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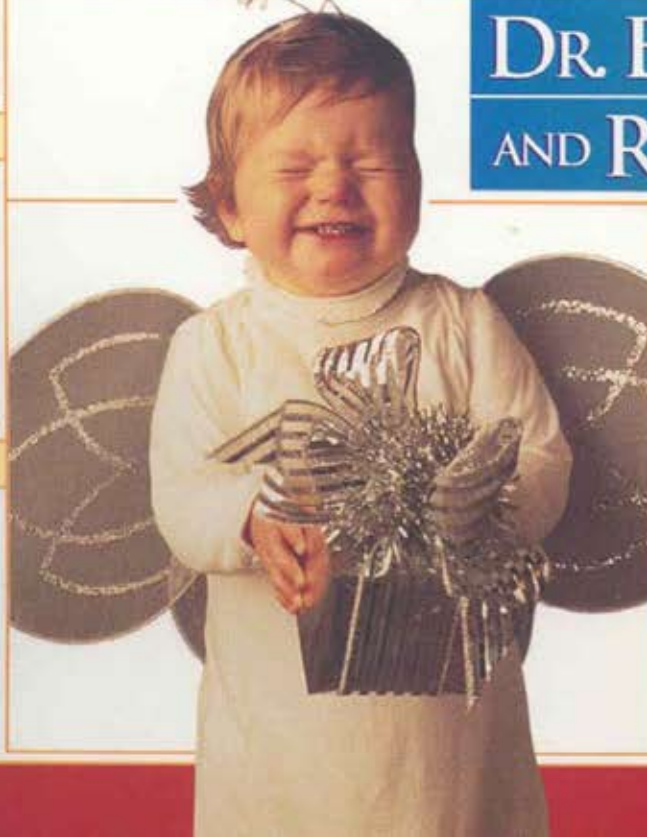
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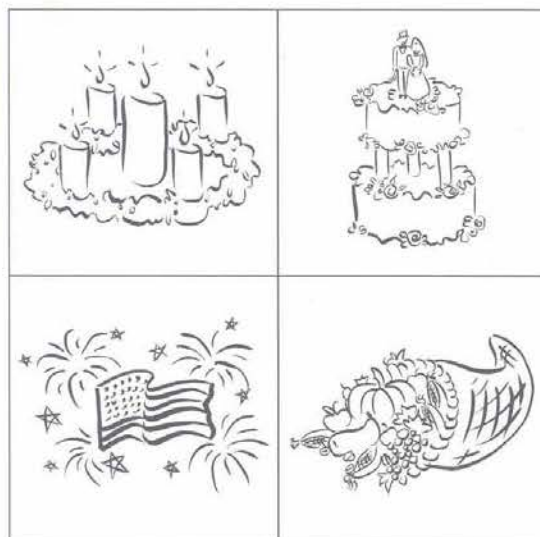
THE YEAR-ROUND CHURCH EVENT BOOK

DR. ELMER L. TOWNS
AND REV. STAN TOLER

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE
to Planning and
Promoting More
than Fifty Different
Church Events and
Celebrations—
One for Every
Season & Holiday!



THE YEAR-ROUND CHURCH EVENT BOOK



STAN TOLER
and
ELMER TOWNS



Gospel Light is an evangelical Christian publisher dedicated to serving the local church. We believe God's vision for Gospel Light is to provide church leaders with biblical, user-friendly materials that will help them evangelize, disciple and minister to children, youth, adults and families.

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ISBN 0-8307-2040-5

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THE YEAR-ROUND CHURCH EVENT BOOK

RITUAL CELEBRATIONS AND SERVICES

Advent

Baptism

Blessing the Children

Coming-of-Age Ceremony
Journal Assignment
Communion Service
Easter
Funeral Service
Infant Dedication
Weddings

COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS

Vision Sunday for the New Year (January)
Martin Luther King Jr. Day (January)
 I have a Dream” by Martin Luther King, Jr.
Sanctity of Life Sunday (January)
Valentine’s Day (February)
National Day of Prayer (May)
Mother’s Day (May)
Graduations (May/June)
Father’s Day (June)
Independence Sunday (July)
Labor Day (September)
Thanksgiving (November)
Christmas (December)

CHURCH CELEBRATIONS

Church Anniversary
Churchwide Fast
Commissioning Service
Installation of Church Board and Staff
Pastor Appreciation Day
The Pastor’s and Church’s Covenants
A Service of Covenant and Commitment
 Between a Pastor and the Congregation
Sunday School Growth Campaign
Victory Sunday

FELLOWSHIP AND OUTREACH EVENTS

Block Party
Certificate of Recognition
Church Picnic
Conspiracy of Kindness
Friend Day
Harvest Celebration
Homecoming
Ice Cream Social
New Member Introduction
Old-Fashioned Day
Pumpkin Festival

STEWARDSHIP

- Above and Beyond
- Church Cleanup Day
- Discover the Joy of Giving
- Youth Volunteer Service Day

SUNDAY SCHOOL GROWTH CAMPAIGNS

- A Call to Care
- Appreciation Day
- Captured by the Spirit: From Easter to Pentecost
- Faith Campaign
- Fall Roundup Celebration
- Family Day
- Favorite Sunday
- Room Decoration Day
- Roundup Sunday
- Space Age Sunday
- Surprise Guest Sunday
- Taxi Sunday
- “We Love You” Sunday School Campaign

DEDICATIONS

- Church Dedication
- Home Dedication

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: CHECKLISTS

- Event Checklist
- Pastor’s Checklist
- Wedding Service Checklist

APPENDIX II: SAMPLE RESOURCES

- Event Proposal
- Prayer Commitment Card
- Publicity
- Invitations
- Forms, Surveys, Scripts and Certificates
- Stewardship Crossword Puzzle

APPENDIX XI: SERMON BIBLE TUCK-INS™

- Hanging of the Greens
- Communion Celebration
- Funeral Service
- Infant Dedication
- The Wedding Ceremony
- Church Dedication

Home Dedication
Commissioning Service
Installation of Church Board and Staff
A Service of Covenant and Commitment Between a
Pastor and the Congregation

APPENDIX V: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ONE-YEAR EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS CALENDAR

CROSS-REFERENCE INDEX

INTRODUCTION

You are holding in your hands dozens of ideas to make holidays and other special days in your church exciting and memorable. Everyone is looking for themes, artwork, mottoes and step-by-step guidance to make a “big” day *big*. This is an idea book to help your church plan successful events of all sorts. The ideas in *The Year-Round Church Event Book* were created as templates for you to custom create your own events. This book provides you with ideas for everything from the basics such as communion, baptisms and weddings to ideas for stewardship like the Church Cleanup Day and Discover the joy of Giving Sunday to fun evangelistic outreach event ideas such as block parties and Conspiracy of Kindness days. These are just a few examples of many easy-to-use event ideas that we are sharing with you.

We have been gathering and using these events throughout our ministries in small and large churches. There are more than 50 event ideas in this book, but we suggest that you hold no more than four to six events in your church each year.

It is our hope that this resource will serve you well and help to make your church successful in doing the work of God.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Elmer Towns and Stan Toler

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THE YEAR-ROUND CHURCH EVENT BOOK

STEP ONE: VISION

You’ll find ideas to give you the big picture of how to celebrate a special day in your church. Many times you’ll find a motto or slogan to use on that day; on other pages you’ll find useful artwork or advertising suggestions. Once you get a vision of what can be accomplished on a special day, then you can communicate it to your congregation. Remember the first law of leadership:

When people buy into your vision,
they buy into your leadership.

When your followers take ownership for the event day, you have launched the project toward successful completion.

STEP TWO: PUTTING YOUR VISION INTO ACTION

We suggest that you form a Ministry Action Team (M.A.T.) for each event. Get your congregation excited about the event, then form a team of people who will put the event together and who are willing to pray for the event. There are simple-to-use checklists in the back for the leader to use or to photocopy and handout to the team.

STEP THREE: MAKING IT SPECIAL

You need to celebrate big days at your church because there are big days on the secular calendar as well as the church calendar. Every church must celebrate Easter and Christmas, two of the biggest days on the church calendar. What about the community calendar? You shouldn't ignore Thanksgiving or the New Year. These are times to reach the unsaved through their interests or needs.

And finally, remember these five guidelines:

Make special days *special*.
Make big days *big*.
Make friend days *friendly*.
Make outreach days *reach out*.
Make happy days *happy*.

EVERY PAGE IN THIS BOOK IS REPRODUCIBLE!*

- Hand out copies as instructions to leaders, photocopy sermon outlines or tuck-ins for quick reference, duplicate easy-to-use worksheets that you can use over and over again.
- Reproducible clip art is provided on the pages of every event for you to advertise events in your church bulletin, posters or in any other creative ways that you think of.
- Here's what you'll find in the appendices: sample invitations, sermons, services, announcements and more. Many are generic enough for you to copy right out of the book, then add your own information and use immediately.

* with the exception of *I Have a Dream*.

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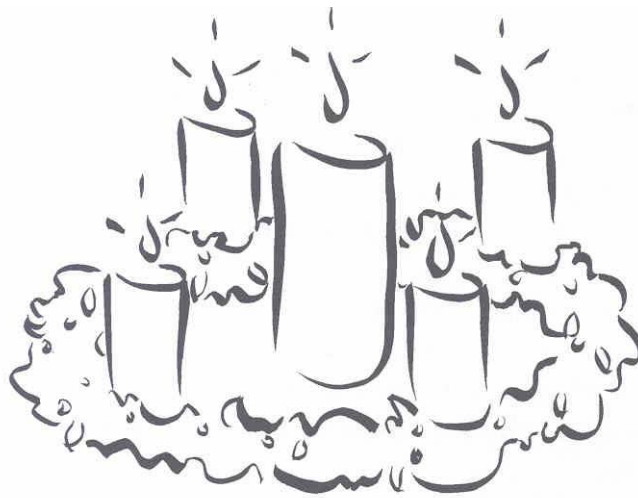
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Section One

RITUAL CELEBRATIONS and SERVICES

ADVENT



INTRODUCTION

Christmas, the celebration of the birth of Christ, holds a special place in the heart of Christians, but it is particularly close to the hearts of children who delight in hearing about the God who was once a child. Although many of the symbols we associate with Christmas have become misunderstood and commercialized, the symbols originally stood for the light and hope that give meaning to this event.

- The evergreen tree, green through the long winter, symbolizes everlasting life.
- Candles and colored electric lights, remind us of the victory of light over darkness.
- Even Santa Claus is a variation on St. Nicholas, an early Christian archbishop of Myra who gave gifts to the poor and had a special love for children.

The four weeks leading up to Christmas are called Advent. There is a growing movement today toward minimizing commercialism in Christmas and focusing on the original spirit of Advent.

IDEAS FOR CELEBRATING ADVENT

- A live nativity
- Christmas musical or drama
- Candlelight communion Christmas Eve
- Christmas caroling in hospitals and nursing homes and to shut-ins
- A “Hanging of the Greens” service
- An Advent devotional guide written by members of your congregation
- The lighting of an Advent wreath on the four Sundays before Christmas

PREPARING AN ADVENT WREATH

The greens are arranged in a circle and four candles (dripless are best) are inserted. The first three weeks of Advent are symbolized by dark purple candles. These symbolize the darkness of the world before the arrival of the Messiah. The fourth candle, used during the last week, is pink. It stands in contrast to the dark candles and symbolizes hope.

In the center of the four candles stands one large white candle. This is the Christ candle. Light this candle on Christmas Day along with the other four. The candles burning together symbolize God’s act of sending light into our world of darkness.

Place the Advent wreath where it has central focus in your sanctuary (perhaps the communion table). The following schedule could be used each Sunday of Advent, utilizing a different family each week to read the Scripture verses and the explanation, then light the candle(s).

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 9:2-6

Say: “We light the prophet’s candle to remind us of the light of hope that the prophets had in the coming of a Messiah who would bring peace and love to the world.” Light one purple candle.

Sing: “Away in a Manger”

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Scripture Reading: Matthew 1:18-25

Say: “We light the Bethlehem candle to remind us of the dark night when Joseph and Mary found light and warmth in the stable.” Light the first purple candle and then a new purple candle.

Sing: “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:8-20

Say: “We light the shepherd’s candle to remind us of the great light and joy that surrounded the shepherds when they heard about Jesus’ birth.” Light all three purple candles.

Sing: “Silent Night”

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Scripture Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

Say: “We light the angels’ candle to remind us of the light of the stars that guided the Magi to

Jesus, and that keep watch over us by night.” Light all three purple candles and the pink candle.
Sing: “The First Noel” or “We Three Kings”

CHRISTMAS DAY

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:68,69

Say: “We light the Christ candle to remind us of the baby, born as the prophets foretold to be the Savior of the world.” Light all candles including the white center one.

Sing: “Joy to the World”

HANGING OF THE GREENS SERVICE FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND PRAYER

Refrain: “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

Introit: People, look east. The time is near

Of the crowning of the year.

Make your house fair as you are able,

Trim the hearth, and set the table.

People, look east, and sing today;

Love the Guest is on the way.

Hymn: “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” (lyrics by Charles Wesley; music by Rowland H. Prichard)

THE PROPHETS CANDLE

Read Micah 5:2, then explain:

The prophecy which I have just read is but one of 80 specific prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah. The accuracy of all of these prophecies is truly amazing. Consider this: Prophets predicted the birthplace of the Messiah; that the Messiah would be preceded by John; that the Messiah would make a triumphant entry; that the Messiah would be betrayed. Prophets also predicted that he would be sold for 30 pieces of silver. They also prophesied of His denial and crucifixion with transgressors.

Phillip Stoner, a mathematician, calculated the likelihood of only 8 of the 80 prophecies being fulfilled in one man.

He calculated that the odds of these predictions, made hundreds of years before, coming true in Christ were 1 in 100 trillion.

To illustrate the point, he said that if the state of Texas were covered by silver dollars, two feet deep, that would equal 100 trillion. If you were to be blindfolded and were to pick one special silver dollar from the 100 trillion dollars, on the very first try, you would accomplish a comparable feat.

Today we light the first candle reminding us of the prophets who announced Christ's coming.

LITANY OF THE GREENS*

Leader: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the King?

People: With branches of cedar, the tree of royalty.

Leader: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the eternal Christ?

People: With garlands of pine and fir, whose leaves are ever living, ever green.

Leader: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, our Savior?

People: With wreaths of holly and ivy, symbolizing His passion, death and resurrection.

Leader: How shall we prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus, the Son of God?

People: By hearing again the words of the prophets who foretold the saving work of God.

Leader: For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

People: Glory to God in the highest!

*Congregation stands

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 40:1-5

Hymn: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" (translated by John M. Neale and Henry S. Coffin)

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 23:5,6

Explain:

The cedar branch: In ancient times the cedar was referred to as the tree of royalty. It also signified immortality, and was used for purification. We place this branch in the sanctuary as the symbol of Christ, who reigns as King forever, and whose coming, in justice and righteousness, will purify our hearts.

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 9:2,6,7

Explain:

The evergreen wreath: Because the needles of the pine and fir trees do not die each season like the leaves of most trees, the ancients saw them as symbols of things that last forever. In the Scripture passage just read, the prophet Isaiah tells us that there will be no end to the reign of the Messiah, and so we hang this wreath of evergreens shaped in a circle, which itself has no end, to signify the eternal kingdom of Jesus, the Christ.

Hymn: "Joy to the World" (first stanza)

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 61:1-3

Explain:

The mistletoe: Because this is the passage that Jesus reads at the beginning of His ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth, and which He applied to Himself, we cannot hear these words of Isaiah without thinking of the healing that the coming of the Christ will bring. The evergreen most associated with healing properties in the ancient world was the mistletoe. It was called the "all-healer." People thought its special powers came from the lightning bolt that fixed it high up in a tree, and therefore, they believed it came, as did the lightning, from heaven itself. This healing power was not only for physical ailments, but for the healing of relationships as

well. It is said that in one town in medieval England, a bough of mistletoe was brought in and put on the altar, and the priest then declared a pardon for all sins. Originally, the kiss under the mistletoe was thought to have been the “kiss of peace,” symbolizing reconciliation, not the romantic kiss of a man and a woman. It is in keeping with this more ancient meaning that we decorate this house with mistletoe, in anticipation of the coming of the healing presence of Jesus the Christ.

Hymn: “Joy to the World” (second stanza)

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 53:1-6

Explain:

The holly: Tradition holds that this passage from Isaiah describes the sufferings of Jesus, who saved us from our sins by His death on the cross, and by His being raised from the dead. In ancient times, the holly was considered the symbol of Christ’s passion; its prickly leaves suggested the crown of thorns, its red berries the blood of the Savior, and its bitter bark the drink offered to Jesus on the cross. As we hang the holly, let us rejoice in the coming of Jesus, our Savior.

CHOIR SPECIAL MUSIC

OFFERING

Scripture Reading: John 1:1-5,9-14

Explain:

As our final preparation for the coming of Christ, the Light of the World, we will light the Christmas tree. And in this time of Advent, whenever you see a lighted Christmas tree, let it call to mind the One who brings light to our darkness, healing to our unwholeness, and peace to all who will receive Him.

Hymn: “Joy to the World” (third and fourth stanzas)

Benediction

(A reproducible version of this service is available in Appendix III.)

INVITING IDEAS FOR CHRISTMAS

Receptivity to worship invitations is far higher at Christmas than perhaps any other time of the year. Take advantage of it by providing your members with invitations to distribute to friends, relatives, associates and neighbors.

The invitations can be generated on good quality paper if your office has access to a computer and copier. If not, employ a local printer to prepare a bulk of invitations.

Distribute the invitations on Thanksgiving Sunday. Invitations should be to specific event(s) during the Advent season at your church. The invitation can be mailed or hand delivered by members of your congregation.

Encourage your members to think about the following unchurched prospects:

- Family members
- Coworkers
- Neighbors
- Friends
- People you know through sports, hobbies, or clubs
- Doctors, dentists, insurance agents, mechanics, or teachers

Think especially of someone who is experiencing some personal loss, pain or stress.
Advent inviting works!

POINSETTIAS FOR CHRISTMAS

Poinsettias for Christmas

Christmas is here! As we celebrate the love God showed us by sending His Son, we want to give you an opportunity to show your love to someone whose memory or presence you cherish.

It is tradition to decorate our church and sanctuary each year with beautiful poinsettias. If you would like to honor someone with a plant please fill out this order form. Return it and your money to an usher or to the church office.

The poinsettias will be displayed from _____ through _____. At that time you may take your plant home.

The cost per plant is \$_____

Name of Giver(s): _____ Phone: _____

Name of Person(s) Being Honored: _____

Message: _____

CONCLUSION

There are a multitude of ideas that can make Christmas an unforgettable event in the life of your church. Build traditions that constantly remind your people that Jesus is the Reason for the Season!

BAPTISM



INTRODUCTION

Baptism is important. There are differing views about the mode of baptism. Some say immersion is the proper way to baptize; others think sprinkling or pouring is acceptable. One thing is clear, baptism should be celebrated in a New Testament church!

PURPOSE

Baptism is a public statement of faith.

A child asked her father, “Daddy, when can I be advertised?”

The father, not knowing exactly what the child meant said, “What do you mean by ‘advertised’?”

The child said, “You know, when the preacher puts people under water!”

Baptism is just that, advertisement. It advertises, “I belong to Christ.” Much like a wedding ring symbolizes love and devotion to one’s mate, baptism symbolizes our love and devotion to Christ.

GOALS

- To provide a celebration of faith for those who come to know Christ as their personal Savior
- To renew commitment as the membership of the church celebrates the candidate’s newfound faith.
- To provide an opportunity for the baptism candidate to invite his or her family and friends to celebrate the baptism.
- To give a teachable moment to our children as to the value of Christian baptism.
- To give an invitation to receive Christ.

PREPARATION

There are some hurdles to overcome, laying aside the theological debate about the mode of baptism. Three hurdles in particular come to mind:

First, the hurdle of adults thinking that baptism is just for kids. Second, the hurdle of going public. Many would prefer the company of only the pastor and a few close friends, just a private ceremony. But like a wedding, there is great value in its being seen. Vows made public have greater strength than vows made in private. And third, the hurdle of vanity. Admit it, baptism is an undignified experience, especially for those who immerse. Some women never want to be seen without makeup. Some men never want to risk their “store-bought” hair getting wet in public. Some big people look at their little pastor and have their doubts: “He can put me under, but can he pull me out?”

To overcome these hurdles, here are some suggested steps:

STEP ONE

Have a baptism class. The class can be as detailed as you want it to be, but answers to the following questions need to be addressed:

- What is the mode of baptism?
- What is the significance of baptism?
- Why should I be baptized?
- Does baptism mean I’m a member of your church?
- What if I was already baptized as an infant?
- What should I wear?
- Will I have to say anything?

STEP TWO

A brochure could be printed, if your denomination does not already have one, that responds to the previous questions.

STEP THREE

A letter should be sent to each candidate instructing him or her where to meet the pastor before the service and what to bring (towel, change of clothes, etc.).

STEP FOUR

Invitation cards should be made available to the candidates so that they can invite their friends and family to the celebration. (See the sample.)

STEP FIVE

Prior to the service, a briefing should be held to rehearse the procedure and answer any last minute questions. Show the candidates exactly what will be done, what you will say and what they will say.

STEP SIX

Host a reception following the service.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

The presentation of baptism certificates can be done formally in front of the whole congregation after the completion of the baptism, or informally mailed to the person's home.

Baptism invitation cards can be used by new Christians for the purpose of inviting their friends and family.

The use of these cards is optional. They may provide an opportunity for personal witness to a baptismal candidate's friends and family. On the first line of the card, write the name of the person being baptized, on the second line insert the date of the baptism and on the third line the time. Then address the envelopes and send them to friends and relatives who do not know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. They will find these warm and cordial invitations to the baptism very meaningful. It will provide a personal means of expressing to someone that they are so important to the candidate that he or she wants to share this special occasion with them. And the witnessing of the baptism and the preaching of God's Word during the service may speak to their hearts' needs. Pray that the Holy Spirit will prepare and speak to them and that they will find Jesus as Savior that very day!

cordially invites you to attend his/her baptism

ON _____
AT _____ O'CLOCK

First Church
123 Main Street
Anywhere, U.S.A.

Your presence will make this special
occasion even more meaningful.

A reproducible version of this invitation is available in Appendix II.

MUSIC

The following musical selections could be used during appropriate times between baptismal candidates when several are baptized at one time:

“My Tribute” (lyrics and music by Andraé Crouch)

“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” (source unknown)

“Take My Life and Let It Be” (lyrics by Frances Ridley Havergal; music by Henry A César Malan)

“I Will Serve Thee” (lyrics and music by Gloria and William J. Gaither)

Encourage the congregation to say a hearty “Amen” as the candidate is raised from the water; then begin singing.

For additional ideas see: New Member introduction; Coming-of-Age Ceremony.

BLESSING the CHILDREN



INTRODUCTION

Parents are invited to bring their children to the sanctuary during a Sunday morning service in which the pastor or other church leaders will bless the children and pray for them. This is not the same as infant baptism or baby dedication. Parents are invited to bring all their children to a special service that emphasizes the family and Christian child rearing. At the end of the church service, church leaders (i.e., pastors, elders, board members and spiritual counselors)

place themselves around the sanctuary and families stand next to the nearest church representative for the blessing.

PURPOSE

- To bless children by introducing God's influence on their lives
- To reach out evangelistically because many unchurched parents will bring their children
- To commit parents to godly child rearing
- To commit the church to support and minister to parents in their task of rearing children
- To give children God's blessing for protection from the attacks of the evil one
- To form a threefold cord between church leaders, parents and the Lord for the ongoing nurture of the next generation in the community of faith.

PREPARATION

Prepare a door hanger announcing the service, including the time, date and purpose. A door hanger is usually printed on card stock paper and has some way of attaching it to a front doorknob. This can be accomplished by stapling a small rubber band to one corner of the advertisement. The door hanger should have the phone number of a church member living in the community whom parents can contact for more information. When the contact person receives a phone call, he or she explains the following to the parents:

- The purpose of blessing the children;
- Necessary directions for the parents; and
- That the contact person will meet the family at church and sit with them during the service.

THE SERVICE

The pastor preaches a sermon on the importance of raising children, a challenge to parents to know Christ and to live by Christian principles and the biblical purpose of the blessing. The pastor makes it clear that this does not take the place of infant baptism or baby dedication.

Have a card in the bulletin for parents to complete giving the church basic information on the child, including name, birthday, address and the name of the parents (see the sample). It is permissible to ask for the parent's church connection if any. The parents should fill this card out and have it ready to give to the one who will pray for the children.

At the end of the sermon, the church leaders station themselves around the church auditorium. The parents are instructed to take their children to the closest representative who will pray a blessing for their children. The representatives receive the card so they can pray for the children by name. Then a personal admonition is given to the parents to raise their children in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord.” If they are small babies, the representatives receive the babies, lay hands on them and pray the Aaronic blessing over them.

The LORD bless you, and keep you; the LORD make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace (Numbers 6:24-26, *NASB*).

The representative should explain three aspects of the Aaronic blessing to the parents. First, “The LORD bless you and keep you.” The blessing of God is for spiritual, physical, social and mental growth. Challenge the parents to raise their children as “Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52).

The first blessing is also for spiritual protection. Pray that the child is protected from physical danger *and* spiritual temptations. Explain the last petition of the Lord’s Prayer is “deliver us from the evil one” (Matthew 6:13), which is asking for spiritual protection from Satan.

