the Gospel

This can be done by the speaker or by a designated lady at each table. A registration-card response is an option as well, but this setting lends itself to a personal testimony followed by invitation.

Event-Specific Preparation

- Make this an aesthetically attractive event. Put a team of ladies with a flare for decorating in charge of that aspect.
- This works well as a quarterly event, giving ladies in the church a consistent opportunity to bring unchurched friends and colleagues, and helping them develop the habit of doing so.
- The speaker should be inspirational and speaking on a topic that easily relates to women. If a quarterly event, vary the topics and style. It could be a serious topic one month, and something related to make-up, dress, and so on another time.
- Provide attractive door prizes and use registration for the prizes as the overall registration mechanism. One option for responding to the gospel is to have the ladies put a star on the door prize card if they are interested in hearing more about Christ. Then take up the cards after the gospel presentation.
- With the occasional exception of when a “big name” speaker is used, don’t spend a lot of money on external advertising. This is a relational event and your focus should be internal, motivating the ladies of the church to invite neighbors and coworkers.
- Make this an easy event for working ladies to attend. Consider them in event time, length, and location.

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

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- Logistics Team
- Budget Preparation



first place float

Attraction

Create a fabulous float for your town's annual parade.

Bridge

Parades draw crowds, and the crowds watch the floats. Almost any theme of parade lends itself to a Christian float.

Parades draw crowds

Communicating the Gospel

An artistic church member designs it, dozens of members work to make it a reality, and your church is exposed to lost people you'd never touch otherwise. Add an evangelistic touch with walkers or skaters alongside the float distributing candies with your church logo, invitations to your church, and talking with people in the crowd. Challenge each walker to share a testimony with at least one onlooker.

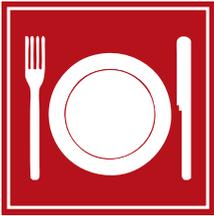
Event-Specific Preparation

This is a logistics-intensive event. You will need to start one year in advance, identifying the parade you want to participate in and finding out:

- Registration deadlines.
- Float requirements and limitations.
- How many "walkers" can be with the float.
- Float-day organizational details (where to report, when, etc.)
 - You need a very gifted creative team to come up with the concept (6 months before event) and then lead in the building of the float (aim for completion 2 weeks before event).
 - While the walkers can share the gospel, and it can be shared via literature, in some aspects this is a pre-evangelistic effort. You want to make a positive, upbeat impression. It is doubtful that a moving float, which is not observed for long, can communicate the full gospel. Choose a brief, positive theme and use the event to bridge to the community.
 - This is a good event in which to emphasize a particular aspect of your church's ministry. For instance, the single adults could sponsor this float, or the single parents, seniors, youth, and so on.

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
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- Promotion Team
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- Logistics Team
- Budget Preparation



dinner theater

Attraction

A first touch event that can be targeted to various age groups, aimed for an artsy crowd or couples. The event can take many forms, targeting married couples, college students, singles, and seniors. It could also be a seasonal theme (Valentine's Day, etc.)

Bridge

Entertainment and fellowship create a relational bridge.

The message of the drama could easily communicate the gospel

Communicating the Gospel

The message of the drama could easily communicate the gospel, with a master of ceremonies following up with a clear gospel invitation, either a come-forward call or by marking registration/decision cards.

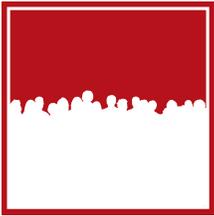
Event-Specific Preparation

- The church provides or caters a good meal, typically thematic, in conjunction with the format of the theater event for the evening.
- It is most effectively done outside the worship center of the church, possibly in a gymnasium or fellowship hall. It could also be done off-campus at a local theater or exhibition hall (keep in mind that you need serving facilities if it is not catered, and you really need round tables of 8-10 seats).
- Typically tickets are sold to cover the cost of the event (rentals, meals, sets, etc).

Enlist, equip, and mobilize the following ministry teams. Refer to the Ministry Team Preparation section of the manual for instructions on how the teams will function.

- Counseling/Follow-up Team
- Spiritual Preparation Team
- Promotion Team
- Effective Prayerwalking
- Creative/Worship Team
- Logistics Team
- Budget Preparation

For more details on how to effectively plan a block party, go to the Evangelism Planner and select the Event Evangelism category. Select the Block Party Manual. The free Evangelism Planner is available through your state convention evangelism department or by calling NAMB's Customer Service Center toll-free at 1 866 407-NAMB (6262).



revivals and crusades

While this manual is not designed to cover revivals and crusades, we at the North American Mission Board want to assert as strongly as possible that these two means of sharing the gospel remain alive and well. The Acts 1 and 2 strategy described in the chapter “Why Do Events?” illustrates the effectiveness of revivals and crusades. Well-planned and prepared harvest events work. In short, revivals and crusades work when pastors and leaders work them. Do not let your search for “the edge” carry you away from some of the historically proven effective means of sharing the gospel!