The second part of the Aaronic blessing is “The LORD make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you.” Let the parents know that the face of the Lord is God’s presence in the life of a children. The parents should know that God loves children, will care for them and the children should always have the Lord’s presence in their lives.

The third part of the blessing is “The LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace.” When God lifts up His countenance on a child, that means His approval and protection.

The church representative should tell the parents that this does not save the child, but only places God’s protection and blessing upon the child. Therefore, the representative should share the plan of salvation with the parents.

The following ABC plan of salvation is a simple, yet straightforward presentation of the gospel message:

Admit that you are a sinner—see Romans 3:23.

Believe that Christ can save you—see John 1:12.

Confess Christ is Lord of your life—see Romans 10:9,10.

FOLLOW-UP

After the blessing day, the church should mail a letter to the parents thanking them for being present in the service and for letting the church pray for their children. Also, the church letter should offer spiritual assistance in the raising of the child and the establishment of the Christian home.

Also, leaders commit to pray through the year for the children and families they blessed. They send special notes of encouragement and on special occasions such as birthdays, Easter, etc.

Special Note: Be sensitive to those who are unable to have children, have lost children to death or through family conflicts, are unmarried or have chosen not to have children. Be aware that this service may be a reminder of their losses. They could be included in the service by encouraging them to pray for the families that have asked for this blessing.¹

¹. Special thanks to Paul Dugan, Associate Pastor at Community Presbyterian Church in Ventura, California, for allowing us to adapt his idea.

Blessing the Children Service Information

Child's Full Name_____

Child's Birthdate_____ Age_____

Address_____

Parent(s) Name(s)_____

Phone_____ Family's Church Affiliation_____

For additional ideas see: Coming-of-Age Ceremony; Infant Dedication.



COMING-of-AGE CEREMONY

INTRODUCTION

There is no universal way that most Christians mark the end of childhood and the transition to adulthood. Yet the coming of age can be a spiritual milestone of immense importance. Too often responsible adults are relatively uninvolved when children begin their teen years; as a result youth lean heavily on their peers and the entertainment media for affirmation and values.

PURPOSE

To give teenage boys and girls an unforgettable public experience that recognizes their transition into adulthood through a coming-of-age ceremony.

GOALS

- To acknowledge and recognize young men as they begin manhood and young women as they begin womanhood (notice we say “begin,” not “attain”—becoming a responsible adult is a process that takes years).
- To prepare them for responsible Christian adulthood.
- To incorporate young people more fully into the Body of Christ.

PREPARATION

RECRUITING ADULT MENTORS

- These men and women will have pastoral responsibility, so they should be chosen very carefully, according to qualifications for leadership mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:1-11 and Titus 1:6-9 and 2:1-8. Men will mentor boys; women will mentor girls.
- The mentors will need to make a time commitment of not less than five hours a month to receive training and to meet with the young people assigned to them.
- Mentors should look upon their role as God given and as a tremendously important contribution to the life of the young people they will be getting to know.

INSTRUCTION AND MENTORING

This instruction period should take several months to a year. Activities should include:

- Attending regular meetings, at least once a month for two or three hours. The meeting could be at church, at the young person's home, at a restaurant, at a bowling alley or some other semi-public, semi-private place.
- Offering prayer both with and for the young person by the team of adult mentors.
- Having fun bonding experiences with the mentor and others preparing for their coming-of-age ceremony (pizza parties, cookouts).
- Talking over life issues: physical changes; sex and dating; peer pressure; personal goals; relationships with parents; rights, responsibilities and privileges.
- Covering spiritual issues: Bible reading, prayer, study, fellowship and evangelism.
- Completing assignments such as journaling; recognizing strength and growth areas; challenging the young people to take risks; and building them up in areas of significant giftedness and God-given vision.
- Learning basic first aid in preparation for wilderness experience (use a Red Cross first aid book).
- Learning wilderness survival skills in preparation for the wilderness experience (a Boy Scout book has very useful information).

A WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE

- At least two adults accompany the young people to a base camp location.
- The adults stay in the base camp as each young person goes off alone with an adequate supply of water, supplies and camping equipment to find his or her own space to fast and camp in seclusion.
- Each camper can take a Bible, hymnal, journal and a musical instrument.
- They have two to four days to rest, sleep, think, read and pray.
- They will spend time journaling on topics such as *Why was I born? Who am I now that I am no longer a child? Who are my real friends? What do I really want to do with my life? What does it mean to really follow Christ?* (See the sample assignment sheet.)
- For safety reasons, each person has a buddy who knows the location of his or her campsite and those buddies periodically check in with each other.

THE CELEBRATION

- Could be held at a church or banquet hall (a banquet hall is much more expensive). The entire evening would be dedicated to the celebration.
- Several young people (not more than four) could be included during each celebration. Invite family and friends of the young people.
- The pastor, assistant pastor, youth pastor, Christian education director or other important person in the church could act as master of ceremonies.
- The ceremony includes a time when the family formally recognizes that from that point on, the young person will be treated as an adult.
- Each young person's mother and/or father would also have the opportunity to say public words such as "This is how I have seen you grow." and "These are some of your greatest strengths..." and "I believe in the potential God has given you to..." and "Here is a Scripture I have been praying for you." The expressions of the mother and father could be extemporaneous or prepared. A short poem could be read. In this way the family would recognize and honor the giftedness, uniqueness and potential of the young person.
- Baptism could be performed if it hasn't already taken place.
- Prayers of dedication and imparting of the Holy Spirit's gifting and guidance in the young person's life to glorify Jesus Christ should be offered. For example, 1 Timothy 4:14 encourages Timothy not to neglect the spiritual gift that was given to him by prophesy with the laying on of hands by the elders of the church. And 2 Timothy 1:6,7 reinforces the importance of that event when Paul reminds Timothy to stir up the gift of God which he received at Paul's laying on of hands.
- Holy Communion could be included.
- Party! The meal could be catered or potluck. The party could include live music, a DJ, dancing, food, laughter, fun. For example, the young person could be hoisted up while sitting on a chair and paraded around the room.

For additional ideas see: Baptism; Blessing the Children.

JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT

GOALS

Describe your goals for the following areas of your life and tell what you are doing to work toward completing your goals for each area:

Ministry
Career
Personal life
Health and fitness
Activities and hobbies
Financial

VALUES AND PRIORITIES

What are your top five priorities in life? Put them in order of importance. Write down how much time you spend on each priority in a given week. How do you feel about each of the following areas of your life? Tell whether you feel you spend enough, too much or not enough time and energy on each area.

Hobbies
Activities
Academics
Friends
Family
Relationships with the opposite sex

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

List your strengths and explain how you are developing and/or using them. Which ones do you need to develop further?

List your weaknesses.

Which weaknesses could you overcome? How could you overcome them?

Which weaknesses do you need to adjust to or learn to accept as part of your uniqueness as an individual?

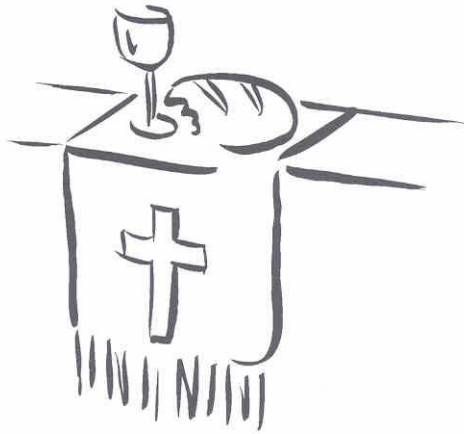
CONCLUSION

What qualities do you look for in your friends?

Which of those qualities do you have?

Who have you modeled your life after? In what ways?

COMMUNION SERVICE



INTRODUCTION

The Lord commanded His disciples to eat of the bread and wine, emblems of His broken body and shed blood. Holy Communion can be served any day of the week. When the Lord's Supper is served, it should always be a time of celebration for the church.

PURPOSE

To celebrate the birth, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The shed blood of Christ on the cross should be the focal point of a Communion service.

GOALS OF HOLY COMMUNION

- A time of introspection
- A time of reflection
- A time of repentance
- A time of commitment

COMMUNION CELEBRATION

Scripture Readings: Psalm 139:23,24; Psalms 51:1, 19:14; 1 Corinthians 10:1-4

Songs of Celebration:

“Let Us Break Bread Together” (lyrics and music by Floyd W. Hawkins and Lyndell Leatherman)

“I Come With Joy” (lyrics and music by Brian Wren)

“Here at Thy Table, Lord” (lyrics and music by May P Hoyt)

“Here, O My Lord, I See Thee” (lyrics by Horatius Bonar; music by Edward Dearle)

Communion Meditation: Matthew 26:20; John 14:1-3; John 6:35; Hebrews 9:13,14

Important Statements as Communion Is Being Served:

While the bread is being distributed, let the Communion leader say:

The emblem of bread reminds us of the broken body of our Lord Jesus Christ. May He preserve you blameless, into everlasting life. You may eat of the bread.

As the cup is served, let the Communion leader say:

The cup, the fruit of the vine, helps us recall the red blood of Jesus on calvary's cross. Drink from this cup of life and be grateful.

It is especially effective to ask everyone in a church Communion service to hold the elements until all have been served. Ask them to eat and drink together to symbolize the unity of the church family.

Prayer of Holy Communion:

Our Father, who of tender mercy gave to us Your only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for our sins. We humbly approach Your throne of grace. Please grant that as we receive these emblems of bread and wine that we be made caretakers of the benefits of His glorious atoning work on the cross.

We come before You remembering that Jesus took the bread the night He was betrayed and blessed it, then broke it with thanksgiving. Also, He took the cup and giving thanks, He shared it with His disciples, reminding them of His shed blood. In this service of Communion, we humbly give thanks and once again bless these emblems of sacrifice at the Lord's table.

May we humbly show in these special moments our love, faith and belief in Jesus Christ, Your Son. As we partake in this holy sacrament we await His second coming without sin, unto salvation. Amen.

SUGGESTED SCRIPT FOR SERVICE

Leader 1: Father, as we gather together, we acknowledge that we are a needy people.

People: We admit the fact that we need Your help and direction.

Leader 2: Too often the problems of life and the conditions of this fallen world seem to get the best of us.

Women: We want to know where to turn when we run out of answers.

Men: We want to know how to live our lives in these changing times.

Leader 1: Then "let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."¹

People: Teach us to take our eyes off of this fickle world and look to Jesus.

Leader 2: For it is Jesus Christ who calls us to learn a new way of living, it is in Him that new life is found.

People: We need to remember that “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”²

Women: Where can we go to learn Christ’s point of view?

Men: Where may we see Christ’s way of living?

Leader 1: I invite you to the table of the Lord.

COMMUNION IS SERVED

Leader 2: As we leave Your Table, Lord, remind us of the lessons of this summer.

Men: Help us to learn to scale back, to stop chasing the things that would tempt us to try to serve two masters.

Leader 1: And when the problems of life weigh down on us so much that it seems we will break from the stress,

Women: May we find calm in Your nearness and take courage from Your presence.

Leader 2: And continue to remind us that we are not alone.

People: We are Your Body and as we all do our part, together, we will survive.

Women: So help us to care for those who are hurting.

Men: And teach us to guard the dignity of each man and woman.

Leader 1: And in this world where it so often seems that evil has the upper hand,

People: May we always remember that we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Leader 2: We will survive!

Leader 1: For “who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”

Women: “Shall trouble or hardship or persecution”

Men: “Or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?”³

All: “No.... for I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”⁴

- ¹. Hebrews 12:2
- ². 2 Corinthians 5:17
- ³. Romans 8:35
- ⁴. Romans 8:37-39

(A reproducible version of this service is available in Appendix III.)

SPECIAL TIMES FOR COMMUNION SERVICES

- Worldwide Communion Sunday
- Palm Sunday or Maundy Thursday
- Christmas Eve
- National/ International Day of Prayer
- Quarterly or as often as your tradition requires

CONCLUSION

Holy Communion can be a wonderful time for unchurched persons to find Christ. Always plan to present the ABC plan of salvation before serving Communion.

Admit that you are a sinner—see Romans 3:23.

Believe that Christ can save you—see John 1:12.

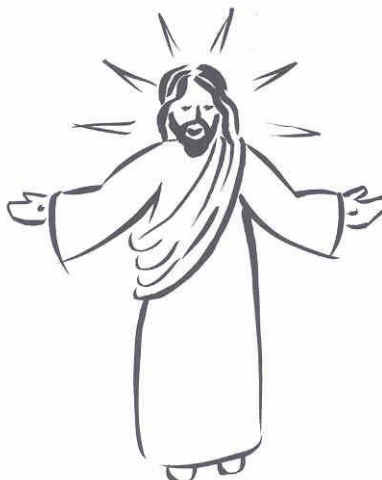
Confess Christ is Lord of your life—see Romans 10:9,10.

You will be thrilled at the conversions experienced as parishioners prepare for this time of celebration.

1. Hebrews 12:2
2. 2 Corinthians 5:17 3. Romans 8:35
4. Romans 8:37-39

For additional ideas see: Easter; Weddings; Thanksgiving; Advent.

EASTER



INTRODUCTION

Holy Week is the week in the Christian calendar that begins with Palm Sunday, commemorating the day of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem (see Mark 11:1-10), and climaxes with Easter Sunday, the celebration of Christ's glorious resurrection (see Matthew 28:1-10).

The events leading up to the first Easter are memorable:

Sunday:	The Triumphal Entry (see John 12:12-16)
Monday:	Cleansing of the Temple (see Matthew 21:12,13)
Tuesday:	The Authority of Christ Questioned (see Luke 20:1-8)
Wednesday:	The Plot Against Jesus (see Mark 14:10,11)
Thursday:	The Last Supper (see Mark 14:12-26)
	Gethsemane (see Matthew 26:36-46)
	Christ's Arrest and the Trials (see John 18:2-19:16)
Friday:	The Crucifixion (see Matthew 27:27-56)
Saturday:	In the Tomb (see Matthew 27:62-66)
Sunday:	The Resurrection (see John 20:1-20)

COLORS FOR HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday to Maundy Thursday—Purple
Good Friday and Holy Saturday—Black
Easter Sunday—White

IDEAS FOR HOLY WEEK

On Palm Sunday, give each attender a palm branch, representing Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, where the people shouted with joy and waved palm branches in hopes Jesus could change their lives.

On the Communion table or in a prominent place, arrange the following symbols:

- A bag of money that symbolizes Judas's betrayal of Jesus.
- The basin and towel that shows how Christ came to serve, not to be served.
- Grapes and wheat that help us remember the gathering in the Upper Room where the disciples shared their last meal with Jesus.
- A crown of thorns that reminds us of how the Jewish authorities sought to crucify Jesus.
- A handful of nails to remember the crucifixion.

Provide a brief service each evening of Holy Week. Include dramatic dialogue focusing on the thorns, the nails, the shroud, the robe, the spear, and the stone.

Utilize music and drama.

Offer a "Come and Go" candlelight Communion where members can drop in during a couple of specified hours on Good Friday evening to take Communion.

Have an Easter sunrise service. Breakfast could be served following the service.

CONCLUSION

Easter is an outstanding day for your church to initiate new programs and ministries such as:

- New ushers and greeters ministry;
- Adding another church service;
- The announcement of special events and upcoming celebrations.

Remind your congregation on Palm Sunday that Easter Sunday will bring a number of new people to your church. Encourage those who are able to leave the best parking for visitors on Sunday.

The pastor could announce an exciting new sermon series that will begin the following Sunday. Allow Easter to help your church come alive!

For additional ideas see: Captured by the Spirit: Easter to Pentecost; "We Love You" Campaign.

FUNERAL SERVICE



PREPARATION FOR THE FUNERAL

The funeral service will usually be conducted at a church, graveside or at the funeral home. Usually, the minister meets the family at the funeral home to discuss the funeral arrangements. Most funeral directors handle all details of burial, etc.

A POSSIBLE SERVICE ORDER

Music Prelude
Greetings/ Comfort to the family Scripture
Eulogy/Obituary
Prayer
Song
Scripture Meditation
Sermon
Song
Benediction

It would be beneficial to use a work sheet such as the one on the following pages, especially if you did not know the deceased personally. This work sheet will give you all the information you need to deliver a sermon or eulogy.

The following pages contain a sample work sheet and funeral service to aid you in planning any funeral.

FUNERAL WORKSHEET

SERVICE INFORMATION

Funeral home _____
Address _____
Phone _____
Funeral director in charge _____
Address _____ Phone _____
Contact person _____

Address _____ Phone _____
Date of service _____ Time _____
Place _____
Graveside service time _____

BASIC INFORMATION

Name of deceased _____
Address _____
Phone _____
Date of birth _____ Place _____
Date of death _____ Place _____
Occupation _____
Name of spouse _____
Living? Yes _____ No _____ if no, date of death _____
Occupation of spouse _____ Date of marriage _____
Number of children _____ Grandchildren _____ Greats _____
Names _____

Surviving siblings

Surviving parents

LIFE-CENTERED INFORMATION

Education _____

Specialized
training _____

Church affiliation _____
Social/civic involvements _____

Hobbies/ interests _____

Awards/ recognitions _____

Cultural interests /involvements _____

Travels/adventures_____

Additional information_____

FUNERAL SERVICE INFORMATION

Officiating minister_____

Assistant(s)_____

Favorite Scripture(s)_____

Song(s)_____

Musical selections_____

Vocalist_____ Accompanist_____

Tribute prepared by_____ Read by_____

Special reading or poem_____

Pallbearers_____

Ushers_____

Sound_____ Recording: Audio_____ Video_____

Reserved seating_____

Order of service_____

Order of procession_____

Viewing arrangements_____

Last respects_____

Flowers_____

Graveside details_____

Additional information_____

Opportunity for personal reflections during service_____

MEMORIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

As you reflect over the life of your loved one, is there something you would like to share that would give a deeper insight into the life of the deceased?

Personal family relationship_____

Favorite memories_____

Humorous anecdotes

FUNERAL SERVICE

OPENING READING

“I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say”

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 "Come unto me and rest;
 Lay down, thou weary one,
 Lay down thy head upon my breast."
 I came to Jesus as I was,
 Weary and worn and sad;
 I found in Him a resting place,
 And He has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 “Behold I freely give
 The living water! Thirsty one,
 stoop down and drink, and live.”

I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched,
my soul revived
and now I live in Him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
“I am this dark world’s light;
Look unto me, thy morn shall rise,
And all thy day be bright.”
I looked to Jesus and I found
in Him my star, my sun;
And in that light of life I’ll walk,
Till traveling days are done. -Horatio Bonar

SERMON OUTLINE: ROMANS 5:1-8

1. A life of faith (see Romans 5:1)
2. A grace-filled life (see Romans 5:2)
3. A life of integrity (see Romans 5:3,4)

Reputation is what people think you are;
character is what God knows you are.
Circumstances determine your reputation;
what you believe and what you love
determine your character.

Reputation is your photograph;
character is your face.

Reputation is what you have when you come;
character is what you have when you go.

Reputation grows like the mushroom;
character grows like the oak.

Reputation goes like the mushroom;
character is as lasting as eternity.

Newspapers can make one’s reputation;
toil and consecration can make one’s character.

If you want to get a position, have a reputation;
if you want to keep it, have a character.

Reputation makes one rich or poor;
character makes one happy or unhappy.

Reputation is preserved on tombstones;
character is preserved in the books of heaven. –Roland Q. Leavell

4. A life of hope (see Romans 5:5)

Remember we sleep to wake.
Remember that today prepares us for tomorrow.
Remember that we never tear the last page off
God's calendar.
Remember God's tomorrow. -Anonymous

(A reproducible version of this sample service is available in Appendix III.)

INFANT DEDICATION



SAMPLE OF INSTRUCTIONS TO PARENTS

It is fitting that we gather together as family and friends to celebrate the gift of a child that God has bestowed upon us as His people. This act of dedication is no small thing that we do. For truly it means we are dedicating ourselves to the task of raising this child in the love and adoration of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we prepare for this time of dedication let me share with you the process that will occur:

- The family and pastor will meet at the Information Center early for pictures.
- The family will be seated in the first row. Parents and the baby should sit on the aisle. Extended family can fill in the remainder of the seats.
- At the appropriate time in the service the children's pastor will come to escort the family to the platform. The extended family will then line up in single file on the ground level in front of the communion table, facing the platform.
- The family will stand to the side of the pulpit with the pastor behind the pulpit. The children's pastor and pastor's spouse will stand beside the pastor. (When more than one family is dedicating their baby, they will stand on either side of the pulpit.)

- After the ceremony the children's pastor and pastor's spouse will present the parents with a certificate and a New Testament. After this, all parties may return to their seats.

We hope this will truly be a time of deep spiritual meaning to you and your family as it is and will be to us.

SCRIPT FOR DEDICATION SERVICE

The minister addresses the parents:

Your child was hand stitched by the Lord, not mass manufactured in some sweatshop. His/Her mind is intricately woven with the finest of neurological threads. His/Her emotions are given a distinct texture, with a feel all their own. His/Her personality is cut from a unique bolt of cloth. Like snowflakes and fingerprints, no two children are alike.

Your child is "fearfully and wonderfully made" according to Scripture (Psalm 139:14). Celebrate the uniqueness of your child for he/she is one of a kind. You will have this special, unique creation for just a short time.

When the parents (or guardians) have presented themselves with the child (or children) before the minister at his call, *the minister should say:*

Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19:13,14, KJV).

In presenting this child for dedication you not only signify your faith in the Christian religion, but also your desire that he/she may early know and follow the will of God, may live and die a Christian, and come unto everlasting blessedness.

In order to attain this holy end, it will be your duty, as parents [guardians], to teach him/her early the fear of the Lord, to watch over his/her education, that he/she not be led astray; to direct his/her youthful mind to the Holy Scriptures, and his/her feet to the sanctuary; to restrain him/her from all harmful associates and habits; and, as much as in you lies, to bring him/her up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Will you endeavor to do so by the help of God? If so, answer, "I will."

The minister addresses the congregation:

I now ask you, the congregation: Will you commit yourself as the Body of Christ to support and encourage these parents [guardians] as they endeavor to fulfill their responsibilities to this child and to assist them by nurturing his/her growth toward spiritual maturity? If so, answer "We will."

Our loving Heavenly Father, we do here and now dedicate
(child's name) _____
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

CHALLENGE TO PARENTS

“The father of Jonathan Edwards was a minister and his mother was the daughter of a clergyman. Among their descendants were:

14 presidents	100 lawyers	100 clergymen and
of colleges	30 judges	missionaries
100+ college professors	60 physicians	60 authors

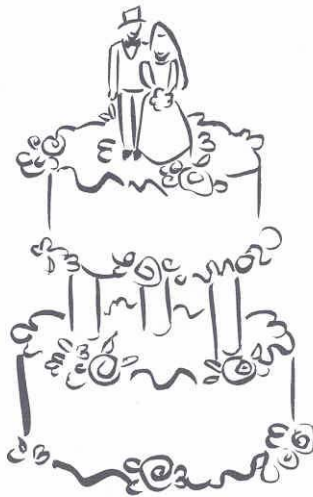
Such is the product of one American Christian family.” -J. Oswald Sanders⁶

(A reproducible version of this sample service is available in Appendix III.)

For additional ideas see: Blessing the Children.

⁶J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1994).

WEDDINGS



SUGGESTED SCRIPT FOR CEREMONY

“Dearly beloved, we are gathered together in this holy place and in the presence of family and friends to unite this man and this woman in holy matrimony.

“Marriage is indeed an honorable estate, instituted by God in the Garden of Eden, when He saw that it was not good that man should be alone. Marriage was given a crown of glory by the apostle Paul, who likened it unto that holy union which exists between Christ and His Church, in which Christ is called the Bridegroom and His Church the bride. Surely it is a blessed union and it is a holy one. The Holy Scriptures set before you the love of Christ for His Church

as an example for your devotion to each other. You are not left without guidance concerning the meaning of that love. The words of the Apostle Paul tell us the meaning of love in I Corinthians, chapter 13:4-8 (TLB)”:

Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong. It is never glad about injustice, but rejoices whenever truth wins out. If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him and always stand your ground in defending him. All the special gifts and powers from God will someday come to an end, but love goes on forever.

Addressed to the parents:

As parents, you come releasing your children. Jesus said that we must leave our father and mother and become one, so you parents come with your children to present them to each other and give blessing to their unity. In giving them to each other, you are giving yourselves to be a part of a new family and thus will now assist this new family in finding their place among other families.

Pastor: “Who presents this woman to be married to this man?”

Father: “Her mother and I do.”

INTRODUCTION TO THE VOWS

Addressed to the groom:

_____, you are about to take upon yourself a pure resolve, a solemn vow, incurring grave and lasting responsibilities. The woman of your choice is now to become a partner of your life, the coheir of your possessions, the queen of your home. In no other way could she so manifest her love for you. She leaves her home ties, the companionship of friends—all of these—to share with you the joys and sorrows of life. With you will she now abide and for you will she live.

Addressed to the bride:

_____, you are also to assume grave responsibilities. He whom you are about to wed will look to you for solace in the hour of trial. Your smile should be his brightest day, your voice his sweetest music, your industry his greatest wealth, your economy his safest steward, your life his faithful counselor and your prayers his most able advocate in heaven’s court.

VOWS

To the groom:

Will you, _____, have this woman, to be thy wedded wife, to live together according to God's holy ordinance in the holy state of matrimony? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health and forsaking all others, keep yourself only for her, so long as you both shall live?

Groom answers: "I will."

To the bride:

Will you, _____, have this man, to be thy wedded husband, to live together according to God's holy ordinance in the holy state of matrimony? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health and forsaking all others, keep yourself for him, so long as you both shall live?

Bride answers: "I will."

Pastor: Join hands.

Pastor to groom:

_____ please repeat after me. I, (groom's name),...take you, (bride's name)... to be my wedded wife,...to have and to hold ... from this day forward for better, for worse,...for richer, for poorer in sickness and in health to love and to cherish till death do us part,...according to God's holy ordinance and thereto I pledge you my love.

Pastor to bride:

_____, please repeat after me. I, (bride's name),...take you, (groom's name)...to be my wedded husband to have and to hold ... from this day forward,... for better, for worse for richer, for poorer...in sickness and in health to love and to cherish till death do us part,...according to God's holy ordinance and thereto I pledge you my love.

Solo: "The Lord's Prayer"

RING CEREMONY

When God made a covenant with Noah, He set His bow in the cloud as a reminder of that covenant, and said, "I will look upon it that I may remember it was an everlasting covenant." So, from this we learn that it is well for us, when entering into solemn agreements, to set aside some token as a reminder. You have, therefore, chosen these rings as the token of your marriage covenant. Being made of gold, it is a type of that which is the least easily tarnished and the most enduring, fittingly representing the ties that bind husband and wife together.

The ring, an endless circle, until broken by some outside force, is a symbol of the unbroken marriage union which God has ordained and shall continue until broken only by death.

May I have the rings, please.

Pastor to the groom:

____(groom's name), take the ring and place it on ____ (bride's name)____'s finger, and let it be the seal of your mutual love and fidelity, and a memorial of this sacred service. You will repeat after me: "I give you this ring ... as a symbol of my love ... and as a pledge of my faithfulness."

Pastor to bride:

____(bride's name), take the ring and place it on ____ (groom's name)____'s finger, and repeat after me: "I give you this ring ... as a symbol of my love ... and as a pledge of my faithfulness."

COMMUNION

Bride and groom kneel at the altar.

Pastor asks the congregation to pray for the couple.

Please join me in a prayer of blessing for (groom's name) and (bride's name).

PASTOR'S PRAYER

LIGHTING OF THE UNITY CANDLE

Bride and groom stand up and move to the unity candle.

You have chosen to symbolize your union in yet another way. There are three candles—two of them lighted, one yet unlit. You came into this sanctuary as two and you leave as one, husband and wife, no longer walking separate paths, but walking together in one path in a oneness you will find richly rewarding. You will spend all your years together learning and enjoying what this oneness means, as you live, work, play, laugh and weep together.

From now on, your lives will be shared and you will have new strength as two hearts beat as one and two pairs of hands carry the burdens of life.

Bride and groom light the candle.

Bride and groom move back to the center.

PRAYER OF BLESSING

PASTOR'S PRONOUNCEMENT:

And now, having heard you make these pledges of your affection and take these vows of fidelity, I do, by virtue of the authority vested in me, as a minister of the gospel and in accordance with the laws of God and the State, pronounce you husband and wife, no longer twain, but now one, in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

You may kiss your bride.

It is my privilege to present to you,

Mr. and Mrs. _____.

INVITATION TO THE RECEPTION

DISMISSAL

(A reproducible version of this sample service is available in Appendix III.)

For additional ideas see: Valentine's Day.

WEDDING SERVICE CHECKLIST

Couple's Full Names:

Groom _____

Bride _____

Date of Wedding _____ Date of Rehearsal _____

ORDER OF SERVICE

The Worship of God in Sacred Music

Seating of Family and Friends by Ushers: Ushers' Names _____

Mother/Father of Groom Seated by: _____ Usher's Name _____

Mother of the Bride Seated by: _____ Usher's Name _____

The Lighting of Candles _____ Time _____

Solo _____ Soloist _____

The Bridal Procession: _____ Maid/Matron of Honor _____

	Bridesmaids	_____

	Best Man	_____
	Groomsmen	_____

The Unrolling of the Bridal Carpet by:	Usher	_____
Entering of the Flower Girl & Ring Bearer:		
	Flower Girl	_____
	Ring Bearer	_____
Entrance of the Bride		
Solo	_____	Soloist _____
The Marriage Ceremony Addressed to the Couple		
Holy Communion Served to the Couple*		
Solo	_____	Soloist _____
Lighting of the Unity Candle		
Kiss of Unity and Devotion		
Introduction of the Couple to the Congregation as Husband and Wife		
Recessional		

(A reproducible version of this sample form is available in Appendix I.)

*Only for Christian couples

FACILITY USE REQUEST FORM FOR WEDDINGS

UTILITY AND CUSTODIAL FEES FOR USE OF THE CHURCH FACILITIES

For Members and Regular Attenders of First Church:

Sanctuary (seats 650)	\$ _____
Chapel (seats 225)	\$ _____
Use of fellowship hall/patio (for rehearsal dinner)	\$ _____
Use of fellowship hall/patio (for reception)	\$ _____
Wedding facility coordinator	\$ _____
Security deposit required (refundable)	\$ _____

Musicians' Fees:

Keyboard person carrying the major part of the wedding (prelude, postlude)	\$ _____
Other musicians carrying lesser responsibilities	\$ _____

Vocalist(s) \$ _____
Sound technician \$ _____

No wedding will be scheduled on Sunday. No wedding will be scheduled after 5:00 P.M. on Saturdays. No exceptions.

All monies are due and payable to _____

Payment should be made in full two weeks before the activity. Please give to church secretary.

Your security deposit will be returned to the person in charge of the wedding no later than _____ if the church is left in good condition.

To prevent scheduling conflicts, the following form should be filled out and returned to the church immediately.

REQUEST FORM

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Rooms Requested ☐ Chapel ☐ Sanctuary

☐ Patio ☐ Fellowship Hall

Dates Needed _____ Number Expected _____

Will you need to decorate the building in advance? _____ When? _____

I understand this is a building designed for Christian usage and I pledge to abide by the rules of the church.

Signed _____

----- For Office Use Only -----

Amount charged _____ Amount of deposit received _____

Date deposit received _____ Approved by _____

Amount of deposit returned _____ Date returned _____

(A reproducible version of this sample form is available in Appendix 11.)

Section Two

COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS

VISION SUNDAY
for the NEW YEAR



INTRODUCTION

“Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law” (Proverbs 29:18). Vision Sunday should be conducted on the first Sunday of the New Year. It should be a day of new commitments and new beginnings.

PURPOSE

The purpose of Vision Sunday is to cast a vision for a year of growth and evangelism for the people of God.

GOALS

- To share the beliefs and values of the local church body.
- To give specific direction concerning the future of the local church.

PLANNING THE DAY

1. Organize a vision team for planning the New Year’s Sunday services.
2. Meet with the core group and key leaders of your church in mid-November to focus on the future goals and strategies for the New Year.

Explain the purpose of Vision Sunday.

- It will set a high standard of faith and reflect the high ideals of the church.
- It will clarify purpose and direction.
- It will inspire and move the congregation to action. Establish guidelines for the meeting.
- Make the meeting a time of fun and celebration.

- Reflect on God's goodness and guidance in the past year.
- Review your church's mission statement and/or vision plans.
- Serve refreshments.
- Stick to time limits.
- Allow for creative brainstorming. Remember, every idea is a good idea!

Answer the vision questions.

- Who are we? What are our core beliefs, values, goals, etc. as a church?
- What time is it: calendar?
- Who is our target audience?
- Who has lordship over our church?

PREPARATION

1. Music should focus on God's faithfulness and the church's future in Christ.
 - "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" (lyrics by Isaac Watts; music by William Croft)
 - "He Is Able, More Than Able" (lyrics and music by Rory Noland and Guy Ferguson)
2. The sermon should focus on a passage of Scripture that challenges and promotes visionary thinking.

EZEKIEL'S VISION OF THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES IN EZEKIEL 37

- I. Observe the condition of the church (vv. 1-5)
 - A. Dry bones are lifeless.
 - B. Dry bones are hopeless.
 - C. Dry bones are useless.
- II. Notice the vision of the pastor (vv. 6-11)
 - A. He prayed with fervency.
 - B. He preached with urgency.
- III. Verify the response of the church (vv. 12-28)

- A. They were energized by the message.
 - B. They were mobilized by Ezekiel.
- 3. Scriptures should be reflective of promises that stretch out faith.
 - a. Ask a layperson to read Hebrews 11.
 - b. Ask a staff member to read Joshua 1:1-9.
- 4. Distribute a card or brochure that explains the vision, goals and plans for the new church year.
- 5. Other ideas:
 - A Sunday evening banquet with departmental leaders sharing the vision plans for the New Year.
 - Use technology to communicate your plans: videos, overhead transparencies, audio, etc.

CONCLUSION

Ask your church family to commit to the vision. You may want to consider some type of commitment form that they could sign and hand in. Commitments to prayer, giving and ministry involvement will be the key areas to emphasize.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY



INTRODUCTION

Perhaps more than any recent prophetic voice in the American church, the life and message of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. have garnered discussion, cultivated opinions and polarized perspectives within the Christian community and the nation at large. Unfortunately, much of the division of perspective is drawn along racial lines.

David Bryant in his book, *Stand in the Gap*, quotes noted African-American leader Raleigh Washington: “When revival comes, and it will surely come, it will wear the faces of reconciliation.”¹ One could forcefully argue that Dr. King’s life was not only about justice, but also about reconciliation. Even a cursory reading of his famous “I Have a Dream” speech shows his intimate understanding of the biblical imperatives regarding justice, mercy and reconciliation. It is important for us as Christians to recognize that racism is still an issue in America and in the American Christian Church because the most segregated hours of the week are on Sunday morning.

The anniversary of Dr. King’s birth is an excellent opportunity to gain fresh understanding of God’s commands for us to be reconcilers (see 1 Corinthians 5:18); justice seekers and mercy givers (see Micah 6:8).

PURPOSE

Reconciliation is a practical way to demonstrate the truth that God is in Jesus reconciling the world to Himself. Throughout history great seasons of revival and renewal in the church are marked by considerable emphasis on open acknowledgment of sin and a call for changed attitudes and just actions. Christians today have great potential to demonstrate reconciliation, justice and mercy in many creative ways.

By our example of humble acknowledgment of past injustice, we vividly illustrate the power of confession and forgiveness. By recognizing the unique contributions Dr. King made to our understanding of the nature and destructiveness of racial prejudice and injustice, we can learn that reconciliation and injustice are issues we must address as Americans and more importantly, are commanded to deal with as Christians.

GOALS

- To understand and commend the unique contribution of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to our nation by challenging us to racial reconciliation.
- To help the Body of Christ take ownership of reconciliation, justice and mercy as lifestyles.
- To bless the African-American community.
- To fully comprehend the role of Christ as reconciler, justice seeker and mercy giver.
- To enlarge our congregation’s view of the body of Christ as a multicultural, multiracial and multidenominational community.

- To begin genuine processes of cross-cultural and interracial friendship, love and community.

PREPARATION

A month before the event, a series of sermons should be presented on the role of Christ as reconciler, justice seeker and mercy giver. The emphasis should be placed on the responsibility of each believer to model Christ and take ownership of His commands to follow His example. In the book of Revelation it says we overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. For multiethnic churches, African-American members may be asked to share their own personal experiences regarding race and the wounds caused by prejudice. Personal stories of God's grace are powerful tools in building reconciliation.

Some churches celebrate by inviting guest choirs or exchanging pulpits with an African-American church. You can plan and work together on a community project. Both formal and informal gatherings should be encouraged as a good way to form long lasting relationships. Make a commitment to sustain relationships made during these times. You may want to plan a joint concert of prayer with a church of another race.

SUGGESTED EVENTS AND SERVICES

- Hold a joint service with churches of other racial, cultural or denominational identities.
- Provide a suggested reading list to the congregation.
- Ask church member(s) to make a presentation about the issue during Sunday services.
- Encourage Sunday School classes to discuss racial, cultural and denominational differences.
- Show films about justice, mercy and reconciliation.
- Present a play that challenges the congregation to think about the issues.
- Use role-playing exercises in worship services.
- Read or watch a video clip of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech on Sunday morning and ask for comment and reflection.
- As a local congregation, take on a specific project that deals with reconciliation, justice and/or mercy.

CONCLUSION

It is very important to move beyond rhetoric to meaningful actions. Ask each member of the congregation to make a written commitment to actions, events, ministries and/or programs that will result in a new lifestyle. Establish regular review processes of your church's ministries, programs and philosophy as they relate to these three important issues.

For more information on racial reconciliation, read *Healing America's Wounds* by John Dawson (Regal Books, 1994).

¹ David Bryant, *Stand in the Gap* (Ventura, Calif: Regal Books, 1997), p. 137.

I HAVE A DREAM

BY MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

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Delivered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. on August 28, 1963.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of captivity.

But one hundred years later, we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize an appalling condition.

In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men would be guaranteed the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation.

So we have come to cash this check—a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America

of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradual-ism. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to open the doors of opportunity to all of God's children. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quick-sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment and to underestimate the determination of the Negro. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.

We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny and their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning, "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous peaks of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!

Let freedom ring from every hill and every molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

SANCTITY OF LIFE SUNDAY



PREPARATION

1. Prepare a sermon on the sacredness and sanctity of all human life.
2. Encourage parishioners to support the efforts of those seeking a constitutional amendment to prevent abortion and euthanasia.
3. Distribute biblically-based instructional tapes, books and pamphlets on the subject of proper sexual relationships. Many unborn children have been conceived as the result of promiscuous sex.
4. Offer counseling to unwed expectant mothers in your community.
5. Encourage parishioners to seriously consider adopting a child, taking in an unwed mother-to-be or giving spiritual, emotional and financial support to a single mother.
6. Pray for God's guidance and direction on Sanctity of Life Sunday.

SCRIPTURES FOR SANCTITY OF LIFE SUNDAY

Have nothing to do with a false charge and do not put an innocent or honest person to death, for I will not acquit the guilty (Exodus 23:7).

Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture (Psalm 100:3).

And now the LORD says-he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself (Isaiah 49:5).

It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin (Luke 17:2).

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world (James 1:27).

A PRAYER FOR SANCTITY OF LIFE SUNDAY

Heavenly Father, we humbly pray for all of the unborn children in our world. We pray for Your protection for them. We pray that each expectant mother would value the sacredness of life and preserve the child for life here on earth. Deliver these children safely through the perils of childhood. Deliver them from the temptations of youth. Help us as a church to lead them to the knowledge of Christ as Savior. In the name of Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT HUMAN LIFE?

1. Human life is sacred. God sets apart human life as unique, distinctive and valuable.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (Genesis 1:26,27).

What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor (Psalm 8:4,5).

Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother's breast. From birth I was cast upon you; from my mother's womb you have been my God (Psalm 22:9,10).

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me (Psalm 51:5).

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful. I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All

the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be (Psalm 139:13-16).

Human life is sacred!

2. God preserves and protects human life as sacred. No other life on earth is as important to God as human life.
3. Human life begins at conception and continues to develop in the womb where God is at work shaping the child into the precise kind of person He desires him or her to be.

MEDITATION FOR SANCTITY OF LIFE SUNDAY

Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, "But we knew nothing about this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done? (Proverbs 24:11,12)

MOTIVATING THE CHURCH TO ACTION

1. Encourage church members to volunteer time, energy and money to nonprofit organizations that promote sanctity of life.
2. Ask members to open their homes to unwed expectant mothers.
3. Start a letter-writing campaign to local, state and national leaders to protest abortion and euthanasia.
4. Teach young people the importance of moral and sexual purity.

Note: Please exercise caution in endorsing political candidates as it may affect your nonprofit status.

For additional ideas see: Churchwide Fast; Mother's Day; Father's Day; Blessing the Children.

VALENTINE'S DAY



INTRODUCTION

Valentine's Day isn't a legal holiday, but it should be illegal to forget your sweetheart on this special day! No one knows for sure how Valentine's Day began, but there is one story that says there was a Christian priest named Valentine who lived in Rome. The story says he helped young soldiers get married (against the wishes of the emperor). The angered emperor had Valentine put in jail. The children of Rome were saddened and wrote notes saying that they loved and missed him, then they pushed their notes through the prison bars. These notes were perhaps the first valentines. Later, Pope Gelasius I declared February 14 the feast day of Saint Valentine. It became a day for the expression of love.

The greatest commandment says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" and the second is this: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37,39).

Jesus also said, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35).

PURPOSE

- To help people fulfill the greatest commandment
- To foster loving, caring relationships within the church family as well as in the community your church serves
- To provide a fun-loving Christian atmosphere for the sweethearts of your congregation

This is not just a good time for couples to celebrate their relationships, but it is also a celebration of the love that exists in all kinds of relationships. However, because Valentine's Day is so closely associated with romantic love, be prayerfully encouraging and aware of your parishioners who do not have a sweetheart. Valentine's Day can be a painful time for anyone who doesn't have a "special someone." Keep in mind the following people who may be in your congregation:

- singles of all ages;
- the widowed;
- the separated or divorced;
- someone whose loved one is away from home for an extended period of time (i.e., someone in the armed services or in prison or on a business trip);
- someone who is married to an unbeliever;
- someone who is in an abusive relationship.

You might want to call your event the “Love One Another Banquet” and use one of the themes that does not center on married couples (i.e., Luau or Nifty Fifties) and invite singles to come with or without dates.

IDEAS FOR A VALENTINE’S DAY CELEBRATION

- Encourage one of the departments within the church to sponsor a Valentine’s Day Sweetheart Banquet. The invitation could be to everyone from teenagers to married couples, or for specific groups in the church. This depends on the size of your congregation and what you want to accomplish.
- There is a variety of themes for a successful sweetheart banquet. The theme could be determined by what is available at your local party supply store. Here’s a few theme ideas:
 - Hawaiian Luau-the menu would consist of ham with pineapple and lots of fruit and rice side dishes. Encourage casual dress with lots of flowered prints. Music must include a steel guitar! Maybe even have a Jack Lord (from Hawaii Five-O) Look-Alike Contest.
 - A Nifty Fifties Party-some party supply houses are renting booths, soda stands, juke boxes and Coca-Cola decor. Dress of the day: bobby socks, saddle shoes, and Pennzoil on the hair! Music supplied by an Elvis impersonator. • Other theme titles you might want to use: “A Winter Lover-Land” or “Love Overflowing.” Use your imagination.
 - Encourage married couples to bring their wedding pictures. Have a table available to display photos with names on them. Or have party-goers guess who the couples are.
 - Have a Valentine’s Day poetry writing contest. Here is my personal favorite:

 Last night I kissed my girlfriend,
 Pleasure I was seeking.
 Missed her lips and kissed her nose,
 And found that it was leaking!

- A takeoff on *The Newlywed Game*-”The Know-Your-Spouse Game”-can provide lots of laughter. Select three married couples and ask each of them a set of questions while their spouses are in a “soundproof” room. Bring the spouses in and see if they can answer the questions the way their mates did. (See the sample questions.)
- Invite a guest speaker. Topics could be on love, marriage and the family, 1 Corinthians 13.
- Have a photographer available to take photographs of couples as they enter. An appropriate theme background could be arranged for the photos.

OPPORTUNITY TO RENEW VOWS ON VALENTINE’S DAY

Use this occasion to afford married couples the opportunity to reaffirm their marriage vows. The following ritual could be used:

The pastor shall say to the husband(s):

Will you continue in your commitment to have this woman as your wedded wife, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you continue to love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health, and remain faithful to her so long as you both shall live?

The husband(s) shall answer, “I will.”

Then the pastor shall say to the wife (wives):

Will you continue in your commitment to have this man as your wedded husband, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you continue to love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health, and remain faithful to him so long as you both shall live?

The wife (wives) shall answer, “I will.”

Then the pastor shall say:

Take the hands of your spouse now, and as confirmation that you will continue to uphold your marriage vows, repeat those vows once again. The husband(s) will repeat after me:

I (husband’s name) take you (wife’s name) ... to be my wife ... to have and to hold ... from this day forward ... for better, for worse ... for richer, for poorer ... in sickness and in health ... to love and to cherish ... till death us do part ... according to God’s holy ordinance ... and thereto I pledge you my faith.

Then the pastor shall say:

The wife (wives) will repeat after me: I (wife’s name) take you (husband’s name) ... to be my husband ... to have and to hold ... from this day forward ... for

better, for worse ... for richer, for poorer ... in sickness and in health ... to love and to cherish ... till death us do part ... according to God's holy ordinance ... and thereto I pledge you my faith.

CONCLUSION

This event can be a lot of fun and very rewarding. Just make certain the banquet meals are always *hearty*!

You Are Invited

to our Valentines Day Sweetheart Banquet

on Friday, February 14

at 7:00 P. M.

in the Fellowship Hall.

Cost: \$15.00 per couple

RSVP: 555-1234

(A reproducible version of this sample invitation is available in Appendix 11.)

For additional ideas see: Weddings.

THE KNOW-YOUR-SPOUSE GAME

1. What is your spouse's pet peeve?
2. What season does your spouse enjoy most?
3. What is your spouse's favorite color?
4. If you could redecorate or remodel any room in your house, what room would it be?
5. Does your spouse squeeze the toothpaste from the bottom or the top?

6. Would you characterize your marriage as:
 - a. Romeo and Juliet?
 - b. Blondie and Dagwood?
 - c. Roseanne and Dan?
7. Would you say your spouse is getting:
 - a. Flabby?
 - b. Blabby?
 - c. Crabby?
8. Where is your spouse's favorite place to eat?
9. You are in a crowded elevator, ladies, and your husband "breaks wind." Would he:
 - a. Be embarrassed and turn red?
 - b. Blame it on you?
 - c. Think it's funny?
10. Does your spouse mostly sleep on his or her...
 - a. Back?
 - b. Side?
 - c. Stomach?
11. Does your spouse like the toilet paper to...
 - a. go over the top?
 - b. come from underneath?
 - c. Doesn't care?

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER



INTRODUCTION

The National Day of Prayer is traditionally held on the first Thursday in May. This is becoming a well-organized event throughout the nation with rallies, breakfasts, and other organized events. Christian periodicals and broadcasters can be a source of information for this event. The national organization for this annual day of prayer can suggest many ways to observe this event in your community.

PREPARATION

Select leaders to offer specific prayers for our nation's leaders, church, world, families, etc. Use the Lord's Prayer as a pattern. Share the following guidelines with your parishioners:

HOW TO PRAY FOR GOVERNMENT LEADERS

1. Pray that they would be conscious of their sin, as revealed by the Holy Spirit, and that they would pray daily for forgiveness.
2. Pray that they would realize their weakness to fulfill their awesome task, and seek God's wisdom and courage to do what is right.
3. Pray that they would reject all counsel that violates spiritual principles.
4. Pray that they would resist those who would pressure them to violate their consciences.
5. Pray that they would reverse pagan trends of socialism and humanism.
6. Pray that they might be willing to put their own personal ambitions and political careers aside, if need be, for the sake of the country.

7. Pray that they would find their daily source of strength, wisdom and courage through prayer and the reading of God's Word.
8. Pray that they would restore and maintain dignity, honor and righteousness to the office they hold.
9. Pray that they might be good examples in their conduct to all peoples of our country.
10. Pray that they would be reminded daily that they are accountable to Almighty God for the decisions they make.

-Charles Stanley

- Ask several lay members to read verses on prayer in the morning worship service.
- Instruct your worship leader to sing songs of faith with a focus on prayer, i.e., "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" (lyrics by Joseph M. Scriven; music by Charles C. Converse).
- Prepare a series of devotionals for your congregation to read and study four weeks prior to National Day of Prayer.
- Conduct a 24-hour prayer vigil the weekend before the National Day of Prayer.
- Organize a team to phone every person in your church for prayer requests.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Be a person of prayer.
2. Preach from the overflow of your prayer life.
3. Challenge your church for the National Day of Prayer and intercession.
4. Give people an opportunity to share prayer miracles.
5. Preach a sermon on the prayer life of Jesus.

For additional ideas see: Churchwide Fast; Independence Sunday.

LITANY FOR NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

Hymn: "Sweet Hour of Prayer" (lyrics by William W. Walford; music by William B. Bradbury)

- Leader:* Heavenly Father, thank You for Your grace and glory manifested through Jesus Christ Your Son. Draw us close to You. Warm our hearts with the presence of Your Holy Spirit.
- People:* We give God all praise and glory.
- Leader:* God is great and greatly to be praised.
- People:* “Ascribe to the LORD, O mighty ones, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness. The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD thunders over the mighty waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is majestic” (Psalm 29:1-4).
- Leader:* God is on His throne and hears and answers prayer.
- All:* “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being” (Revelation 4:11).

THE PRAYER LIFE OF JESUS

KEY SCRIPTURE

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” Mark 1:35

Jesus Christ is our supreme model of a life blessed by prayer power. Fifty-one times in Scripture He refers to the subject of prayer.

1. His ministry on earth was characterized by prayer.

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased” (Luke 3:21,22).

2. His ministry was empowered by prayer.

Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed (Luke 5:15,16).

3. His miracles were performed through the power of prayer.

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he [Jesus] gave thanks (Matthew 14:19,23).

He [Jesus] dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray (Matthew 14:22,23).

CONCLUSION

PRAYER IS...