For more details on how to effectively carry out revivals, go to the Evangelism Planner from NAMB and select the Event Evangelism category. Select either the Revival or Area Crusade Manual.

The Evangelism Planner is a free resource and is available through your state convention evangelism department or by calling the NAMB’s Customer Service Center toll-free at 1 866 407-NAMB (6262). Additionally, printed copies of these manuals can be purchased through NAMB’s Customer Service Center.

Also, consider using one of the full-time evangelists from the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists at www.sbevangelist.org. The office of the “evangelist” goes back to Ephesians 4:11-12. They have a call and a gift from God for the harvest.

In short, revivals and crusades work when pastors and leaders work them

appendix

section four



Guidelines for Dealing with Christian Athletes as Speakers

- Start Early! You want to identify potential speaking candidates one year out.
- Identify athletes through ministry contacts and through para-church ministries (FCA, AIA, etc.) that work with them.
- Do your homework on the athlete. Don't be afraid to ask those who know him/her about their walk with Christ, about their speaking ability, etc. Famous does not equal well-spoken or mature. Sacrifice level of fame for quality of character and presentation any time! Who do you ask about athletes?
- Identify more than one, and set deadlines for when you need to hear back from the athlete or his/her representative. If you don't, you'll be backed up far too late trying to find a speaker.
- Contact them at least nine months out.
- Treat them as people instead of 'superstars'—they'll appreciate it.
- Write them a brief, practical letter that does not try to 'convince them' to do anything, but instead simply sets forth the opportunity. In your letter, tell them approximately how many people you expect to be in attendance, how you are reaching out to the lost, and – as much as possible – what percentage of the audience you expect to be unchurched. Clearly set forth the financial parameters: X amount honorarium plus expenses, and define expenses. How much do you offer? Consider it like you would a revival speaker or conference leader. If you have nothing to offer, simply say so.
- Know in advance how you want to handle the Gospel invitation, including exactly what role you want the athlete to play. Psychologically, it is better if the athlete can follow-through with the invitation, because you'll 'keep the audience' rather than risking losing it—mentally—in a transition from athlete to pastor or other leader.
- However, if the athlete is not comfortable giving the invitation, have someone else do it. But, ask the athlete to call that person forward, and to stay there next to them (this helps keep the audience plugged in).
- Even when an athlete says he will be glad to give the invitation, make sure he knows how, and that he understands what your church or group expects to be presented. Feel free to offer him 'cheat notes' that highlight the steps to salvation your church regularly covers, and ask him to make sure he covers them. Ask if he has ever done this before; if not, practice with him and go over—he'll appreciate it.

Prayer Walking 101

Do you feel like you have two left feet when it comes to prayerwalking? Here are a few tips to help you get off on the right foot.

- **Pray for Direction.** Prayer originates with God, so talk with Him about how to get started, “Call to me and I will answer you” (Jeremiah 33:33), and where He would have you walk and pray. “Your ears will hear a voice behind you saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it’” (Isaiah 30:21). Think of prayerwalking as a way to get to know God better by taking a walk with Him.
- **Get Cleaned Up.** Before you can pray for others, you need to be in right relationship with God. Allow the Holy Spirit time to examine your heart, confess any known sin, and accept God’s forgiveness. Then you will be a clean vessel ready for God’s use in prayer. “Search me, O God and know my heart” (Psalm 139:23-24). “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).
- **Get Dressed.** The object of a prayerwalk is not to draw undue attention to yourself, so it’s best to leave the monk’s robe and incense-box-on-a-rope at home. In addition to putting on the whole armor of God as described in Ephesians 6:10-18, wear clothing appropriate for the season and location (culture) along with comfortable walking shoes.
- **Start Where You Are.** Don’t worry about whether you do everything just right, or what other people may think of you, “Do not fear the reproach of men” (Isaiah 51:7). Lean on the Holy Spirit. “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness” (Romans 8:26-27).

Take a brief walk around your neighborhood asking God to give you eyes to see your neighbors as He sees them. Pray silently for them as God gives you insight about them from bikes, boats, or other items you see.

- **Use Scripture.** To keep your prayers biblical, spend time reading the Bible. Memorize God’s Word; or carry a few key verses on index cards to refer to as you pray. “So is my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11).
- **Thank God that He loves your lost neighbors and pray that they would believe in Jesus** (John 3:16). Ask Him to bring them out of darkness (Colossians 1:13-14). Pray for them to be released from whatever hinders their faith (2 Timothy 2:25-26). Allow God to teach you through Scripture to pray in the character of Jesus, and remember “[God] is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” (Ephesians 3:20), so pray believing He will answer.
- **Involve Others.** Invite a Christian friend at work to come to work early to walk by each desk and pray for fellow workers. Think about places you’d like to prayerwalk and Christians you know in that setting who might walk and pray with you. Participate in organized prayerwalks at your church or in your community. The best way to learn to prayerwalk is to give it a try; so tie your shoes and take those first steps while you’re thinking about it.

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