Adoration
Confession
Thanksgiving
Supplication

MOTHER'S DAY



INTRODUCTION

The first Mother's Day service was held on May 10, 1908, at a church in Grafton, West Virginia. It came about as a result of a crusade by Anna Jarvis to have a special day set aside to honor her mother. Anna continued her crusade until the state of West Virginia observed its first Mother's Day on April 26, 1910. President Woodrow Wilson made the first national proclamation in May 1914.

PURPOSE

Mother's Day is a special day to honor the women in your congregation and community with the recognition and gratitude they deserve. The aim for this day is not a high attendance; however, in many churches, Mother's Day is attended as well as Christmas and Easter!

Not only is recognition an important part of Mother's Day, but prayerful support and encouragement is an aim for this day. For some, Mother's Day is painful. Keep in mind the following people who may be in your service on this day:

- a woman who is coping with infertility;
- a woman who has chosen not to have children;
- a woman who is a single parent;
- a woman who has had an abortion;
- a woman who is grieving over the death of a child;
- a woman who is experiencing her first Mother's Day since the death of her own mother;
- a woman who is dealing with a severely handicapped child;
- anyone who has had an abusive mother.

GOALS

- To motivate the church to obey the fifth commandment
- To nurture, honor and esteem all women
- To build relationships in the family and bond people to Christ

PREPARATION

MUSIC

Let the women of the congregation select the music for the service. Two to four weeks prior to Mother's Day, distribute a survey to the women of the church. The survey could look similar to the following:

MOTHER'S DAY MUSIC SURVEY

1. What is your favorite hymn?
2. What is your favorite chorus?
3. What song would you like the choir to sing?
4. Who would you like to provide the special music, and what would you like them to sing?

SCRIPTURE

The following Scripture selections can provide helpful support for the day:

Acts 16:11-15,40	Lydia: A Woman and Her Work
Exodus 2:1-10	Pharaoh's Daughter: A Single Mother
I Samuel 1:2-28; 2:1-21	Hannah: A Model of Spiritual Strength
Proverbs 31:10-31	A Wife of Noble Character
Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1-45	Mary and Martha: Single Women Serving Christ
2 Timothy 1:3-6	Lois: A Godly Grandmother

PRAYER

Select one of the respected elder women in your congregation to give the special prayer for the day.

GIFTS

Gifts should be given to each adult woman so that no one is left out. The following will provide some inexpensive but appropriate gift ideas:

- Pictures—Have a photographer available before and after the morning service for each mother to be photographed with her children.
- Flowers—Have vases with carnations or roses at the front of the sanctuary. At the beginning or close of the service, ask the children to distribute a flower to each adult woman in the congregation. Geraniums, African violets, or any other small indoor plant will work as well.
- Helping Hands—A week before Mother's Day have Sunday School teachers assist the children in tracing their hands on pink construction paper and cutting them out. On each hand, write something the child can do to help his or her mother: do the dishes, sweep, take out the trash, pick up toys, etc. The children will then present their "Helping Hands" to their mothers on Mother's Day.
- A Tribute—Two weeks prior to Mother's Day, ask everyone to write a tribute to their mother. The tribute can be in the form of a letter, a poem, a song or an essay: "I'd Like to Honor My Mother Because...." The tribute can be framed to become a treasured memory for each mother.
- Booklets—A Christian bookstore or your denomination's publishing house can provide affordable and appropriate booklets to distribute.

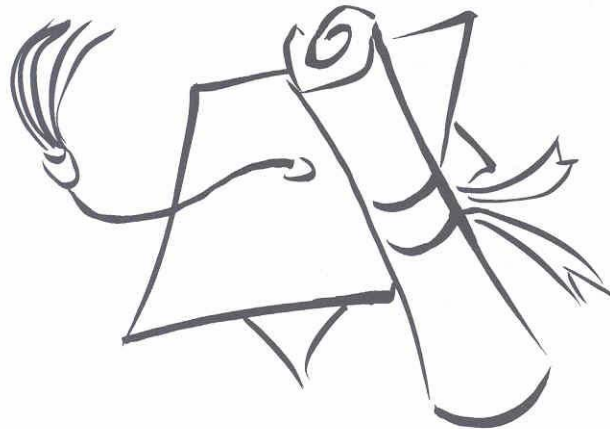
- Special recognition could be given to:
- The mother with the most children in attendance;
- The mother with the youngest child;
- The oldest mother;
- Mother of the Year—an open ballot could be distributed the previous Sunday.

A FINAL SUGGESTION

It is usually difficult to get into a restaurant on Mother's Day. Encourage the fathers and children to treat mom like a queen with a meal prepared totally by the family (from setup to cleanup). Let Mom read the Sunday paper in uninterrupted peace, sit in front of the TV and do some "channel surfing" while everyone else prepares lunch!

For additional ideas see: Father's Day.

GRADUATIONS



INTRODUCTION

It is important to publicly celebrate the successes of our youth. Graduation is an important event in the life of any young person. Recognition should be given to graduates of high school, vocational school and college. Invite the graduates' families and friends to be present. Emphasize the church's pleasure in their accomplishment.

GOALS

- To encourage church members to pray for each graduate because, even though it is a time for celebration, it is also a time of transition for both the student and the parents
- To “rejoice with those who rejoice” (Romans 12:15)
- To promote the value of our youth and their education
- To honor high school and college graduates

PREPARING FOR A SUCCESSFUL CELEBRATION HONORING THE GRADUATES

Have a procession for the graduates at the beginning of the morning worship service. The instrumentalists could play “Pomp and Circumstance” as the graduates enter the sanctuary dressed in their robes.

The pastor, youth pastor, or other church leader may direct remarks of challenge and congratulations to the graduates. At the conclusion of these remarks, the graduates should then be called by name to the platform and be presented with a gift on behalf of the congregation.

GIFT IDEAS

- Money (my personal favorite)
- Gift certificates
- A study Bible (signed and dated by the pastor)
- Devotional books

BULLETIN BOARD

A bulletin board can be devoted to the graduates. A graduation picture with a biographical sketch mentioning the student’s future goals and plans could be posted for each graduate.

DECORATIONS

Use school colors. Set up a table with a display of yearbooks, sports memorabilia, photos, favorite stuffed animal, textbooks, etc.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Assign a lay member to each graduate. The member would commit to the following for a one-year period:

- Pray regularly for the graduate.
- Remember the graduate’s birthday or other important occasions with a gift or card.

- Write notes of encouragement.
- Send care packages to the graduate who attends a college or university in another community.

RECEPTION

Following the morning service, have a reception in their honor. This will allow all church members to greet and congratulate the graduates and their families. Coffee, tea and light refreshments could be served. Have a slide or video presentation of pictures to chronicle the lives of the graduates from birth to the present.

CONCLUSION

Make contact with churches of your denomination in the college town where your high school graduates will be attending if away from home. If they are staying close to home, plug them into a Bible study and a ministry in your own church. This is a delicate age group and easy to lose from the church.

For additional ideas see: Coming-of-Age Ceremony.

FATHER 'S DAY



INTRODUCTION

Father's Day has been observed since 1910 (officially since 1924). Fathers today come in all varieties: traditional fathers, stepfathers, grandfathers, surrogate fathers and spiritual fathers. The following will hopefully provide some practical ideas for this event in your church family.

PURPOSE

The purpose of Father's Day is to honor the men of your church and to challenge them to be the men God challenges them to be according to His Word.

GOALS

- To strengthen family relationships by emphasizing the importance of the father's role
- To express appreciation to each father
- Fulfill the fifth commandment
- Challenge men to be spiritual leaders in their homes

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SERVICE

MUSIC

A men's quartet, an all men's choir or a children's choir could provide the special music.

Suggested Hymns:

"A Christian Home" (lyrics by Barbara B. Hart; music by Jean Sibelius)

"Faith of Our Fathers" (lyrics by Fredrick W Faber; music by James G. Walton)

"Find Us Faithful" (lyrics and music by Jon Mohr)

"God of Our Fathers" (lyrics by Daniel C. Roberts; music by George W Warren)

"A Child of the King" (lyrics by Harriet E. Buell; music by John B. Sumner)

RESPONSIVE READING

Leader: Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

People: Honor your father and mother.

Leader: Listen to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding.

People: What child is not disciplined by his father?

Leader: We have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it.

People: How much more we should submit to the Father of our spirits and live!

Leader: Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best;

People: But God disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness.

- Leader:* If you know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!
- People:* I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.
- Leader:* How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!
- All:* O Lord, You are our Father. We are the clay, You are the potter. We are all the work of Your hand.

TESTIMONIES

Two weeks prior to this event, contact three people of various ages (child, teen, adult) and ask them to share a brief testimony on the topic “What My Dad Did Right.”

GIFTS

Include all men in gift giving. Finding gifts for men can be difficult; however, here are some suggestions that should be readily available:

- A sleeve of golf balls;
- A pen with the church’s logo;
- A coffee mug (can be personalized with a Scripture verse);
- A key chain with your church’s logo or appropriate Scripture verse

Warning: Do not give neckties! Dads have enough ugly ties from their family members. However, an ugly tie contest may be appropriate. The winner’s tie should be cut—never to be worn again in public.

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL EVENTS

- A golf tournament the previous Saturday
- A hiking or camping trip
- A fishing trip
- A father/child softball game
- Father of the Year Award-Nominations should be received at least a month prior to Father’s Day. Those who nominate someone should write a brief paragraph to

describe their reasons for nominating that man. Have a committee read the nominating paragraphs and decide who is the best example of a Christian father.

For additional ideas see: Mother's Day.

INDEPENDENCE SUNDAY



INTRODUCTION

Independence Sunday can be a great event in the life of any church. Annual traditions such as picnics (watermelon eating contest included!), musicals and dramas can be developed for this event.

Independence Sunday is an easy day to promote. There are a number of materials, helps and decorations to enhance this patriotic event. Be as creative as you want to be. The following suggestions will hopefully provide stimulation to get your creative juices flowing.

PURPOSE

The purpose of Independence Sunday is to help your church celebrate Christian citizenship.

GOALS

- To give thanks to God for the freedom Americans are able to enjoy
- To commemorate military personnel who gave their lives for our country
- To recognize current or retired military personnel in your congregation
- To challenge Christians regarding their civic responsibilities

IDEAS

- You might want to make contact with a member of your church who is in the military and stationed overseas. Have him or her videotape a greeting to your congregation. In return, the church could send a video tape or audio tape of this event, as well as a card shower to the military personnel.
- The Fourth of July weekend may mean absences of regular attenders and attendance of first-time guests. Alert your greeters to look for new faces!
- If your community has a Christian elected official, you may want to invite him or her to speak or attend this event. His or her speech could focus on what it means to be a Christian in the political world.

DECORATIONS

Put red, white and blue everywhere! Most churches display the American flag and Christian flag. Have children or teens lead the congregation in pledges to these flags. (It may be helpful to print the pledges in the morning bulletin.)

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SERVICE MUSIC

There are a number of patriotic musicals available at your local Christian bookstore. This is an excellent day to be creative in the music department. You may even want to invite a special musical guest.

Suggested Hymns:

“Battle Hymn of the Republic” (lyrics by Julia Ward Howe)

“My Country, ‘Tis of Thee” (lyrics by Samuel F. Smith; music by Al Jacobs)

“God of Our Fathers” (lyrics by Daniel C. Roberts; music by George W. Warren)

“America, the Beautiful” (lyrics by Katherine Lee Bates; music by Samuel A. Ward)

“The Star-Spangled Banner” (lyrics by Francis Scott Key; music attributed to John Stafford Smith)

SCRIPTURE

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD (Psalm 33:12).

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people (Proverbs 14:34).

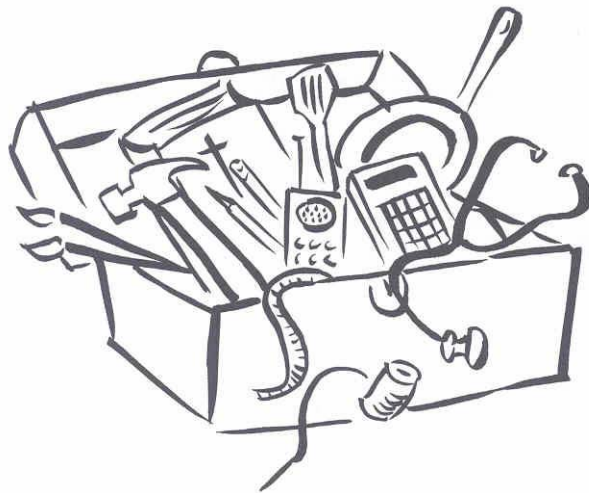
If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed (John 8:36).

PRAYER

Remember to pray specifically for government leaders, military personnel and give thanks for the freedom we are able to enjoy as Americans.

For additional ideas see: National Day of Prayer; Block Party; Church Picnic; Ice Cream Social; Pumpkin Festival.

LABOR DAY



INTRODUCTION

Labor Day is a day to honor working people. Labor Day is the first Monday in September and a symbol of the end of summer. It is a day to rest and recreate.

The two men credited with suggesting the holiday are Matthew Maguire, a machinist from Patterson, New Jersey, and Peter McGuire, a New York City carpenter who helped found the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners.

Both men played significant roles in organizing the first Labor Day parade in New York City in September, 1882. Oregon became the first state to make Labor Day a legal holiday in 1887. President Grover Cleveland signed a bill in 1894 making Labor Day a national holiday.

PURPOSE

- To raise the standard of work ethics
- To express appreciation to the working class
- To reward the faithful work of your congregation

SUGGESTIONS

The week prior to Labor Day weekend, visit the various work sites of your church members. (Let them know in advance that you are coming.) Videotape them on the job and then have a brief interview with them concerning the various aspects of their work.

Let them know you will be putting together a presentation for the Sunday morning service, using their interview and shots of them on the job. (You will be amazed at your attendance Labor Day weekend!) If a video camera does not work for you, use a 35 mm camera and do a slide presentation.

Have an annual Labor Day drawing. Have the people of the church submit their names and places of employment on a 3x5-inch index card. The senior pastor then draws a name from a construction hat and arranges to go to work for a day with the winner. This is good clergy/laity *PR*!

LABOR DAY DRAWING

Name_____

Place of Employment_____

Telephone Numbers: Business_____ Home _____

Note: You must be present to win!!!

Note: Pastors, take your spouse with you if a member of the opposite sex wins the drawing.

CONCLUSION

Think about it for a moment: work is where people spend a lot of time during the week. Work is where their faith is tested and tried. This simple event can be most fruitful in helping your people be light and salt at their places of employment.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men (Colossians 3:23).

For additional ideas see: Block Party; Certificate of Recognition.

THANKSGIVING



INTRODUCTION

It was not until President George Washington proclaimed Thanksgiving Day on November 26, 1789 that the celebration became an established event. In 1859, after several appeals had been made by Sarah J. Hale, all but two governors issued proclamations for Thanksgiving Day. She wrote to President Abraham Lincoln, enclosing a copy of President Washington's proclamation of 1789 and suggested that he establish a national Thanksgiving Day. At her suggestion, the President proclaimed a national Thanksgiving Day on July 15, after the battle of Gettysburg in 1863.

It is now the custom of the United States to proclaim the fourth Thursday of November as Thanksgiving Day. The purpose of this day is to give thanks to God for all His blessings and benefits.

GOALS OF THANKSGIVING

- To foster an attitude of gratitude
- To help people put their blessings in perspective and provide help to those less fortunate
- To set the stage for the Advent season
- To help people focus on what they do have instead of what they don't have

WORSHIP IDEAS

SCRIPTURE

1 Chronicles 29:13 Psalm 105:1

Psalm 30:2,11,12 Psalm 118:28,29

Psalm 67:1 Psalm 150:6

“Come Ye Thankful People, Come” (lyrics by Henry Alford and music by George M. Elvey)
 “We Gather Together” (translated by Theodore Baker)
 “Give Thanks” (lyrics and music by Henry Smith)
 “Count Your Blessings” (lyrics by Johnson Oatman, Jr.; music by Edwin O. Excell)
 “The Doxology” (Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow) (lyrics by Thomas Ken; music attributed to Louis Bourgeois)
 “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” (lyrics by Thomas O. Chisolm; music by William M. Runyan)
 “My Tribute” (lyrics and music by Andrae Crouch)

RESPONSIVE READING

Leader: Give thanks to the Lord, call on His name; make known among the nations what He has done.

People: Enter His gates with thanksgiving

Leader: And His courts with praise;

People: Give thanks to Him and praise His name.

Leader: Glorify the Lord with me;

People: Let us exalt His name together.

Leader: Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise. Worship the Lord with gladness;

People: Come before Him with joyful songs.

Leader: Sing to Him, sing praise to Him;

All: Praise the Lord, O my soul; All my inmost being, praise His holy name, and forget not all His benefits.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS FOR THANKSGIVING CELEBRATIONS

- Sponsor a barbecue and hayride on a farm or in a park. Enjoy simple games such as bobbing for apples, sack races, pumpkin pie-eating contest, etc. Conclude the evening around a campfire with singing and testimonies of thanksgiving.
- Have a Harvest Celebration where everyone donates nonperishable food items or gives money as a First Fruits offering to be distributed to the needy. The goods and money may be given to local food pantries or used for your own church’s ministry to those in need.
- One week before Thanksgiving, sponsor a bean dinner, and encourage people to contribute what they would pay for a meal at their favorite eatery. Announce the

total collected by the congregation and forward the money to a local food pantry or shelter, or use the money for your own benevolence fund.

- Have a “Come and Go” candlelight Communion where members can drop in during a couple of specified hours on Thanksgiving Eve to celebrate Communion in small groups.

In everything give thanks (1 Thessalonians 5:18, NASB).

For additional ideas see: Harvest Celebration; Homecoming; Pastor’s Appreciation; Appreciation Day; Old-Fashioned Day.

Section Three

CHURCH CELEBRATIONS

CHURCH ANNIVERSARY



INTRODUCTION

Every church has a history and it should be celebrated. A true vision plan can never unfold without a complete understanding of where the church has come from! Use this special day to bring the church together, both past and present. This can be a special Sunday in the history of the church!

PURPOSE

To acknowledge the good work of previous lay leaders and pastors. Paul said, “I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish” (Romans 1:14).

GOALS

- To give thanks for past achievements
- To build morale through public opportunities of previous leadership
- To point to success as landmarks for the future vision classes
- To enlighten newcomers concerning the spiritual journey of the local church

PREPARATION

MINISTRY ACTION TEAM

Build a team of past and present leaders to plan for this great occasion.

PROMOTION

Contact all past and present members by phone and letter. Place an article in local newspapers. Advertise on local radio and television. Use clip art in bulletins, fliers, newsletters and posters. Insert the year of your church's anniversary in top crest of clip art.

MUSIC

Invite previous music directors, worship leaders and soloists to return to share in the celebration.

DECORATION

Display a banner with the year being celebrated noted as well as your theme for the upcoming plan. Include a display of historical photos, survey books, bulletins and archives material in a prominent place.

VIDEO

Be sure to videotape this occasion. It will be very helpful in casting future vision plans. Also, if slides or videos of years gone by are available, use such media items. You could set up a big screen TV in the fellowship area with the video continuously replaying the history of the church.

HANDOUTS

Give out commemorative gifts such as:

- Lapel pins
- Key chains
- Coins

- Pendants
- Pens and/or pencils
- Keepsake worship folders

SPEAKERS

Invite former pastors, staff and community leaders that have been associated with the church, or invite a VIP. Have a missionary sponsored by the church speak about how the church has contributed to the cause of Christ through the missionary's ministry.

Special Note: The current pastor should also speak concerning the future of the church.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Combined Sunday School classes with a former pastor speaking

Worship: Music from the past and present with both former and present worship leaders

Messages: Speakers from the past and present

Lunch: On the church campus

Afternoon: A time of musical celebrations and reflection

Award Ceremony: Honor a great lay leader of the church with plaque of appreciation

For additional ideas see: Homecoming; Pastor Appreciation Day; Covenant and Commitment Service; Installation of Church Board and Staff; Old-Fashioned Day; Certificate of Recognition; The Pastor's and Church's Covenants.

CHURCHWIDE FAST



INTRODUCTION

On certain occasions fasting is private (see Matthew 6:16-18), and other occasions fasting is public. The difference between the two kinds of fasts is that a person fasts privately for personal needs and a church fasts corporately for community needs.

Some think that fasting is an Old Testament discipline; however, Jesus fasted (see Matthew 4:2), the Early Church fasted (see Acts 13:2,3) and Paul fasted (see 2 Corinthians 6:5). For more information on biblical fasting obtain Dr. Towns's book and accompanying study guide *Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough*.¹

PURPOSE

WHEN FACING A NATIONAL CRISIS

England fasted when Captain Drake faced the Spanish Armada. The Pilgrims fasted the day before they disembarked from the Mayflower to set foot on the United States. Esther and Mordecai called the Jews to fast when facing annihilation under the wicked prime minister, Haman (see Esther 4:16). Jehoshaphat called a national fast when faced by Edom (see 2 Chronicles 20:2-4).

WHEN FACING A NEED

Ezra proclaimed a fast for protection when he had to take a caravan of people through the wilderness and he was transporting a large sum of money (see Ezra 8:21ff).

WHEN GOING THROUGH PERIODS OF DISTRESS

When Israel was faced with the civil war against Benjamites (see Judges 20:26-28); when Hannah was distressed because she was childless (see 1 Samuel 1:7); when David demonstrated grief at Abner's death (see 2 Samuel 3:31-37) and when David faced the death of his infant son (see 2 Samuel 12:15-17).

WHEN FACING SPIRITUAL DECISIONS

Our Lord fasted before He began His ministry (see Matthew 4:1,2). The church fasted before sending out missionaries (see Acts 13:1-3).

PROCEDURES

The Early Church would not fast on Tuesday and Thursday because these were days that the Pharisees fasted and the early Christians did not want to be identified with the Pharisees. Many Christians in the Early Church fasted on Wednesday and Friday.

The best fast for those who have never participated is the Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) Fast. The Yom Kippur Fast follows the Old Testament designation of a day from sundown to sundown. Therefore, those who participate in the Yom Kippur Fast usually fast from sundown to sundown. Some churches call a fast for different days of the week or a particular

calendar date in the month. However, most churches have found it most effective to fast on Monday. When the congregation arrives at church on Sunday morning, the pastor should:

- Instruct the people of the purpose of the fast;
- Preach on the purpose of fasting and give a biblical basis for intercession and pouring out one's soul before God;
- Challenge the people to all start together that evening.

The best way to begin a fast is for the whole church to begin on Sunday evening. Many traditional churches have a Sunday evening worship service. Instruct the people to eat a light snack before they come to church on Sunday evening. Then the church gathers at Sunday evening worship after the evening service is over. They all begin the fast together. Technically, the Christian misses Sunday night supper, breakfast and lunch the next day. The Yom Kippur Fast is broken the following evening (i.e., Monday evening) after the sun goes down.

Recently, one of the authors was in Israel and asked his Jewish tour guide if he celebrated the Yom Kippur Fast.

“Yes,” was the answer.

The Jewish guide was asked how he knew when to break the fast.

“A Jew does not break the Yom Kippur Fast until he can see two stars in the sky,” the tour guide explained. “A hungry man can see one star that is not there,” he laughed, explaining, “so we wait until we can see two stars in the evening.” Then the Jewish guide laughed more heartily, “You pray that it is not a cloudy evening.”

FOUR KINDS OF FASTS

1. The Normal Fast means going without food for a definite period of time. It is suggested that most people begin with a 24-hour Yom Kippur Fast.
2. The Absolute Fast allows no food or water at all. It is advised that a person not try this fast on his first attempt and remember that without water, damage can be done to the human body. At the same time, the human body can go without food for a much longer period of time than water.
3. The Partial Fast omits certain foods or is scheduled for a limited amount of eating or it may consist of omitting just one meal a day. Some people eat just vegetables or drink vegetable juice during the partial fast.
4. The John Wesley Fast—John Wesley only ate bread (whole grain) and drank water for a period of usually 10 days before he had a significant spiritual event, such as when preaching to his early Methodist pastors.

MOTIVATING FOR THE FAST

TESTIMONIES

Because people are fearful of entering new territory, have someone who has fasted share what happened to them, how they prayed and what answers God gave to them. A simple testimony in a church service will prepare others for the fast, while motivating others to begin.

PRINTED PURPOSE

The purpose for the churchwide fast should be explained in the bulletin, posters, motto and/or a letter mailed to the entire congregation.

PRAYER LEADER

Rather than the pastors taking the total responsibility for a churchwide fast, appoint a layperson who will be responsible for:

- Privately recruiting people to fast and intercede;
- Putting together a list of prayer requests for the churchwide fast and having it printed and distributed to the congregation;
- Recruiting helpers to join him in motivating, recruiting and enlisting prayer support;
- Leading group meetings of prayer at the church, such as early morning prayer meeting, noon prayer meeting and a sundown prayer meeting where the people come to the church to break the fast together.

CORPORATE PRAYER MEETINGS

In addition to calling the people to fast, conduct a number of prayer meetings on the day of the fast where people can come and pray together. There is strength in corporate prayer: “If two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven” (Matthew 18:19). These meetings may include:

- All-night prayer meeting
- Dawn prayer meeting
- Ladies’ and men’s prayer meetings
- Noon prayer meeting
- Sundown prayer meeting to break the fast

Commitment Card

I will participate in the churchwide fast.

Corporate Aim: _____

Affirmation: God being my strength, and grace being my basis, I commit myself to the churchwide fast.

Foods from which I will abstain: _____

Beginning Date _____ and Time _____

Ending Date _____ and Time _____

Private Aim: I am fasting to _____

Bible basis: _____

Signed _____

Date _____

1. For more on biblical fasting read *Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough* and its accompanying study guide by Elmer Towns (Ventura, Calif: Regal Books, 1996 and 1997, respectively).

COMMISSIONING SERVICE



INTRODUCTION

In Matthew 28:19,20, Jesus gave us the Great Commission: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

We are all ministers. Some of us have been credentialed and officially ordained by our churches. Others have simply been ordained by God—paperwork not included.

It is important for the church to give its blessing to those who do the work of ministry. The following is a model for commissioning the various ministers of your congregation (i.e., Sunday School teachers, board members, women’s and men’s ministry directors, etc.).

SUGGESTED SCRIPT FOR THE SERVICE SCRIPTURE READING

Recognizing God’s method of setting apart certain leaders for specific areas of Christian service, we come to this moment of commissioning these before us today. Let us consider God’s instructions to us from His Word (any of the following passages will do):

Matthew 20:26	Ephesians 4:1-3,7,11-13
Acts 2:41-44; 6:1-7	Colossians 3:16
Romans 12:1,2,4-15	1 Timothy 3:8-13
1 Corinthians 12:4-12	2 Timothy 2:15
Galatians 6:6	Titus 1:5-9

HYMNS

Choose one of the following examples:

“Take My Life and Let It Be” (lyrics by Frances Ridley Havergal; music by Henry A. Cesar Malan)

“Give of Your Best to the Master” (lyrics by Howard B. Grose; music by Charlotte Barnard)

“Hark! The Voice of Jesus Calling” (lyrics by Daniel March; music by Lon Von Esch)

“I Am Thine, O Lord” (lyrics by Fanny Crosby; music by William H. Doane)

“I Will Serve Thee” (by Gloria and William J. Gaither)

PRESENTATION OF LAY MINISTERS

An appointed person presents the lay ministers to the senior minister, saying:

I present _____ to you to be
commissioned as _____.

Then the senior minister addresses the congregation, saying:

Church, today we purpose to commission these ministers who stand at this altar. After training and examination, we believe them to be worthy for this service.

ADDRESS TO LAY MINISTERS

The senior minister addresses the lay ministers, saying:

We now come to this important moment when you who stand at this altar take upon yourselves the work of ministry. God has gifted you and empowered you through the Holy Spirit. With joy and anticipation we have watched God reveal His will for your life in ministry, and you eagerly desire to use your spiritual gifts for His glory and the building of His church.

Yours is no easy assignment. The destiny of souls are in your hands. May God grant you wisdom and strength as you serve Christ and His church. What you have done alone with God, you do now formally and publicly in the presence of this Body of believers.

LAY MINISTER'S COVENANT

The senior minister then leads the lay ministers in reading in unison the covenant as follows:

As a minister of Jesus Christ and His church, I hereby covenant:

- To maintain a high standard of Christian living and example in harmony with the ideals and standards of the church;
- To cultivate my relationship with Jesus Christ by setting aside time for prayer and Bible study;
- To continue my education as opportunity is afforded;
- To faithfully support the mission of the church, to know Christ and to make Him known through (insert your church's mission);
- To attend all meetings for which I am responsible.

ACT OF COMMISSIONING

Senior minister extends right hand to minister and says:

_____(name of minister)_____, I commission you to service as a member in _____(name of church)_____, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

ADDRESS TO CONGREGATION

Senior minister says:

You have heard the covenant of these lay ministers. Now, I charge you, as a congregation, to faithfully support them with your love, prayers and affirmation. If you, the church, will accept this charge, answer “We will.”

PRAYER OF BLESSING

A reproducible version of this sample service is available in Appendix III.

TOKENS OF COMMITMENT

Give each newly commissioned lay minister a visual remembrance of his or her commitment:

- Cross: the emblem of sacrifice
- A shaft of wheat: symbolic of sowing and reaping the seed of the Gospel
- A journal: symbolizes the daily need for prayer and reflection
- Salt shaker: Read Matthew 5:13, “You are the salt of the earth.” Talk about the significance of this passage in relation to the task of ministry.
- Stones: Read 1 Peter 2:5, “You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”
- Towel and basin: Make reference to the passage in John 13 where Jesus washed His disciples’ feet. Speak of the importance of being servant-leaders.
- You may even give each lay minister a towel embroidered with his or her name, the name of your church and the date of the commissioning as a reminder and keepsake.

For additional ideas see: Installation of Church Board and Staff; Pastor’s and Church’s Covenants.

INSTALLATION OF CHURCH BOARD AND STAFF



ORDER OF SERVICE

Invite the church board and pastoral staff to come to the altar.

SCRIPTURE READING

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men (1 Corinthians 12:4-6).

PASTOR'S CHARGE TO CHURCH BOARD AND STAFF MEMBERS

Pastor: You have been elected by the fellow members of this church to serve as leaders, and you have declared your willingness to serve. Do you accept the responsibilities of the office into which you are installed and do you promise to faithfully and efficiently discharge your duties? If so, answer "I do. "

Response: I do.

Pastor: Will you seek to promote and maintain a sympathetic and friendly relationship with those with whom you work, so that the bond of fellowship throughout the church may be strengthened? If so, answer "I do."

Response: I do.

Pastor: Do you promise to honor God and your church in your service, behavior and conduct? If so, answer "I do."

Response: I do.

PASTOR'S CHARGE TO CONGREGATION

Pastor: The responsibilities that these leaders are now called upon to assume can-not be discharged by them alone. They have promised to serve their offices well, God

enabling them, but their best efforts will fail unless they are supported by the wholehearted and consistent cooperation of the entire congregation.

Pastor: Do you, members of this congregation, acknowledge and receive these leaders as duly elected officers? If so, answer “We do.”

Response: We do.

Pastor: Do you promise to give them the honor, encouragement, and cooperation to which their offices entitle them? If so, signify by standing.

Response: *(Everyone stands)*

Pastor: *(to congregation)* You may be seated.

Pastor: *(to board and staff)* I now declare you duly installed board and staff members. May the grace of God be with you, and may you enjoy the confidence and loving support of your fellow members.

Pastor: *(to board and staff)* At this time I want to present each of you with special remembrances of this installation service.

Each of you will receive:

1. A cross—the emblem of sacrifice
2. A towel—the symbol of servanthood
3. A shaft of wheat—symbolic of sowing & reaping the seed of the gospel
4. A journal—to symbolize the daily need for solitude, prayer and reflection

Pastor invites them to come take the symbols and then kneel for prayer.

PASTORAL PRAYER

SPECIAL MUSIC: “WE ARE STILL THE CHURCH”

MINISTRY COVENANT RESPONSIVE READING

Pastor: Father, we are Your people.

Congregation: We are the people of God.

Pastor: We are living stones.

Congregation: We are holy priests.

Pastor: You are a chosen race, the King's priests;

Congregation: Yes, Father, we are Your priests.

Pastor: Though we are unworthy, we are priests.

Congregation: We are humbled to be called Your priests, Father.

Pastor: We offer the sacrifices of praise, service and deeds of love.

Congregation: We offer ourselves as sacrifices, desiring that our lives would be spent in ministry.

Pastor: We are the Body of Christ.

Left Side: Yes, we are part of Your Church.

Right Side: And You are the Head.

Pastor: The incarnation continues.

Left Side: Yes, it continues in us.

Right Side: We reach, but You touch.

Pastor: We want to minister in Your name.

Congregation: Yes, Father, we covenant together and with You that we will use our gifts to minister.

Pastor: We see gifts in each other.

Left Side: We affirm your gifts.

Right Side: And we affirm yours.

Pastor: We recognize that love holds us together.

Congregation: Yes, Father, we desire our ministry to be characterized by Your love.

Pastor: We confess our need of You.

Congregation: And our complete dependence upon You.

All: And our thankfulness for the opportunity to serve.

A reproducible version of this service is available in Appendix III.

For additional ideas see: Commissioning Service; Pastor's and Church's Covenants.

PASTOR APPRECIATION DAY



INTRODUCTION

Respondents to Gallup polls over the years have consistently given pastors above average “grades” for the overall quality of their work. Three out of four church members gave their pastors an A or a B, while only four percent gave their pastors a failing grade. But do we tell our pastors how much we appreciate them? Pastors need appreciation and encouragement.

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

Recognize your pastor's employment anniversary each year in a tangible way. Once a year celebrate Pastor Appreciation Day!

GOALS

- To have a special time of prayer for the pastor. Prayer not only changes things, but prayer empowers pastors.

Pray much for others; plead for God's mercy upon them; give thanks for all he is going to do for them. Pray in this way for kings and all others who are in authority over us, or are in places of high responsibility (I Timothy 2:1,2, TLB).

- To express love and encouragement to the pastor and his family
- To unite the church and build morale

PREPARATION

Appoint a chairperson and celebration committee. Choose a Sunday for this event that is near the pastor's employment anniversary date.

Publicize the celebration. Invite special guests, such as local government officials, family and friends of the pastor, district superintendent, etc.

Prepare a luncheon. The actual recognition of the pastor works better following the luncheon, rather than in the morning worship service. This allows people to stay focused on the purpose of worship during the service.

Determine what kind of tangible gift will be given to the pastor.

The following may be used for Pastor Appreciation Day, pastoral anniversaries, the pastor's birthday or any other time you want to show your appreciation to your pastor:

Pastor,

For all those times we called you in the middle of the night because life's problems don't keep banking hours, we thank you.

For being a good shepherd to your sheep-even on those occasions when we may have acted more like stubborn mules and old crows, we thank you. We thank you, too, for the banquets, bake sales, prayer breakfasts, and all the other calorie-filled events you've had to attend as pastor of our church. I mean, let's face it, after one of our spaghetti dinners, "church growth" takes on a whole new meaning.

We also admire your vision, Pastor-except on the golf course. And we want you to know we'll always stand behind you-far behind you when you're teeing off.*

But we're mostly thankful, Pastor, for the love you've shown, the faith you've demonstrated, and the wisdom with which you've led. You set the example. You don't merely teach us how to live. You live what you teach.

We love and truly appreciate you Pastor, and we're counting on being able to call you "pastor" for many, many years to come! (Excerpted from Martha Bolton's book *Home, Home on the Stage*.)²

*Or other hobby or interest of your pastor.

GIFTS OF APPRECIATION

- A love offering
- A check equal to the amount of one week's cash salary and benefits
- A three day, two night getaway for the pastor and spouse
- A gift that corresponds to your pastor's hobbies-i.e., fishing or hunting equipment, golf clubs or annual club membership, etc.

- Distribute 31 stamped post cards to 31 members. Have each member send a note of appreciation to the pastor's home so that a card is received each day for an entire month.
- Members could commit to inviting the pastor's family to Sunday dinner in their homes for a month.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

If you have a drama team, there are a variety of humorous skits that could be developed around this celebration. Be creative.

New Hope Baptist Church in Fayetteville, Georgia, had Big League cards printed. The card resembled a baseball card, with the pastor's photo on front and statistics on back that include membership and attendance gains, baptisms and other accomplishments.

In many ways, the laity makes or breaks the pastor. Pastor Appreciation Day is a celebration that will make your pastor!

The Perfect Pastor

At last we have developed a model for a perfect pastor that will suit everyone! He's guaranteed to please any church that calls him. He preaches exactly fourteen minutes. He condemns sin, but never hurts anyone's feelings.

He works from 9:00 in the morning until 11:00 at night, in every type of work-from preaching to custodial services. His salary is \$60.00 a week. He wears good clothes, buys good books, has a nice family, drives a nice car, and gives \$30.00 a week to the church.

This perfect pastor is thirty years old, but has been preaching for 35 years. He is tall, short, thin, heavy-set and very handsome. His hair is parted in the middle, with the left side dark and straight and the right side light and wavy. He has a burning desire to work with young people, and spends all his time with the older folks.

He smiles all the time with a straight face because he has a sense of humor that keeps him seriously dedicated to his work. Although he makes ten calls a day on church members, ten on the unchurched, and five on those in the hospital, he is always available for telephone calls in the office. -Author Unknown

2. Martha Bolton, *Home, Home on the Stage* (Kansas City, Mo.: Lillenas Publishing Co., 1991), p. 48. Used by permission.

THE PASTOR'S AND CHURCH'S COVENANTS



SUGGESTED ORDER OF SERVICE

- A statement by a church board member regarding the call of a pastor to minister to a local congregation
- A report of the district superintendent or denominational leader concerning the call of the pastor
- Call for pastor and spouse to come and stand before the church
- Call for church board to come forward to stand behind the new pastor and his spouse
- Reading of the Pastor's Covenant
- Reading of the Church's Covenant
- A church leader invites the congregation to stand and join in prayer for the pastor and his wife

For additional ideas see: Church Dedication; Service of Covenant and Commitment.

THE PASTOR'S AND CHURCH'S COVENANTS SERVICE

The leader will read the following Scripture:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for, works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up (Ephesians 4:11,12).

To the Pastor and Spouse:

As a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, an ordained elder in the church and pastor of this church, will you covenant to continue to:

- Preach the Word;
- Administer the sacraments;
- Care for the sick;
- Comfort the mourning;
- Receive persons as members of the local church;
- Reprove, rebuke, and exhort with longsuffering and doctrine;
- Exercise your gifts in reaching the lost and equipping the laity for the purpose of building and strengthening the church of Jesus Christ?

If you so covenant, please respond by saying, “By the grace of God, we will.”

Pastor and Spouse’s Response: “By the grace of God, we will.”

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others (Romans 12:4,5).

To the Congregation:

As the church under the Lordship of Christ, will you covenant to continue to:

- Affirm that through the work of the Holy Spirit, the church and pastor are brought together;
- Encourage, support and pray for your pastor as he seeks to lead us in building this church for the glory of God;
- Faithfully exercise your gifts, in a spirit of cooperation, to join your pastor as partners in ministry.

If this is your covenant, respond by saying, “By the grace of God, we will.”

Congregation Response: “By the grace of God, we will.”

A SERVICE OF COVENANT AND COMMITMENT BETWEEN A PASTOR AND THE CONGREGATION



SUGGESTED SCRIPT OF THE SERVICE

Leader: Other than the family, the closest relationship is that of a people and their pastor. Our Lord pictured this relationship, with its warmth and meaning, in the imagery of a shepherd and his sheep. People of the congregation, what covenant and commitment do you make to your new pastor?

Congregation: Before God, we make this covenant with you FULLY this very first day, as our leader and shepherd. As our lives become more and more intertwined, you will be more and more our pastor. It is not that we will hold you out, but as you probably know better than we, pastor, bonding at its most meaningful level happens as we...

Celebrate together;

Sorrow together;

Laugh together;

Weep together;

Dream together;

Achieve together.

We will give you time, as you will give us time. We start loving you and your family NOW. That love will grow and deepen, and never end.

Leader: (to the church board) As your pastor, (name) will also be your leader. Members of the church board, what covenants and commitments do you make to your pastor?

Church Board: Pastor, we want you to lead us in thinking, dreaming and planning. We want you to share with us the visions God gives you for this people. We promise to...

Dream with you;

Think with you;

Pray with you

for God's great plans for us to become a Great Commission church. We do not expect to dictate what you think and do. And we know you will not dictate to us.

We covenant to seek God's direction with you, so we can come in all things to say, "It seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us."

Pastor: Because God has called me to this ministry,

I will establish my ministry upon the Bible as the Word of God. As your pastor, I intend to grow as a child of God.

I will be honest with the use of my time and work at my job of being a pastor/shepherd.

I will be fair with my family-giving them the time and consideration they need by being a good spouse and parent.

I will handle responsibly all confidences shared with me.

I will seek to use my gifts in developing and equipping you, my people, for works of ministry.

I will strive to remain open to constructive criticism and receptive to suggestions intended to strengthen our ministry together.

I will exercise the necessary discipline to stay mentally, spiritually and physically fit.

I will be honest in my stewardship of money, endeavoring to live within my income and securing my debts.

I will guard my integrity and the integrity of my staff by being open and honest regarding our ministry.

Leader: People, what covenant do you make with your pastor's mate?

Congregation: We want to get to know you. Really know you! And we offer all our love and acceptance to you. We would like to make another commitment not often thought of. We'll not think of you as just a pastor's spouse. You are a person of value and an equally important part of the team. We want you to be a real down-to-earth person among us. You are a special person who happens to be married to our pastor. We need you. We need you to need us. Our hearts and our arms are open to you.

Leader: Pastor, what covenants and commitments do you make to these who are now your people?

Pastor and Spouse: We offer ourselves to you now—without reservation. You will be our people, our flock. We will love you. We will trust you. We will believe in you. We will honor each one of you as people of worth and importance to our loving Lord.

We cannot offer to you perfection, neither do we expect perfection from you.

We are people together—real human people. Both of us, like each of you, have strengths and weaknesses, gifted areas and ungifted areas. We covenant with you that all of us together will celebrate the strengths that our Lord has distributed among us by His grace and we will lovingly accept each other's weaknesses without unworthy expectations.

Congregation: We accept your love. We accept you. Teach us from God's Word. We need that. Pray for us in our needs. We need that—and we will pray for you. Today we begin together.

Everyone: Today we begin a journey together. It is not a new journey for any of us, but today our paths merge. We want the journey to be good and long. Our spirits blend in the words of the song, "I'm So Glad I'm a Part of the Family of God."

May His grace and presence be ours for the journey!³

A reproducible version of this service is available in Appendix III.

3. Special thanks to Dr. Bill Burch. Used by permission with slight modifications.

For additional ideas see: Pastor Appreciation Day; The Pastor's and Church's Covenants; Service of Covenant and Commitment; Commissioning Service.

SUNDAY SCHOOL GROWTH CAMPAIGN



INTRODUCTION

To recognize and elevate Sunday School participation, a semiannual fall and spring growth campaign is always an effective tool. The Sunday School growth campaign should involve every member of the congregation from the nursery to the seniors in the congregation.

GOALS

- To enroll new Sunday School members
- To promote the value of Sunday School
- To recruit new teachers and Sunday School workers
- To encourage Sunday School attendance
- To develop new classes

PLANNING FOR A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN

A successful Sunday School promotion should consist of the following characteristics:

- There should be a catchy theme and slogan.
- The Sunday School lessons should tie into the campaign theme.

- Design a logo that quickly identifies the intent of the campaign.
- The campaign should be short enough to maintain interest, but long enough to generate enthusiasm. Six weeks is a good length for a successful campaign.
- The last Sunday of the promotion should be your highest attendance day.

STEPS TO AN EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN

- Step One: Form a committee to plan the promotion well in advance of the fall and spring schedule.
- Step Two: Appoint a coordinator for each Sunday School class.
- Step Three: Have a kick-off banquet.
- Step Four: Encourage each class to develop a prospect list.
- Step Five: Give a gift to each guest. Gift ideas might include bookmarks, Bibles, pens or pencils with church information.
- Step Six: Celebrate with a churchwide dinner at the end of the campaign.
- Step Seven: Pray for a great harvest!

FOLLOW-UP

Encourage your regular members to establish continued contact with the new enrollees gained through the campaign of growth. Provide them with acceptance and encouragement to help them make your church their home!

For additional ideas see: Victory Sunday; Friend Day; Roundup Sunday; Taxi Sunday.

VICTORY SUNDAY



INTRODUCTION

At least twice a year or as often as your church reaches a new accomplishment in stewardship, numeric increase, etc., a great celebration should be planned.

PURPOSE

The purpose of Victory Sunday is to raise the morale of your church!

GOALS

- To announce specific results or goals that have been met
- To honor special achievements by the congregation
- To create good morale among the saints
- To develop a sense of appreciation for kingdom building by God's family

PREPARATION

- Select a theme song for all celebrations, i.e., "Victory in Jesus" (lyrics and music by Eugene M. Bartlett).
- Always serve food!
- Have a beautifully decorated cake with the achievement acknowledged.
- Have a special meal at no charge to celebrate the outstanding accomplishment: Potluck dinner, pizza party, banquet.
- Use Scripture passages focusing on praise.
- Honor outstanding leaders, etc. with certificates of recognition and gifts of appreciation.

- Focus music on victory and future growth in Christ.
- Words from the pastor should be focused on gratitude and future possibilities in kingdom growth of the congregation.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

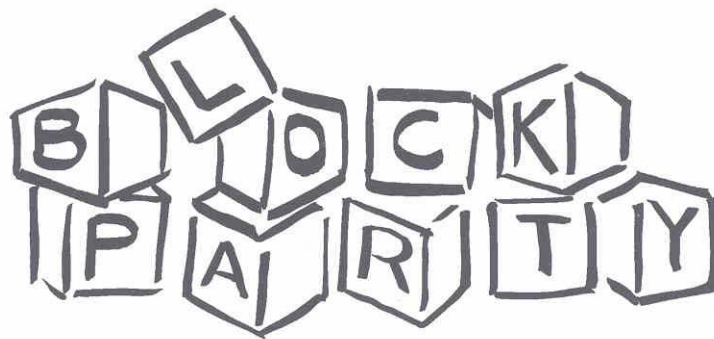
Victory Sunday is a time for the church family. Let them rejoice and be exceedingly glad. Make it both fun and full of praise in worship.

For additional ideas see: Above and Beyond; Discover the Joy of Giving; Sunday School Growth Campaign.

Section Four

FELLOWSHIP AND OUTREACH EVENTS

BLOCK PARTY



INTRODUCTION

The Fourth of July is a great time to celebrate the heritage of our country. In addition to the promotion that you might plan for Independence Sunday, it is also good to plan a neighborhood event to provide an inroad to your community.

PURPOSE

The purpose of a Block Party event is to penetrate your community with a fun-filled event designed especially with children and youth in mind.

GOALS

- To witness to the goodness of God and the freedom we experience in Christ
- To rightly relate to your community the fun-filled games, music and food

- To showcase gifted musicians of your local church, giving your neighbors an idea of the gifted musicians you have performing in Sunday services

PREPARATION

- Form a Block Party Ministry Action Team and appoint a team leader.
- Plan for the following events:
- Games for teens/children: Dunk tank, basketball shooting cages, etc.
- Booths: Crafts, food, face paintings, etc. Give away hot dogs, sodas, etc. Decide whether or not the church will fund the booths or make them self-supporting. Often local fast-food restaurants provide beverages just for the advertisement.
- Music: Plan an evening of patriotic songs and upbeat contemporary Christian music.
- Fireworks: If you are located near a city park where they have a fireworks show, encourage people to bring lawn chairs to sit in the church parking lot to watch the show.
- Publicity: Door-to-door flyers or a zip code mailing (mailing to everyone within your zip code), provide the best advertisement for this event.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

- Invite local dignitaries such as the mayor, city council members and other city officials to this event. Most of them like to mix with the crowds at patriotic events.
- Give out brochures with information about your church.

For additional ideas see: Pumpkin Festival; Church Picnic; Independence Sunday; Old-Fashioned Day, Ice Cream Social.

CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION



INTRODUCTION

Something churches do not do enough is recognize groups or individuals who have made contributions that are very beneficial to the work and ministry of the church. Occasionally we take for granted the volunteers who give so sacrificially. Celebrate the accomplishments of your people with proper recognition.

GOALS

- To express appreciation to volunteers in your church
- To motivate and inspire new volunteers
- To raise morale and unify the church

RECOGNITION IDEAS

There are various ways to recognize and honor good work. The following are just a few ideas:

- Sending personal handwritten notes promptly after the work or deed has been accomplished;
- Telephoning a personal thank-you;
- Sending a singing thank-you-gram delivered to the door (utilize youth in your church for this);
- Placing an ad in the local paper;
- Presenting a certificate of appreciation (see sample);
- Giving an engraved plaque;
- Giving a bouquet of flowers or corsage.

If recognition is given publicly, keep in mind the following:

1. State who is receiving the recognition, unless this information is obvious.
2. State specifically the reason recognition is being given. Point out the recipient's achievements and contributions to the project.
3. Always secure permission for public recognition from those being recognized.
4. Remember that as the presenter, you will be speaking not only for yourself, but for the entire church or specific department in the church.
5. Make an inspiring and effective closing to your presentation and give the recipient the gift you have chosen.

PEOPLE WORTHY OF RECOGNITION

- Senior adults who have given many years of service to the church (especially those 80 years of age and older)
- Recognize those in your congregation who have been married 50+ years. Interview them on the platform and ask them the secret of their successful marriages. Invite family members to attend this day of recognition.
- Sunday School or other ministry workers
- Office volunteers
- Nursery workers
- Youth volunteers
- Choir members and musicians
- Small group leaders
- Altar guild/worship committee
- Ushers
- Committee leaders
- Lay pastors
- Lay Eucharistic ministers

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Do not give recognition that is not deserved. Others tend to resent unearned appreciation. Give awards that cannot be attained any other way. Use variety. Recognition generates enthusiasm!

Certificate of Recognition

THIS CERTIFIES THAT

IS BEING RECOGNIZED FOR

ON THIS _____ DAY OF _____

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD, _____.

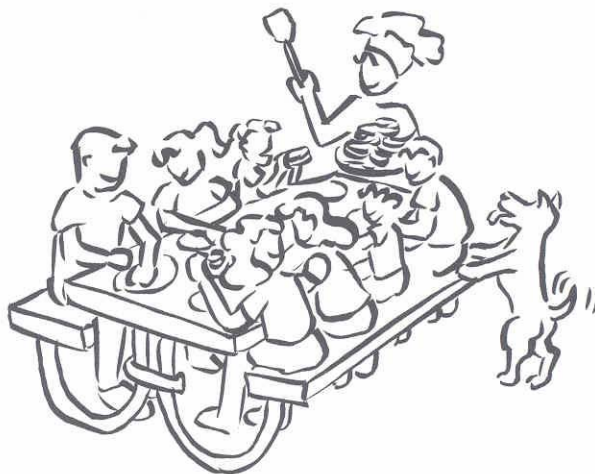
PASTOR

Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you.
Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

2 Corinthians 9:1315, NRSV

For additional ideas see: Pastor Appreciation Day; Appreciation Day; Favorite Sunday; Surprise Guest Sunday.

CHURCH PICNIC



INTRODUCTION

There is nothing quite like an all-church picnic. When carefully planned, the church picnic can be an excellent event for helping members to become better acquainted with one another and also to facilitate the assimilation of new members.

If not carefully planned, however, the children will gather at the playground, the youth at the volleyball net, the women will sit around and swat flies and the old men will pitch horseshoes and solve the problems of the world. The point is, we tend to seek out and socialize with those we already know. Not many of us are gregarious or extroverted enough to make the effort to get acquainted. Design the church picnic to help people become better acquainted with one another.

PURPOSE

Food, fun and fellowship!

GOALS

- To enable people who do not know one another to become better acquainted
- To raise morale
- To improve the quality of communication
- To consume large quantities of baked beans (music to follow!)
- To have fun!

PREPARATION

Special attention needs to be given to the following areas:

LOCATION

Where will the picnic be held? Someone needs to secure a sheltered picnic area at a nearby park. Contact your Chamber of Commerce, parks department or city hall for information and reservations. Usually \$50 or less is required to secure an area. Keep the following conveniences in mind: available drinking water, shelter (in case of rain), restrooms, etc.

PROMOTION

Who will promote the event? How will it be promoted? Specific details should be given to:

- Where the picnic will take place
- What time it will begin and end

- Who is invited
- What to bring
- What to wear

The following is a sample promotional announcement:

I'm here to invite all of you to our annual church picnic. (*Slap side of neck, then continue.*) If you want plenty of good food, fun and fellowship, then come on out this (fill in date).

We have lots of games planned-like the egg toss. Only this year we've had a change of rules. It's going to be everyone against (*Fill in name of one of your church members. Probably the jokester of your congregation*)

(*Slap side of neck again, then continue.*) As always the potluck is sure to be fabulous. Just try not to get stuck in line behind (*fill in the name of another one of your members*). I'm not saying how high he piled his plate last year, but I think I saw snow at the top of his mashed potatoes.

The horseshoe tournament will take place as usual, but (*fill in a member's name*), take my advice. It'll improve your game if you take them off the horse first.

(*Look down at shoulder, then slap it as if trying to hit something off.*) We will be having entertainment again this year. I regret to announce, however, that I will not be singing. The members of the Picnic Planning Committee were afraid my voice would curdle the homemade ice cream.

So, come on out to the annual church picnic for the time of your life. You're all invited. (*Slap side of neck again.*) Uh, on second thought there is someone who isn't invited. (*Pretend to pick up the dead mosquito from off your shoulder and hold it up.*) But don't worry. As in years past, my meat-loaf * will serve as the official bug repellent.

See you there!¹

*Or any other culinary disaster well-known in your church.

(A reproducible version of this sample script is available in Appendix II.)

FOOD

A food committee needs to assure a proper balance of meats, vegetables, salads and desserts are brought to the picnic. This may be done with sign-up sheets passed around to the various Sunday School classes or small groups. Also, drinks such as coffee, tea, lemonade, soft

drinks or cold water need to be provided. The church may provide napkins, paper cups, plastic eating utensils and plates bought in quantity at a local whole-sale outlet.

RECREATION

Various activities to meet the needs and interests of all ages can provide a tremendous amount of fun and team spirit. A lot of the recreational ideas will depend upon the kind of park facilities you are afforded.

Horseshoes, volleyball, shuffleboard, fishing derby, sack races, board games and relay races are just a few suggestions for recreation.

Also, you may want to consider a softball game of the men versus women and children. Sounds unfair? Consider this: the men have to run backwards to the bases, catch and throw with opposite hands (if they are right-handed, they catch right and throw left-handed).

CLEANUP

Who will stay around to clean up? Isn't that in the pastor's job description?

Make certain an adequate number of helpers for this task have been appointed prior to the event. It's a dirty job, but the Bible says, "There will be a special place in heaven for people who stay after church functions to clean up and put away chairs and tables" (Hesitations 33:3).

A FINAL SUGGESTION

Does your church have someone to photograph or video tape special events and celebrations? If not, my guess is there is a camera buff in your congregation who would love to do it if they were just asked and given reimbursement for film and developing. It will make for meaningful memories and provide warmth to the promotion of future events and celebrations.

1. Martha Bolton, *Home, Home on the Stage* (Kansas City, Mo., Lillenas Publishing Co., 1991) p. 48. Used by permission.

For additional ideas see: Block Party; Pumpkin Festival; Independence Sunday; Homecoming; Old-Fashioned Day; Ice Cream Social.

CONSPIRACY OF KINDNESS



INTRODUCTION

Someone lets you go ahead of them in the checkout line. Another person says a kind word to comfort a fussy child. Another picks up the packages you've dropped. A driver lets you cut into the line of traffic with a smile and a wave. It is heartwarming to be the recipient of an act of kindness from a complete stranger. That is the basis of the conspiracy of kindness ministry-believers performing various kind acts in the name of Jesus.

In a harsh and stressed out world kindness is a rare commodity. Showing God's love through a simple act of kindness can be a way for unbelievers to catch a glimpse of His light and lead them to search for more.

PURPOSE

The purpose of performing acts of kindness is to demonstrate the love of Jesus to the community and to make nonbelievers curious about God. This is not an opportunity to share the gospel, but it is an opportunity to share God's love.

GOALS

- To demonstrate the love of Jesus by serving others without expecting anything in return
- To be prepared to share the gospel with any who are interested in finding out more about the love of God

PREPARATION FOR A SUCCESSFUL EVENT

This event can be performed on a large or small scale. It can be a churchwide activity or a small group project. It is also a ministry that can be done by all age levels and abilities. Whether large or small, there needs to be preparation for the event.

RECRUITING A MINISTRY ACTION TEAM

Select someone to be in charge of the whole ministry. Ask for people to volunteer to be a part of the Conspiracy of Kindness team. Let team members know that this is an ongoing ministry, not a one time event. Divide team into groups with a team captain to oversee the team members. Teams may be divided by geographic areas within the community or by the type of activity they choose to do.

Decide how often this event will occur. You may decide to do random acts of kindness only a couple of times a year, once every two or three months, or more often. About a month before the event, begin to recruit parishioners to participate. Select a variety of different acts of kindness to fully use members' various gifts and abilities. As 1 Corinthians 12:4 says, "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of workings, but the same God works all of them in all men."

CHOOSING AN ACT OF KINDNESS

Begin by deciding what acts of kindness will be done. Use the following ideas as a springboard for your own event:

- Hand out free lemonade, ice cold water or sodas on city streets or at the mall, a park or the beach.
- Pick up trash after an event such as a school carnival, holiday parade or a sporting event.
- Give away free food items: cookies, popcorn, etc.
- Have a free car wash.
- Walk down the street and give away flowers, balloons, stickers, whatever you can think of to cheer up others.
- Knock on doors in a given neighborhood (senior citizen apartments or mobile home parks are especially good choices) and offer to:
 - Sweep the sidewalk;
 - Shovel snow;
 - Rake and bag fallen leaves;
 - Haul away any large items to the dump;
 - Wash their windows;
 - Mow the lawn and/or pull weeds.

Have each team captain choose an activity and encourage people to sign up. Captains will call everyone on their lists during the week before to remind them of the date, time and meeting place. Captains may want to appoint someone to gather any materials needed. In many cases donations of money are needed to provide the needed materials (i.e., sodas, flowers, balloons, etc.). These can come from the whole congregation, allowing nonparticipants to be involved.

In some cases you may have to obtain permission from community, police, school and/or park authorities to do the act of kindness on city, county, state or school property. If you are going to be on private property, such as a shopping mall, ask for permission as well.

Make sure that all of the team members realize this is not an opportunity to share the gospel message. If you do something for someone and then give them a tract or try to witness to them, it becomes a conditional act rather than a means of showing God's love. If anyone asks for further explanation, just tell them something such as: "We are doing this to show God's practical love." Don't get into any long philosophical debates with anyone. Remind team members to show God's love in every situation. Witness with actions, not words!

Also, team members are to be reminded not to take any money for performing any task. Tell them to make everyone aware that they are doing this for free to show that God's love is free.

Someone will need to prepare sturdy signs that state your purpose for performing the acts of kindness. These signs will be carried with you if you are moving around or they can be displayed near you if you are staying in one place. For example:

Showing God's love in practical ways.

FIRST CHURCH

Another way to advertise your purpose is to have team members wear name tags printed with the same or a similar slogan.

ON THE DAY OF THE EVENT

Meet for prayer before beginning the acts of kindness. Have the teams go out and do their particular activity. At the end of the day it might be a good idea to meet again to "debrief" and share stories.

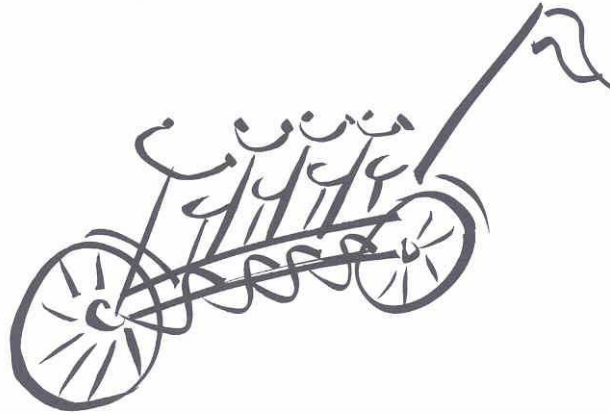
CONCLUSION

Have the team captains select one person from their group to share an encouraging story that happened during the Conspiracy of Kindness Day with the congregation on the following

Sunday. Let people know how important it is to demonstrate the love of God in tangible ways to total strangers!

For additional ideas see: Youth Volunteer Service Day; A Call to Care; “We Love You” Sunday School Campaign.

FRIEND DAY



INTRODUCTION

Every healthy church wants to improve its outreach efforts. One of the greatest potentials for effective outreach is through reaching friends of the people who already attend your church. Because the friends know and trust those who already come to your church, there is a better possibility that they may attend and respond to the Word of God. Jesus Himself emphasized reaching those within our circle of influence when He recruited His disciples, many of whom were friends or relatives. The recruited disciples then influenced their friends and relatives for Christ.

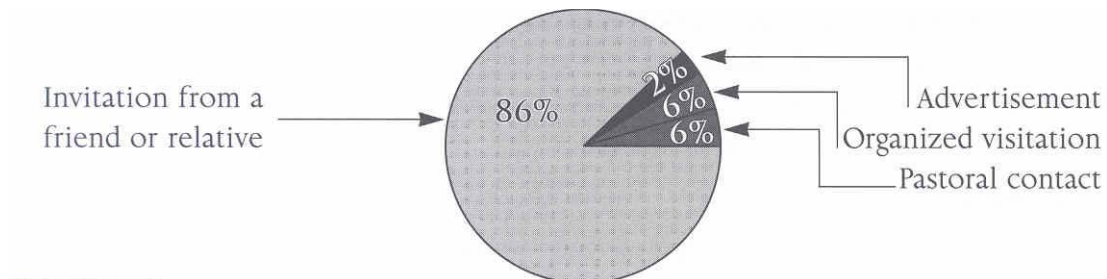
There is a right way and a wrong way to get your members to reach their friends for Christ. The quick announcement at the end of a lesson, “Everyone invite a friend for next week” doesn’t usually work because it lacks believability and organization. A planned Friend Day builds credibility and teaches your people biblical evangelism.

RESEARCH/STATISTICS

A Gallup poll found that 67 percent of the people who have never attended church have never been invited! One church member reported that his friend exclaimed, “Why didn’t you ask me sooner?” Another said, “I was just waiting for an invitation.” Some people who would never think of attending church by themselves will respond positively if asked by a friend. This is where members can play a major role in the evangelistic outreach of their church.

A national survey (done by Elmer Towns between 1984 and 1991) indicates that 86 percent of the people who accept Christ as Savior or join a church were influenced by friends or relatives.

WHAT INFLUENCES PEOPLE TO COME TO CHURCH



PURPOSE

Friend Day is an attendance campaign with a difference. Its aim is not just to give your church record high attendance on one day (which it most likely will do), but it includes a follow-up program designed to bring visitors back until they make a decision. The campaign helps churches carry out the Great Commission by involving members in reaching out to their friends in an organized manner; then the church as a team can lead these friends to Christ.

GOALS

- To expand the church's outreach ministry, build relationships, present the gospel and bond people to Christ and the Church
- To motivate church members to pray for and invite their unsaved or unchurched friends to church for this special day
- To renew church members' enthusiasm for evangelism
- To increase church attendance/promote growth
- To provide a follow-up plan to increase guests' chances of visiting again and making a decision
- To promote the value of friendship

PLANNING THE EVENT

As a leader, you will be teaching your students biblical evangelism; you will be teaching them how to reach their friends with the gospel.

Plan a five-week program leading to Friend Day in the fall or spring because these are the times of year when visitors are most inclined to attend Sunday School. To be successful, all

workers will have to participate in the program. The rooms will have to be decorated, and every Sunday School student will have to be involved.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF FRIEND DAY PLAN—BUILDING MOMENTUM

WEEK ONE

Sunday School leaders will have to plan ahead of time. It is said, “Everything rises or falls on leadership.” Be enthusiastic about the program. Begin to exhort everyone to bring a friend four Sundays before Friend Day. Point out that everyone has a friend and should be concerned about that friend. Even though all of the growth will occur on the fifth Sunday, the weeks of preparation will get the whole school involved. On the first Sunday of the campaign, have the pastor read a letter from a friend stating he or she will come and stand with the pastor as his friend on Friend Day. The pastor should make an effort to invite a person in the community or area who is known to all the church—maybe the mayor, sheriff, or a local sports or media celebrity. The signed letter should be posted on a bulletin board. In Sunday School, have each department leader read a letter from a friend who promises to come. Work ahead of time to make sure the pastor and department leaders have their letters to read on the first Sunday of your Friend Day campaign.

WEEK TWO

On this Sunday, ask the church board to read letters of commitment from their friends who will come to Sunday School with them. Add these letters to the bulletin board. During Sunday School, the departmental workers (pianists, secretary, etc.) will read letters of commitment from their friends.

WEEK THREE

On the third week, each Sunday School teacher should stand before an assembly of the total Sunday School and read his or her letter of commitment. These are also added to the bulletin board for all to see. Have Friend’s Commitment Cards printed and distributed to all the students on this Sunday. Each student should invite a friend to come to Sunday School. Instead of using letters, ask the students to get a commitment card signed by their friend to show the class the following week. Encourage students to get a commitment from more than one friend so that if one gets sick, another can come. Ask each teacher to phone students during the week to remind them to complete their commitment cards.

WEEK FOUR

Collect the commitment cards from everyone. Take time in class to pray for the friends who will be visiting next week. During the week, have teachers send out postcards as reminders to students and to the potential visitors. Remind friends who have agreed to attend that you want to be their friend also. Phone students to remind them to bring their friends.

WEEK FIVE: FRIEND DAY!

If everyone brings a friend, the Sunday School attendance will double. Be sure to make everyone feel welcome. For many, it may be the first time they enter your Sunday School. Be sure to do two things: First, present the gospel clearly in the lesson. The purpose of Friend Day is not just to boost attendance, but to reach people with the gospel. Secondly, be sure to leave the door open for further contact. Be friendly! Let new friends leave knowing there is a warm and friendly place where they can return to study the Word of God.

CONCLUSION

For five weeks, your Sunday School has been working hard to get visitors for one Sunday. Most of them may never intend to come back again. But you can change their minds by investing time in follow-up. Get the name, address and phone number of every visiting friend on Friend Day. The following week, make a special effort to contact them. Thank them for coming and invite them back. This could be done by writing a letter, making a phone call or personally visiting them. One church was so organized that the week following Friend Day, every visitor received three letters, three phone calls and a visit.

For additional ideas see: Sunday School Growth Campaign; Victory Sunday; Church Picnic; Family Day; Ice Cream Social.

HARVEST CELEBRATION



INTRODUCTION

Every church needs an annual youth celebration. Churches need to focus on the needs in their respective communities. The Harvest Celebration provides a splendid opportunity to combine these two endeavors.

GOALS

- To involve young people in a musical team-building event
- To encourage young people to reach out and meet community needs
- To attract peers, teachers and friends to a celebration involving their youthful friends. Great opportunity for evangelism!

PREPARATION

- Build a Harvest Celebration ministry action team.
- Appoint a team leader. Additional team leader assignments:

Prayer Leader

Program Director

Lights/Sound

Script Writers

Multimedia Technicians

Set Design

Costumers

Publicity Coordinator

Drama Coordinator

Food Collection Coordinator

- Select musical theme, songs, etc. Songs you might want to include:

“Thank You” (lyrics and music by Ray Boltz)

“Find Us Faithful” (lyrics and music by Jon Mohr)

“We Need a Parade” (lyrics and music by Nan Guzlay)

“If My People Will Pray” (lyrics and music by Jimmy Owens)

“Great Is Thy Faithfulness” (lyrics by Thomas O. Chisholm; music by William M. Runyan)

“Hallelujah, Praise the Lamb” (lyrics and music by Pamela Thum)

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

- Charge an admission of one nonperishable food item per person. Give the collected goods to the local rescue mission, food pantry or soup kitchen.

- Create a quartet of “turkeys” in full costume that sing and plead with people to eat ham, beef, or some other kind of meat during Thanksgiving! This will give the program a humorous lift!
- Use puppets to draw small children and families to the musical and to be an attention getter during the opening of the program.
- Encourage your senior pastor to give an invitation to accept Christ after the musical. Ask your leader to present the following ABC plan of salvation:

Admit that you are a sinner-see Romans 3:23

Believe that Christ can save you-see John 1:12

Confess Christ is Lord of your life-see Romans 10:9,10

Lead the congregation in a sinner’s prayer.

CONCLUSION

Ask attendees to fill out the following “Harvest Celebration Guest Survey”

A reproducible generic guest survey may be found in Appendix 11.

For additional ideas see: Thanksgiving; Pumpkin Festival; Church Picnic; Homecoming; Pastor Appreciation Day; Old-Fashioned Day.

HARVEST CELEBRATION GUEST SURVEY

1. Which Harvest Celebration did you attend? Please check one.

☐ Saturday ☐ Sunday

2. How would you rate the Harvest Celebration on a scale of 1 to 10? Circle one.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Poor

Excellent

3. Who invited you to the Harvest Celebration? (Please check one)

☐ Friend ☐ Church member ☐ Family member ☐ Other _____

4. What did you enjoy most about the Harvest Celebration?

5. What did you enjoy the least about the Harvest Celebration?

6. Do you think First Church should continue to present the Harvest Celebration?

☐ Yes

☐ No

7. Comments:

HOMEcoming



INTRODUCTION

Homecoming is not a new idea. In fact, homecoming has been an annual event in many churches through the years, but has been neglected in recent years. Resurrect homecoming! It's a fun event that can accomplish a great deal.

GOALS

- To activate the inactives and church the unchurched
- To promote the three Fs: Fun, food and fellowship!
- To build morale and strengthen family relationships

IDEAS

- Invite former pastors to speak.

- Organize an “old-timer’s” quartet, trio or choir.
- Encourage members to invite family and friends who have left home to return “home.”
- Recognize the charter members and the most recent members received. Give one of your charter members an opportunity to speak about the history of the church. You could even videotape an interview with one of your elder saints if he or she is a shut-in.
- Wear name tags.
- Have a display table with memorabilia and photos of bygone days.
- Have a Homecoming Golf Tournament, or other similar event, on the Saturday before Homecoming Sunday.
- Don’t forget “Dinner on the Grounds.”

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SERVICE

The ideal theme for Homecoming is heaven, and thoughts of a glad reunion day with loved ones who have gone on before us.

SCRIPTURE

Psalms 23:6	Hebrews 11:8-10,16
John 14:2-4	2 Peter 3:13
2 Corinthians 5:1-5	Revelation 21:1-27

SONGS

“The Family of God” (lyrics and music by William J. Gaither)

“Find Us Faithful” (lyrics and music by Jon Mohr)

“Amazing Grace” (lyrics by John Newton, John P. Rees)

“Rock of Ages” (lyrics by Augustus M. Toplady; music by Thomas Hastings)

“Victory in Jesus” (lyrics and music by Eugene M. Bartlett, Sr.)

“What a Day That Will Be” (lyrics and music by Jim Hill)

“When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder” (lyrics and music by James M. Black)

“When We All Get to Heaven” (lyrics by Eliza E. Hewitt; music by Emily D. Wilson)

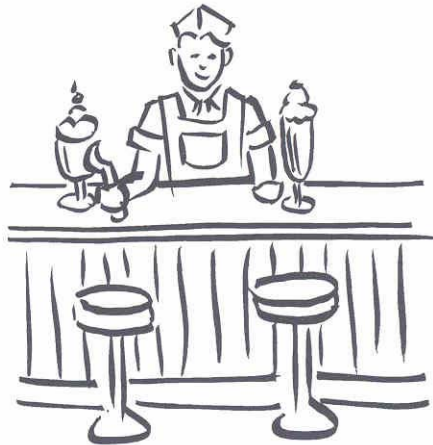
CONCLUSION

Homecoming is especially effective on the date of your church’s anniversary. It can be celebrated annually or at five- or ten-year intervals.

Homecoming can be more than just an event that unites people together. It can also be an event that unites people with Christ!

For additional ideas see: Vision Sunday for New Year; Church Anniversary; Pastor Appreciation Day; Pastor’s and Church’s Covenant; A Service of Covenant and Commitment; Church Dedication.

ICE CREAM SOCIAL



INTRODUCTION

“I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream!” About the only kind of ice cream people don’t like is melted ice cream. There is nothing like good homemade ice cream on a hot day in July.

GOALS

- To provide a nonthreatening event for your members to invite their friends and family
- To encourage fellowship and build morale
- To activate those on your rolls who are inactive
- To provide a support group to all who are addicted to ice cream!

PREPARATION

- Advertise the event at least one month in advance. Put it on the church calendar. Pick the hottest day of the summer!
- Provide 3x5-inch invitation cards to your members to give a formal invitation to their friends and family (see sample).
- Church staff should send out invitations to inactive members.
- Distribute a sign-up sheet for members to commit to bringing one of the following important ingredients of an ice cream social:
 1. Plenty of ice cream (and/or yogurt for the health conscious). Have those with ice cream freezers volunteer to make their specialty.
 2. A wide variety of toppings (marshmallow cream, chopped nuts, chocolate syrup, etc.)
 3. Fresh fruit
- Have the church provide the beverages, paper goods and plastic spoons.

Cleanup is fairly easy and efficient for this event. Just keep an eye on the pastor who always volunteers for cleanup at this event. If left unsupervised, your pastor could become the fastest growing pastor in your community!

VARIATIONS

This event could also be called “Dessert—A—Mania” –or “Rama,” depending on your usage of the Greek. Instead of ice cream, encourage members to bring their favorite dessert (pie, cake, cookies, etc.) to share.

Other variations could be a chili supper or spaghetti dinner. Another idea might be a do-it-yourself sandwich bar. The food committee would set up a table with sandwich fixin’s such as:

Cold cuts

Cheeses

Peanut butter and jelly

Butter

Chips

Mayonnaise, mustard and ketchup

Pickles/olives

Lettuce, tomatoes, etc.

Various white and wheat breads

Let each one create their very own “Dagwood.”

CONCLUSION

Expect your church to grow with this event—perhaps not numerically, but your church will surely grow physically!

*You are invited to an ice cream social at first Church on Friday,
August 15 at 7:30 p.m.*

(A reproducible version of this sample invitation is available in Appendix II.) For additional ideas see: Independence Day Sunday; Church Picnic.

NEW MEMBER INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

The Model Church Workshop teaches the following concerning membership loss:

3% transfers out of town

2% by death

6% stop attending church*

*(Eighty-six percent of members who stop attending, do so within a year or less of joining the church.)

Therefore, the goal of incorporating new people must be given highest priority and visibility. Membership success is determined not only by how many are received, but by how many become and remain active, permanent members.

GOALS

- To blend new members with current members so that both function together as a body of believers
- To give roots to establish future growth in the lives of the new members
- To give the new members the feeling of being valued, accepted and loved

IDEAS

First of all, be careful not to do anything that might embarrass the new member. The fear of having to go to the front of the sanctuary or to have to say something publicly may be a barrier that would prevent prospects from joining your church. Be sensitive to each new member's needs.

Second, use your membership class time to inform new members of the details of the introduction.

The following ideas can be utilized to celebrate the reception and introduction of new members:

- New member photo bulletin board—Use a high-traffic-area bulletin board to display a photo of each new member. Under each photo, place his or her name, address, phone number (if approved by new member), employment, hobbies and area of ministry in which they will be involved. It is important to highlight the area of ministry because it gives new members a sense that they are contributing and are needed by the church.
- New member luncheon—Following the morning worship service, invite members to stay for lunch. Letters of invitation should be mailed at least two weeks in advance. Assign a current member with common interests to sit with the new member. After the meal, the senior minister or key layperson can introduce each new member with a brief biographical sketch.
- Host a casual, all-church fellowship following the Sunday evening service. Provide finger foods and drinks. Names, addresses and phone numbers of new members should be typed and distributed to all church families to insert into the church directory. Give each new member a current copy of your church directory.
- Membership certificate—Publicly acknowledge each new member with a personalized certificate of membership.

CONCLUSION

Transforming new members into responsible church members is perhaps the most overlooked responsibility in the local church. The back doors of our churches are used more often than we care to admit.

For additional ideas see: Baptism; Certificate of Recognition.

Membership Certificate

THIS CERTIFIES THAT

HAS BEEN RECEIVED INTO THE MEMBERSHIP OF

ON THIS _____ DAY OF _____ IN THE
YEAR OF OUR LORD, _____.

PASTOR

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” -Ephesians 3:20, 21

OLD-FASHIONED DAY



INTRODUCTION

Old-Fashioned Day is a day designed to simply reflect on where you've come from as a church. It helps you see that change is inevitable and quite often good. How many of us want to go back to outside plumbing, for instance. That would hinder church growth! But it also helps us to remember simpler times and to slow down.

Have fun with this event. Don't set high attendance goals or be too strict with the format. Let it happen and remember yesterday while looking toward tomorrow—today.

GOALS

- To reflect and count your church's corporate blessings
- To generate enthusiasm
- To help each generation have a greater appreciation for one another

SUGGESTIONS

- Plan and promote your event at least six to twelve weeks in advance.
- Encourage the pastor and staff to generate enthusiasm for everyone dressing in old-fashioned clothing as they discuss their costumes for the event. Pastors could wear a long black coat, white shirt, black string tie and black broad-brimmed hat.
- Encourage the pastor to ride into the church parking lot on a horse or if someone in the church has a wagon and a team of mules, the pastor's family could ride in on the wagon.
- Decorate the foyer with antiques. Put kerosene lamps or lanterns in the windows.

- Find an old pulpit, perhaps one used in the church at one time.
- For the offering, pass the hat instead of the plate.
- Have an old-fashioned baptism at a nearby creek, river or pond.
- Serve dinner on the grounds.

MUSIC

- Select the old songs, the hymns of the faith—no new-fangled choruses, please!
- Have an “Oldtimers” choir-senior adults only.
- Find an old pump organ. Use acoustic guitars—not electric—and accordions. Trombones used to be an old favorite.

CONCLUSION

Take lots of pictures. In fact, invite your local newspaper to do a special interest story on that day. Create lots of memories.

Finally, thank God for padded pews, central heating and indoor plumbing!

For additional ideas see: Homecoming; Block Party; Church Picnic; Church Anniversary.

PUMPKIN FESTIVAL



INTRODUCTION

Many churches do not celebrate Halloween because of its association with Satanism. One fun alternative is to host a Pumpkin Festival on or near October 31st. This can be a great

outreach event as well as providing a fun time for the families in the church. With imaginative planning this event can provide opportunities to present the Gospel.

PURPOSE

The goals of this event include:

- Providing church members and the community with a fun alternative to Halloween activities;
- Providing a safe environment for celebrating;
- Reaching out to the community and providing exposure to the gospel message.

IDEAS

TIME AND DATE

There are a variety of options to consider in planning the actual time and date of the Pumpkin Festival. If you want it to truly be an alternative to Halloween events, you may want to consider having it on October 31st in the early evening from 5:30 to 8:00 P.M. In most communities this is usually the time trick-or-treaters roam the neighbor-hoods. Also this time will best accommodate families with young children. If you provide food, the families can eat their dinners at the festival.

Another good time to have the festival is on the Saturday immediately before or after October 31st. Afternoon hours from 12:30 to 3:30 P.M. work best. Having it during the day allows you to have it outside-weather permitting. Another advantage to holding it outside is you can have a wider variety of activities: pony rides, bouncers, messy games, etc.

LOCATION

If you have the festival at night, you will probably want to have it inside the church facilities. A daytime festival could be held on the church grounds or at a local park. Be prepared to move activities indoors in case the weather turns too wet, windy or cold.

FOOD

Food is a major part of this event. Plan on simple, yet festive, fare. Hot dogs, pizza, sodas, chips, popcorn, cotton candy, etc. Provide plenty of candy as prizes for games. Many people are willing to pay a nominal fee for the food.

ENTERTAINMENT

You'll need a variety of entertainment to make this a truly fun event. Use the talents of church members as much as possible. Have roaming clowns or mimes give away balloons. Have the children's or youth choir perform two or three times. A Christian illusionist or storyteller could also perform. If you have a puppet ministry or a Sunday School teacher who is a great storyteller, have them present a story with a gospel message. Or search for someone who knows how to give chalktalks or an artist that will draw as a gospel story is being told. A great place to present the entertainment is near the area where food is served. Set up tables and chairs to encourage people to sit for awhile. Set up a room with a VCR and TV Show Christian videos for those who want a respite from the noisy activity.

Have each organization in the church—women's ministries, men's ministries, youth, adult Sunday School classes, Bible study groups, adult choir, children's choir, etc.—sponsor a carnival booth. The booths can feature games or activities, just be sure to provide a variety for all ages. Make the games fairly easy to be a winner so even the smallest child can "win" at least a couple of the games. For more booth ideas visit other carnivals or fairs.

Booth ideas to get you started:

Face Painting	Bean Bag Throw	Basketball Toss
Cupcake Walk	Ring Toss	Lollipop Pick
Fishing Booth	Prize Booth	Golf Putt
Dunk Tank	Balloon Pop	Apple Dunking

CONTESTS

Another form of entertainment is to have a few contests with prizes for the winners. These contests can include a pie-eating contest, a pumpkin bake-off (recipes using pumpkin as an ingredient) and game booth decorations.

One question that needs to be settled early in the planning stages is whether or not to encourage or discourage costumes. If you want to invite the community, costumes may be inevitable. Costumes are especially part of the fun for the children. One solution is to select a theme for the Pumpkin Festival such as, "Wild West Days," "Country Fair," "Bible Characters" or "Storybook Characters."

COST

This can be a costly festival, but there are ways to defray the expenses. Charge each person a nominal admission fee of say \$3. For that \$3 each person gets a coupon for a hot dog (or slice of pizza) and a coupon for a soda and five Pumpkin Bucks. Each Pumpkin Buck entitles a person to play one game or booth activity. If they are playing a game and do not win, they get a Pumpkin Buck back. If they win, they receive more Pumpkin Bucks (PBs)—say 5 PBs for a low score, 10 PBs for a high score. An activity such as face painting, fishing booth or apple dunking requires a PB, but does not give back any because the child receives something in return. When children are ready to go home, the Pumpkin Bucks can be redeemed at the Prize Booth. Have a

variety of carnival prizes and candy which the children (and adults) can “buy” with their Pumpkin Bucks at the Prize Booth. This method avoids problems of one game running out of prizes too soon. Also provide a way for attenders to “purchase” more PBs for a nominal fee (i.e., 10 PBs for \$.25, 25 for \$.50, etc.).

Another way to defray costs is to have church members donate bags of candy, carnival prizes, apples, pies, cupcakes or other items. Carnival prizes can be purchased in bulk through party supply stores or catalogs at nominal prices. Charging for additional food items also helps pay expenses.

DECORATIONS

Use pumpkins, pumpkins and more pumpkins. Encourage the use of fall colors of orange, green, yellow and brown in all decorations. Provide cornstalks and other fall-themed decorations. Give decoration guidelines to everyone working on the festival asking them to refrain from using the usual ghosts, bats, witches and black cats. Use a harvest theme instead. Selecting a theme in advance avoids the usual Halloween decorations.

A great way to encourage festive decorations is to announce there will be a booth judging contest. Give the winning group a pizza party or a fun “trophy.”

PUBLICITY

There are several ways to promote enthusiasm for the event. Begin to announce the event at least a month before the actual event. Prepare flyers for church members to give to friends and neighbors. Make posters to hang up around the community. Note: Only put posters in places where you have permission from property owners.

Another way to promote enthusiasm in the church family is to give out Pumpkin Bucks to the children in Sunday School and midweek meetings. Give each child a PB for attendance, then allow the teachers and leaders to award extra PBs for answering questions, saying memory verses, etc.

Make a pumpkin display in a conspicuous area of the church. Purchase a giant pumpkin and allow children to guess the weight for a prize to be awarded at the Festival. Or fill a large glass jar with pumpkin-shaped candies and have children guess the number. Give the candy jar to the winner as a prize.

PREPARATION

Planning should begin three months before the event. Form a planning committee to make the initial decisions for date, time, location, theme. If you plan to employ activities such as pony rides and bouncers, you may need to reserve them now because they get booked up early.

Appoint each committee member to head a ministry action team for each aspect of the Festival: entertainment, decorations, games, food, and publicity. Enlist the aid of the various organizations within the church to sponsor a food or game booth or entertainment.

For additional ideas see: Block Party; Harvest Celebration.

Section Five STEWARDSHIP

ABOVE and BEYOND



INTRODUCTION

This campaign is a simple and straight forward call to obedience. God has blessed us with an abundance of material and spiritual riches. We must not neglect this truth and squander what He has entrusted to our care. Rather, we must move boldly to the future, trusting Him, committing to Him, sacrificing for Him, and above all, obeying Him. This, as the Apostle Paul made very clear, is our reasonable service.

PURPOSE

To accomplish the vision and goals which God has set before us, we must live, serve and give *above and beyond*.

GOALS

- To increase the annual regular giving of the church in order to focus on ongoing and vital ministries of the church and make necessary improvements and additions to the church building
- To develop a plan of action made to realize these goals by:

- Awareness: Through a variety of means we will make every person aware of our vision for the future;
- Involvement: Every member of the church body will be called to involvement in this great task that we have undertaken;
- Mobilization: From the first leadership team meeting forward, we will mobilize the entire fellowship to carry through to victory.

STEPS TO SUCCESS OF THE CAMPAIGN

Planning

Preparation

Promotion

Prayer

Participation

Prioritization

PREPARATION

STEP ONE: PREPARATION PERIOD

This will be a time of leadership identification and task assignments.

STEP TWO: INTENSIVE COMMUNICATION PERIOD

This will be the time of intensive communication between the campaign leadership and the church family. We want every family to have as much information as possible so that intelligent prayerful decisions can be made. Vehicles of communication will include a brochure, newsletters, pulpit messages, testimonies, Bible study materials and a banquet.

STEP THREE: PRAYER VISITS INTO HOMES

During this time, a large group of people will help in an effort to personally visit every home related to the church. The purpose of this visit will be to share information and/or answer questions and to ask each family for a commitment of prayer for the church and its related ministries, and their involvement in them. No financial commitment will be asked for or accepted at that time. This is a genuine call to prayer. The hope of a glorious, God-honoring victory is families with their faces turned to God asking, "Lord, what do You want to do through our lives?"

STEP FOUR: CHURCHWIDE BANQUET

This will be a time of bringing all of the church family together for information, inspiration and fellowship. Every family should be encouraged to be a part of this great event. Those who attend will be given the opportunity to register their commitment at this event.

STEP FIVE: VICTORY SUNDAY

On this day, celebrate together the victory that will enable you to reach more people for the Lord.

CONCLUSION

The ultimate goal of this campaign is not money, nor buildings, nor a better image for the church. Rather, it is that God be glorified as His people fulfill His commission to go into all the world and make disciples. The improvements made to the building are simply a means to an end of a more effective ministry for the cause of Christ.

For additional ideas see: Discover the Joy of Giving; Victory Sunday.

CHURCH CLEANUP DAY



INTRODUCTION

PAINTING THE CHURCH IN A DAY!

“‘Your church doesn’t need revival,’ a resident told me when I was trying to present Christ to him, ‘your church needs a coat of paint.’”

“I was embarrassed. Whether the man was right or not, he influenced my thinking I decided if we paint it, visitors might come to church Naively, I thought they would come to a clean repainted building.

“Later, I learned people don’t visit because of facilities, but because of excitement and the power of the gospel. What I did not realize was that community involvement in painting the old building would attract them to Christ. When members took pride in their church building, their renewed loyalty produced excitement, which caused the rest of the community to visit and see what was happening.

“So I challenged my small congregation, ‘We can paint the whole church in one day,’ and we did!

“I told everyone we would begin at 7:00 A.M. [Saturday morning], before the heat of the noon....

“Saturday morning, I rode up to the church on my bicycle at about 10 minutes to 7; the place was already a beehive of activity. Already the church was surrounded by cars and pickup trucks, and a paint contractor’s truck was backed up on the sidewalk to the front porch....

“By 12 noon on that Saturday morning, most of the painting was done. Those who finished early helped those who did not have as many family members....

“A church congregation experiences great satisfaction in sitting on the front lawn, eating fried chicken, potato salad and homemade buttermilk biscuits, then gazing admiringly at a freshly painted building each one just helped create To feel the friendship of dozens of church members and their friends and neighbors, all sitting around talking, is one of the greatest experiences any pastor can have. It was *koinonia*—what the Bible describes as ‘fellowship one with another.’”¹

Our church buildings and grounds are dedicated to God for the purpose of glorifying and worshiping Him. Keeping in good condition what God has given us is a responsibility we all share as a symbol of our gratitude for His abundant provision and grace.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Church Cleanup Day is to encourage parishioners to take loving responsibility for the surroundings in which they worship. Participation in the maintenance of the Lord’s house as a place of peace, rest and beauty will give us a deeper appreciation for the necessity of godly sanctuaries, not just in our worshiping communities but in our own lives as well.

GOALS

- To instill in church members a sense of stewardship and identity as well as a sense of duty to our religious community
- To build and strengthen community and fellowship
- To begin developing lasting relationships with others through service
- To render service to the church and its regular caretakers

PREPARATION

Many churches either employ a lay member to maintain their sanctuary and grounds or they hire an outside company to clean and landscape. The Church Cleanup Day is an opportunity to save the church a little extra money-if an outside company is hired-and/or to acknowledge the work of the caretakers by assisting them in their duties.

This is an event that should encourage teamwork not only within the church community, but within families as well. To prepare for the Church Cleanup Day appoint a Ministry Action Team to coordinate with the buildings and grounds caretakers. If you hire a company, coordinating with them will not be necessary. You will simply do the work you would have paid them to do.

Coordinating with the church grounds and buildings crew involves finding out what the church's needs are: i.e., painting, washing windows, weeding, preparing and planting flower beds, trimming hedges, pruning, etc. Once you have a list of needs, begin to coordinate people by placing announcements in the bulletin and posters throughout the building calling for volunteers. Start announcing this project at least three to four weeks in advance.

The church should provide most of the equipment-from plants to paint to tools-needed to clean and beautify the buildings and grounds. It may be necessary, however, to ask members not only to give of their time, but of their gardening tools for the day, too!

Ideally, this event should only take a Saturday morning and part of an afternoon-about six to eight hours. The earlier you start, the cooler it will be and the sooner you'll be done. The more volunteers you commit, the faster the work goes.

It may be necessary to start small and expand each year until you have an annual event that encompasses all of the church's physical needs. For instance, the first year you may want to do a yard cleanup and plant new plants. The second year do the yard cleanup, then expand and include window washing. Add a general paint touch-up the next year. If you can determine beforehand how many volunteers you will have, you can then arrange more work.

A few days before the scheduled cleanup, call all of those people who volunteered and remind them that the cleanup is just around the corner. This is also an excellent opportunity to find out before they arrive what they might like to do, if you haven't already. In this way you can immediately put them to work without a lot of dallying on the day of the project.

Arrange for a few members to coordinate drinks, especially if you choose a time of year that is warm. You may even want to order out pizza or provide a potluck meal at the end of the event.

CONCLUSION

The Annual Church Cleanup is an outstanding opportunity for parishioners to get to know one another in a casual way. It will also provide you with an excellent window into the giftedness of your members. Those who are natural leaders and motivators will stand out, as well as those who need a little more prodding. Feelings of love and respect among members for each

others' skills and personalities will be developed, and a sense of unity and identity will be begin to take root and grow.

1. Elmer Towns, *Stories About My First Church* (Ventura, Calif: Regal Books, 1997), pages 26-27, 33-34.

For additional ideas see: Room Decoration Day; Youth Volunteer Service Day; Church Picnic.

DISCOVER the JOY of GIVING



INTRODUCTION

Stewardship is a choice. We define stewardship as managing our time, talent and treasure for God's glory. When we choose to manage our money for God, we have chosen sappiness. Paul tells us "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). Not that giving away anything makes us happy. But when we partner with God, we invest our money according to His principles. We are managing our money for something much bigger than ourselves. We are happy because we control our money for God. We are happy because we control our choices. We are happy because God blesses us.

PLAN OF ACTION

- Uniform lessons for all Sunday School classes during the first four weeks. Stewardship sermons on Sundays and midweek services.
- Five weekly letters to the church from the pastor. These letters should provide inspiration, information and encouragement.
- One audiotape from the pastor to each member, containing 31 two-minute devotionals to be listened to daily.
- Several posters and/or banners placed in the sanctuary, classrooms and other rooms, promoting tithing and sacrificial giving.

- Personal stewardship testimonies in many services and classes.

PREPARATION

Sermons should be prepared from the vineyard parables spoken by Jesus on His way to Jerusalem and the cross:

- **Stewardship Is an Attitude**

Matthew 20:1-16 Subject: Managing my desires

- **Stewardship Is Obedience**

Matthew 21:28-32 Subject: Managing my daily commitment

- **Stewardship Is Accountability**

Matthew 21:33-41 Subject: Managing my money

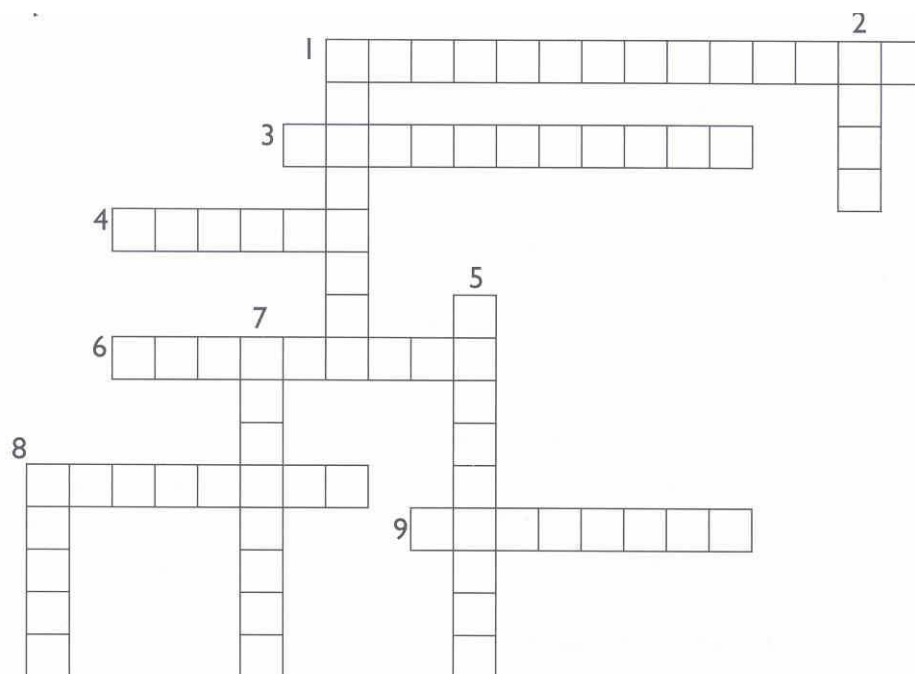
- **Stewardship Is a Decision**

Luke 19:11-27 Subject: Managing my decisions

FINAL SUGGESTION

Use the following crossword puzzle to stimulate interest in the previously mentioned “Stewardship is...” statements:

Photocopy the following crossword puzzle for your bulletin and let parishioners know that the first one to correctly complete the puzzle and show it to the pastor will receive a prize.



ACROSS

1. Not the ability to account, but the ability to accept responsibility.
3. The subject of this puzzle
6. What God wants more than sacrifices from us (see 1 Samuel 15:22).
8. Directing or handling available _____ (see 5 Down) with a degree of skill
9. "For where your _____ is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21).

DOWN

1. "Your _____ should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).
2. We are admonished by Paul to be wise and make the most of our _____ in Ephesians 5:15,16 (NASB).
4. The natural ability of a person
5. Our physical and natural abilities as well as our possessions
7. God asks each of us to make a _____ about our attitude toward giving (see 2 Corinthians 9:7).
8. The subject of 1 Timothy 6:6-10

(A reproducible version of this puzzle and the solution are available in Appendix II.)

CONCLUSION

Discover the joy of stewardship. Invest your tithe to reach the unchurched! Discover the joy of giving by investing your faith offerings for worldwide evangelism through television.

Discover the joy of giving by investing your gifts over and above your tithe in training young people for Christ's service. Get involved and discover His joy!

For additional ideas see: Above and Beyond; Victory Sunday.

YOUTH VOLUNTEER SERVICE DAY



INTRODUCTION

In our churches and communities live many who may be less fortunate than ourselves. Volunteering time, talents and resources gives us opportunities to identify a need and then use the gifts God has given us to serve His children as Jesus taught us.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Youth Volunteer Service Day is to provide an opportunity to get youth out into the community and do an activity of sacrificial service. Serving others instills feelings of joy in serving, self-worth and accomplishment. This activity also benefits those in need by performing a much-needed service that might not otherwise be done.

GOALS

- To identify a need and meet it through selfless giving
- To instill in youth an ethic of loving sacrifice by teaching them to look outward instead of inward
- To begin to develop Christlike attributes through serving others
- To develop a sense of gratitude
- To build and strengthen community and fellowship among the youth

PREPARATION

There are several steps in creating successful youth service projects:

STEP ONE: IDENTIFY A NEED

There may be someone in your congregation or community who has a need as simple as yardwork or as difficult as building a barn. Service begins with an alertness and awareness of the needs of those around you.

STEP TWO: ASSEMBLE A MINISTRY ACTION TEAM

Identify an individual or individuals in the congregation with natural abilities in motivating others—people who are encouragers and go-getters.

STEP THREE: BEGIN TO ORGANIZE THE SERVICE PROJECT

Contact the person you wish to serve. This may be an individual, such as an elderly parishioner, or it may be a nonprofit organization you want to work with such as Habitat for Humanity or a local soup kitchen.

Determine the resources necessary to carry out your project. This could include everything from paintbrushes to pickup trucks, depending on the project. If you're working with an established organization, you may need only to show up and they will provide the equipment and supplies. If you have to provide the equipment and/or supplies, determine what is needed and find out who in the church would be willing to share their resources.

Determine the time needed to complete the task. Some projects require a couple of hours while others may require an entire day or a couple of Saturdays.

Set a time and a date and begin an ad campaign. A round of announcements in the church bulletin as well as posters detailing the need and a call for volunteers should go out at least two weeks ahead of the event. Be sure to include information about the meeting place and transportation, as well as whether or not food and drinks will be provided.

Commit volunteers. Contact the parents of your church's youth and encourage them to participate as chaperones and supervisors. Contact each youth member individually and encourage each one to join you and his or her peers in service. It may be beneficial to select a well-liked youth to assist you with these calls. Teens generally respond better to their peers. This activity is also a good fellowship tool. Use it to draw in those who may be less active.

STEP FOUR. GATHER THE NECESSARY TOOLS AND PEOPLE

Arrange a centralized meeting place such as the church parking lot. Carpool to the service project. Since you cannot always be certain when the project will end, arrange for each youth participant to be taken home. Their parents will appreciate this.

STEP FIVE: EVALUATE THE PROJECT

Talk to those who participated and find out what they enjoyed about the experience. Service projects can have quite an impact for those serving. More often than not, as frequent service projects are organized, youth will respond enthusiastically. Service is a natural high that builds confidence, feelings of self-worth and lasting values and relationships.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

The following are some suggestions for types of service projects you might organize or service organizations you might want to become involved with:

- Painting an elderly person's home;
- Doing yardwork for a local school;
- Holding a worship service for people in the hospital;
- Visiting people in a rest home;
- Helping to prepare and serve a meal at a soup kitchen;
- Adopt-a- highway;
- Helping with Habitat for Humanity, Christmas in April, Toys for Tots or any other annual service project.

CONCLUSION

The important thing to remember in organizing service projects is who the project is meant to bless. Fundamentally, these projects are meant to bless the ones being served. Peripherally, they also bless the ones serving. An attitude of gratitude and love is paramount to successful service-gratitude for the blessings we enjoy and love for those to whom we render service as well as those with whom we serve. Service projects are a great way to put into practice Jesus' words: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39).

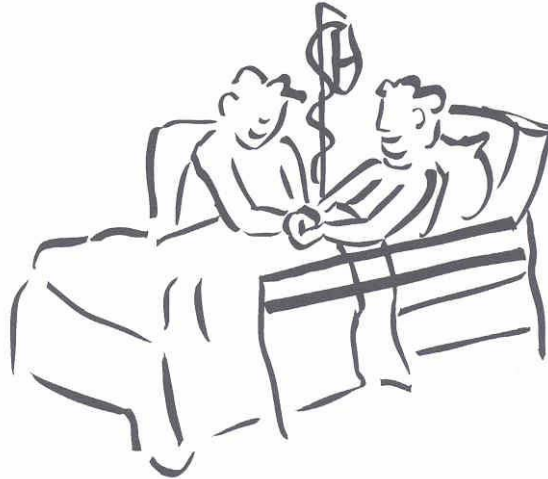
For additional ideas see: Conspiracy of Kindness.

Section Six

SUNDAY SCHOOL

GROWTH CAMPAIGNS

A CALL to CARE



INTRODUCTION

Sunday School is a place where somebody cares-where friends are waiting to greet you, or at least, it should be. This conviction lies at the heart of this Sunday School campaign. Building on the theme “Rediscover the Word,” this campaign examines the word in the Word, “A Call to Care.” The Scripture theme from Matthew 5:13-16 reflects the call we have to care. Indeed, A Call to Care is a practical approach to living the kingdom message of Jesus.

Sunday Schools that care, grow. Those that actively extend the love, compassion and concern that awakens interest in spiritual things experience growth. Take a moment to think about the possible results if your Sunday School were to use these six weeks to mobilize your membership to extend Christian care and concern to your neighbors!

Imagine what could happen if you responded affirmatively with the call to care, focusing your energies on meeting a million new friends, churchwide, with an invitation to rediscover the Word!

This six-week emphasis is different from other campaigns in that it probes the message of God’s love with suggestions on how we can care for others. Practical expressions of care for others actively demonstrate God’s love for them and His invitation to become part of the Christian community through faith, repentance and salvation.

PURPOSE

A Call to Care offers the local church two positive emphases:

- Extending and modeling care to your communities in Jesus’ name;
- Inviting neighbors and friends to experience new life in Christ through Christian community and the life of full salvation.

GOALS

- Mobilize members and friends in an effort to know and understand the needs and opportunities for caring in their neighborhoods.
- Provide tools and resources for members and friends so that they may actively become involved in their neighborhoods and recognized as persons of genuine care.
- Help the Sunday School mobilize its members to demonstrate genuine care for and interest in the lives of members and nonmembers alike.
- Let everyone know that your Sunday School has made a pledge-a promise that every member can be counted on to care for others whose paths cross theirs.
- Invite and recruit new members for the Sunday School, especially those who might lack a care network.
- Communicate clearly that following Christ means being his instrument of care and love in a world where many are waiting for a word of good news.

PREPARATION

WEEK ONE: MOBILIZING THE SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR CARING

Have everyone on your Sunday School responsibility list present at their posts and ready to rally around the noble challenge of being an instrument of Christ's loving, compassionate care during the next six weeks. During week one, we learn the theme for the next six weeks.

WEEK TWO: WE'RE AWARE!

Help Sunday School members become acquainted with their neighbors. Evangelism usually begins with relationship-building activities.

WEEK THREE: WE PREPARE

Awareness should lead to preparation. During preparation we should extend the level and intensity of our awareness so that when the day of invitation comes, we are fully prepared to make a significant invitation-one that will be difficult to refuse. Why? Because that invitation has been built on the foundation of intentional, active and compassionate care.

WEEK FOUR: MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS

Make the next seven days a time of intensive action designed to express to prospects, absentees and others the caring interest and concern your Sunday School offers.

WEEK FIVE: WE CARE!

Continue the theme of caring by encouraging projects of corporate caregiving through Sunday School class projects, etc.

WEEK SIX: FRIEND DAY

One of the goals of this campaign is to make a million new friends through the caring compassion expressed through local churches. On Friend Day, our goal is that every local church will have a number equal to 100 percent of their responsibility list in attendance in Sunday School.¹

CLOSING REMARKS

It is the Word that tells us of His friendship with sinners-with the broken, the downtrodden, the oppressed. It is the Word that tells us He came to make us His friends, not His slaves. He gave unselfishly of Himself so that every person might know Him as friend.

1. Used with permission. Based on a sermon by Stan Toler, "When We Care." Special thanks to Dr. David Felter, Church of the Nazarene Sunday Schools.

For additional ideas see: Conspiracy of Kindness; Friend Day.

APPRECIATION DAY



INTRODUCTION

The Bible has a great deal to say about the giving of thanks or expressing our appreciation, especially to Him, but we are also to express our thanks and appreciation to those around us who have been a blessing to us and who have helped us through the years. These people are not always the most visible in the church. Many times they are quiet, unassuming, faithful people, who go about doing the job that the Lord has given them to do in a thorough, dedicated manner.

There comes a time when all of us can find real joy in expressing our appreciation to those around us who have been a blessing in our lives. It may be a Sunday School teacher, pastor, bus worker, custodian, usher or someone who may not be very visible at all. The

following ideas will give some instruction as to how this material may be used in your promotion of Appreciation Day.

PLANNING FOR A SUCCESSFUL EVENT

The pastor, staff and lay leaders must choose a time several weeks before this particular day in which to plan all of the details. This is one special day that does not require a great deal of planning as far as advertising, printed materials, etc. But a great amount of thought and preparation should be given to Appreciation Day. It is not enough to announce that we are going to show our appreciation for our bus drivers, Sunday School teachers, staff members, etc. on a particular day and have the people come to be honored. Certain definite plans need to be made.

DEPARTMENTS AND CLASSES

In the planning session, the pastor and those working with him should choose someone from each adult Sunday School class to head the campaign to show appreciation for the teacher of that class. It is impossible for the teacher to plan his or her own appreciation day, so someone else in the class needs to spearhead this. In the younger classes or departments, the teachers of the classes should lead their individual classes in a concerted effort to show appreciation for the departmental leaders. The parents of the children in the Sunday School classes should plan to honor their children's teachers.

All of the people being honored can receive certain tangible gifts like homemade cards of appreciation from the children, a financial love gift or some other article; but the best way is to encourage each class to have as many people present as possible, and in that way show appreciation to the department head or the Sunday School teacher. This can be a wonderful day in the Sunday School classes as people show their appreciation and express their love to their leaders. Leaders in the Sunday School or church ministry spend a great deal of time and effort, and this donated time should not go unrecognized.

BUSES

Every bus captain should show his appreciation to all of the people who ride his bus on Appreciation Day by having a nice token of his appreciation to give to them. Then he can teach the children to be unselfish and to show their appreciation to the pastor by having the largest number on the bus they have ever had.

THE CHURCH SERVICE

This is really the paramount portion of Appreciation Day. This is the time when the hearts of the people will be touched very deeply.

As the people file into the services, place in each person's hand—every man, woman and child—a small red ribbon, about one-half inch wide and two inches in length with a small safety pin inserted in the ribbon. They are to keep these in their hands until the close of the service. After the pastor has given the message, ask the people to be seated and explain what is about to

take place. The pastor should then explain that all paid staff members would be excluded from the next few moments as far as people showing their appreciation to them. He should then ask every person to take his ribbon in hand and begin to think of the person who has been a great blessing to them in the past year or over the past several years. It may be a Sunday School teacher, a bus worker or an elderly lady. The pastor should then give a few moments for each person to take his or her ribbon and pin it on the lapel or the dress of the person in the church who has been a great blessing to them.

As the people begin to move about in the sanctuary, it soon becomes evident that certain individuals, sometimes a surprise individual, has made a marked impact on a great host of people. Some people will emerge literally covered in ribbon. At the close of this time it becomes evident that a great number of people have been a great blessing to others and have had appreciation shown to them.

This never turns into a popularity contest. It is a sincere expression of appreciation to people in daily walks of life.

CONCLUSION

The pastor should instruct the people as they leave the auditorium to express their appreciation to every person who has been a blessing to them. They might not have pinned a ribbon on them, but they need to express their love and appreciation to them.

For additional ideas see: Pastor Appreciation Day; Certificate of Recognition.

CAPTURED by the SPIRIT: FROM EASTER to PENTECOST



INTRODUCTION

This is a seven-week campaign for local church Sunday School to give new emphasis on rediscovering God's Word about the Holy Spirit. Scriptural selections are taken from Zechariah and are linked to life applications for today.

Typically, Easter Sunday attendance represents a high mark in the life of the local Sunday School and church. Whether you have traditional classes or a unified service, attendance is high. Launching this campaign from one of your peak attendance days gives added momentum useful in sustaining the energy of an extended campaign.

PURPOSE

- Mobilize for mission accomplishment through renewed emphasis on the Holy Spirit.
- Use weekly themes to reinforce outreach, discipleship and mercy ministries.
- Highlight the Sunday School as the agency for reaching out to new friends as well as strengthening believers in holiness and spiritual living.

GOALS

- To celebrate Christ's resurrection with record attendance in Sunday School
- To attract the lost to the invitation of Christ the Victor, who helps them overcome all sin
- To renew the church with a rediscovery of the Spirit's power and resources
- To enlarge the scope of ministry and mission through new commitment to Christ

PREPARATION

Easter is prime time for encouraging church and Sunday School attendance. Even those without religious traditions are aware of the significance of the Easter event for Christians. Celebrate Christ's resurrection with a record Easter attendance.

WEEK ONE: ABLAZE WITH GOD'S SPIRIT

Fire as a biblical metaphor represents cleansing as well as illumination. The Church is a light shining in the darkness of ignorance, superstition, fear and sin. It is a bright beacon of hope for those who have given up. This campaign can help each Sunday School class and small group see itself as a beacon of God's grace. Urge teachers, class leaders and workers to pray that the Holy Spirit will illuminate their classes and be present in their meetings, fellowship and times of study.

WEEK TWO: ATTITUDES CLEANSED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

Every Sunday School class and small group fellowship can attract new participants more easily when there is an atmosphere of joy, happiness, encouragement and festivity. This week's emphasis is on attitude—an attitude of praise that the world will find attractive. Let every facet of the church be filled with an upbeat attitude of praise, festivity and happy encouragement.

WEEK THREE: EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

“Everyone involved!” is the rally cry of great Sunday Schools and churches, based on God's promise and the availability of the Holy Spirit to His people. The Sunday School class and small group setting are ideal locations for full participation. Everyone can invite friends to attend classes. Empowered by the Spirit means being energized for participation.

WEEK FOUR: GUIDED BY THE SPIRIT IN JUSTICE AND TRUTH

During this campaign, we seek to widen our circle of friendships and relationships so that many will find themselves attracted, called and drawn to our fellowships by the work of the Spirit in our corporate and individual lives.

WEEK FIVE: SEEING BEYOND OUR LIMITATIONS

We believe God for better and greater things—things that may seem marvelous in our eyes. We believe the riches of His Spirit empower us, even when we feel impoverished. We resist the temptation to think from the perspective of impoverishment and declining resources, unrealized expectations, or persistent disappointments. Instead, we commit to believing God's powerful Spirit—to be touched by His grace and power.

WEEK SIX: REVIVED IN THE SPIRIT

While we have been progressing toward the great Day of Pentecost with this special emphasis, there is always the need to emphasize the possibility of renewal and revival. This campaign, with its progressive study of the role and ministry of the Holy Spirit, can serve as a catalyst for renewal and revival. Every Sunday School class and small group should have renewal and revival as its expectation.

WEEK SEVEN: LIVING IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

We envision Sunday School classes, small groups, even the whole church as that place where women, men, girls and boys discover Christ in personal relationships of grace and salvation. More than that, we envision the church as a staging area, a living laboratory where the claims of the gospel confront the world and dispute prevailing notions anchored in human selfishness.²

2. Used with permission. Special thanks to Dr. Talmadge Johnson, General Director of Sunday Schools, Church of the Nazarene.

For additional ideas see: Easter; Victory Sunday.

FAITH CAMPAIGN



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this special campaign is to reach as many families as possible. The whole thrust of the five-Sunday program is to strengthen the church family by adding as many family units as possible.

Faith in the heavenly Father is our most valuable asset as Christians. Sunday School lessons on faith should be taught. The pastor's message should contain a great deal of instruction on faith in the Savior (see Galatians 2:20).

When the number of family units increases, the attendance rises and the offerings increase. Heads of families are important in any church.

PLANNING THE CAMPAIGN

The pastor and his planning team should spend time laying good groundwork for the campaign. Choosing the most promising days on the calendar is vital. Try to stay away from Sundays that would take away from the effectiveness of the campaign.

Push aside as many church activities as possible, such as socials, to give all of your attention to this effort. Go through these weeks on the church calendar and clear it as much as possible.

Place a box in the foyer with an opening at the top for members to place the names of families that might be prospects. You'll be surprised how many other families your members know who can possibly be reached for the Lord.

Have teachers and department leaders turn in a detailed account of their plans for their classes and departments for the full five weeks.

Families

A ll

I ncreasing

T ogether

H ere

WEEK ONE: FAMILY SUNDAY

This is the kick-off Sunday. Every effort should be made to get 100 percent attendance of all family units in the services and in Sunday School. Families should sit together in church if possible.

WEEK TWO: YOU-ALL-COME SUNDAY

On this day, let up on the family emphasis and push for 100 percent attendance on the part of every person, even little children, whose parents have never come with them to church.

WEEK THREE: "I-WILL" SUNDAY

Leading up to this day, every person must have a willing heart to do anything asked of them to make "I-Will" Sunday successful.

- I WILL be present
- I WILL try to bring another family
- I WILL bring my tithes and offerings
- I WILL pray for the campaign
- I WILL be faithful to my task at the church

WEEK THREE: COME-TOGETHER SUNDAY

Encourage every family to bring another family, having the families attend church together. Every family keeps working until they have another complete family coming with them as their special guests. Encourage them to invite their guests home with them for lunch or to take them out for a meal.

WEEK FOUR: COMPLETE-IN-HEAVEN SUNDAY

Ending the campaign on this theme is a great prospect. Pressing for families to be complete in heaven is a marvelous motive. Give out a booklet on heaven to every family present. Sing songs about heaven in the service.

ADVERTISING

Direct mail to each member of the church, each week, is the best method of publicity for this attendance program. Word of mouth is still better. Try to get everyone talking to friends and neighbors about it!

Get a commitment from as many as possible to make five contacts each week, either in person or by phone.

DEPARTMENTS AND SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

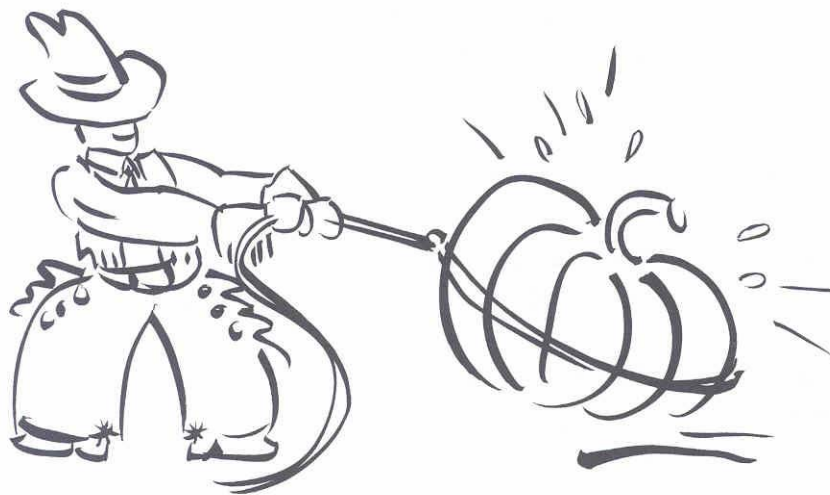
Other special activities and promotions will have to be used to keep the attendance up, especially in the children's departments or in the children's church. The promotional ideas would not have to be family oriented. Any ideas may be used.

BUSES

On the final Sunday, have a luncheon for all families of children who are bussed. Make a special effort to invite as many of the parents as possible. This has been tried with the result that a number of the children's parents were saved because they were in the church service and heard the gospel presented. It really works!

For additional ideas see: Family Day; Friend Day; A Call to Care; "We Love You" Campaign.

FALL ROUNDUP CELEBRATION



INTRODUCTION

Fall Roundup Celebration can be a real attendance booster over the years if planned properly. It is a natural promotion to create interest, fun and outreach.

PURPOSE

- To round up absentees
- To rebuild attendance after the “summer slump”
- To reach newcomers in your community

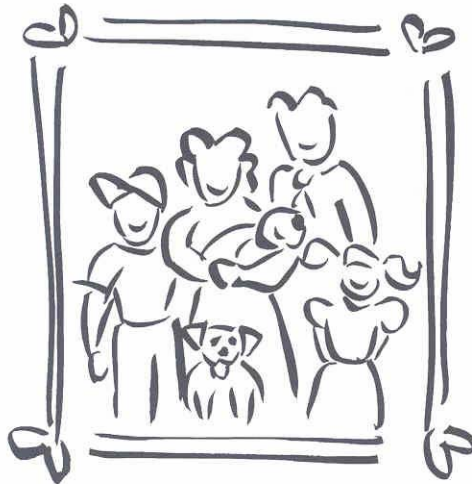
PREPARATION

- Appoint a team leader and Ministry Action Team to plan your fall promotion
- Possible Sunday themes:
 - Round up Absentees Sunday
 - Round up Friends & Neighbors Sunday
 - Round up Newcomers Sunday
 - Rodeo Roundup Sunday
- Promotional ideas:
 - Newspaper—advertise First Annual Roundup
 - Placemats—local restaurants especially in small communities will let you donate placemats with your celebration or event listed
- Banners at your celebration
- Special delivery letters from your church members to the community
- Public service announcements: local radio & TV
- Rodeo Sunday: Western BBQ, pony rides, western costumes worn (jeans, vests, etc.)
 - Decorations (hay wagons, cows, pumpkins, etc.)
 - Classrooms-contest for best western decorations, etc.
 - Cowboys for Christ quartet (create your own!)

- Music (sing some campfire-type songs or Bluegrass sounds/contemporary gospel)
- Other creative ideas:
 - An antique & classic car roundup
 - A picnic in the park
 - Sack races, apple bob, greased pig contest, children's games
 - A dessert-judging contest-members bring their prize-winning desserts

For additional ideas see: Block Party; Church Picnic; Family Day; Roundup Sunday; Victory Sunday.

FAMILY DAY



OPTIONAL NAMES FOR FAMILY DAY

- The Friendly Family Day: emphasize friendly because family members must be friends to one another.
- The Happy Family Day: emphasize the joy and happiness that a family wants.

Celebrate Family Day: together. The key word is “together.” Not only is it a key word in the Bible for the Christian life, but it is the necessary glue that every family needs.

THE EMPHASIS IS ON FAMILY

This event is not primarily an attendance campaign like Friend Day. The emphasis is on family enrichment or “Celebrating Together” because people have a deep concern for the family.

When the church celebrates the family, people will attend out of a need or out of a qualitative expression, rather than because of an external gimmick, such as “bring a friend” or peer pressure.

Family Day should have a vast number of activities that will appeal to different kinds of families. Again, the emphasis is that the church must be a cafeteria, not a blue plate lunch special. You cannot pour one family celebration into a bowl and serve it to every family. You must have different activities for the young family with the baby or preschoolers. Then again, you must do things differently for the family with grade schoolers than for the family with high schoolers. The family with the “empty nest” will have different needs altogether.

PREPARING FOR FAMILY DAY

There should be six weeks of preparation leading up to Family Day. The pastor should preach six sermons focusing on the family. Sunday School classes should have lessons emphasizing the family.

Advertise Family Day during these six weeks of preparation: i.e, “Family Day—Celebrate It Together!”

Inasmuch as baby boomers are raising families and beginning to bring their families back to church, the Family Day activities must center on their children, not on the traditional activities the church family would have celebrated in the fifties or sixties.

POSSIBLE THEMES FOR SERMONS:

These six weeks could be collected in a booklet for Bible study discussion or become the focus of the pastor’s message.

WEEK ONE: SATURDAY IS WORK DAY—SUNDAY IS FAMILY DAY!

The focus of this message is on the work ethic:

- Working around the house;
- Teaching children to love to work;
- Working together, celebrating together;
- List of things that can be done together.

WEEK TWO: STAYING TOGETHER

This lesson will talk about the interrelationships between fathers, mothers and children. Not primarily role description of the father, mother and children, but how they interrelate. The emphasis is “Celebrate It Together”:

- How the father relates to his wife and children;

- How the mother relates to her husband and children;
- How children relate to their father and mother.

Since boomers are big on relationships, this lesson will emphasize how people interrelate in the family.

WEEK THREE: STEWARDSHIP-GIVING AND SERVING TOGETHER

This lesson will show that the management of family resources is more than the parents' responsibility, i.e., food, household, furniture, etc. Rather, this lesson will emphasize how:

- The family makes decisions;
- The family solves problems;
- The family gives to ministries and to those in need.

This lesson could talk about:

- Why family stewardship is necessary;
- What happens when the family doesn't exercise proper stewardship;
- Fresh ideas toward good stewardship

WEEK FOUR: WHEN MOM AND DAD BOTH WORK

Fifty-one percent of all American families have both husband and wife working outside the home, but 80 percent of those 5 percent are boomer families with both parents working. Therefore, this lesson will aim at the 80 percent of the households in which both husband and wife work outside the home. The lesson will center on:

- Why are both mom and dad working outside the home (dealing with reasons both practical and scriptural)?
- What happens when mom and dad work (dealing with both positive and negative influences on the family)?
- What are the dangers when both mom and dad have careers?
- What are the good things resulting from both mom and dad working?

WEEK FIVE: THE HOME IS THE CENTER FOR ENTERTAINMENT

The boomers are going back to the home for entertainment, i.e., video cassettes, games, CDs, television. They are going out to eat less and giving greater attention to cooking at home. The Sunday School lesson should center on:

- Is entertainment good? Necessary? Biblical?
- How to entertain yourselves:
 - Pursuing hobbies;
 - Cooking together;
 - Playing games;
 - Participating in sports;
 - Sharing learning activities;
 - Working together.

WEEK SIX: BACK TO CHURCH-CELEBRATE IT TOGETHER

Boomers are coming back to the church. Is the church ready for them when they return? And how do we prepare for their return to the church?

PLANNING

We know that boomers want:

- Shared leadership;
- Shared goal setting;
- Shared decision making.

Therefore a Family Day that is going to reach boomers' families must have a tremendous amount of input from the boomers themselves.

Create a Family Day planning council. This should involve husbands and wives serving together on this council. Do not separate the family in the planning stages. Include the various types of family groups within the church, i.e., those without children, those with small children, those with teens, those with empty nests.

IDEAS

- Picnic
- Continental breakfast
- Pancake breakfast
- Dinner on the church grounds
- A family group that sings together for special music

- Family Olympics to earn medals, points, etc.
- Saturday work day around the church involving the total family
- Families on the mailing committee to publicize Family Day
- Families phoning to publicize Family Day
- Awards on family day:
 1. Offer a prize such as a gift certificate to a family restaurant, plants for the yard, or family-sized bag of popcorn.
 2. The largest family, the family with newest baby, the largest blood-related family (number of individuals), the oldest blood-related family (accumulated age of all members), the family with the most girls, family with the most boys, family with twins.
- Have testimonies from families who...
 - are foster families;
 - have adopted children;
 - have totally come to know Christ recently;
 - have unique hobbies.
- Host a yard sale in the church parking lot put on by the families, with the money earned going to missions.
- Show and Tell Time:
 - Family showing their hobbies;
 - Family sharing about their business where husband, mother and children work together—I.e., restaurant, sales, repair, etc.

For additional ideas see: A Call to Care; Fall Roundup Celebration; Appreciation Day; Roundup Sunday.

FAVORITE SUNDAY



INTRODUCTION

Everyone has a favorite something. It may be a pair of shoes, a dress, a car or a book. Favorites are very special to people and can be meaningful in our lives.

In our church activities there are also some definite favorites. There are visiting ministers who are a delight to our church. Or there are favorite singers, musical groups, Sunday School teachers, etc.

Use these favorites to build a big day in the life of your church.

PREPARATION

The date for this event should be set far enough in advance to adequately promote this special day, and yet not tire the church of the promotion. Carefully go through a list of individuals that will be enthusiastically accepted when announced to the church.

The individuals settled upon should be contacted as far in advance as possible in order to insure their participation in the special day.

Each class and department should have Favorite Sunday. Plans should be made to have each department leader and teacher write out in detail plans for a very special day for his or her class.

- Pictures and biographical sketches should be secured of the favorite guests in order to do a good job with the publicity. Names are not enough. Use pictures. Your printed material will be more attractive if you use pictures of people. People respond to people, not ideas, buildings or quotes.
- Print posters to be displayed around the buildings and in all Sunday School departments. Make 3x5-inch cards (sized to fit into a shirt pocket) available for people to carry with them to their places of business. Use them in the churchwide visitation.

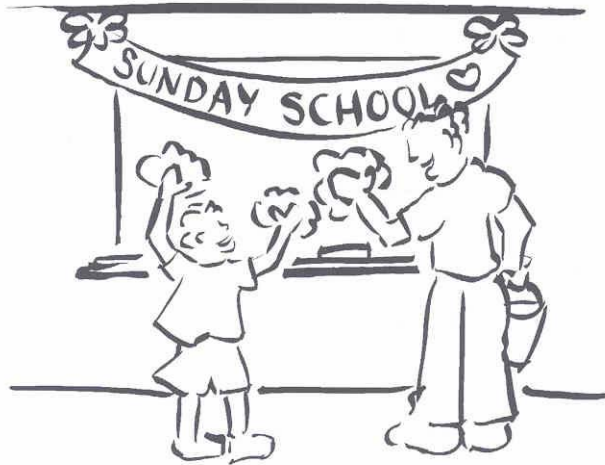
- Have a banner made (professionally, if possible) to be displayed in the front of the sanctuary.
- Have a telephone brigade. Give each helper a list of eight to ten names to call the week before the special day. Make sure every church member gets a phone call, especially those who are not as faithful in attendance as they should be.
- Radio and television spots-all stations by law must give time as a public service. Most have a calendar-of-the-air time slot and will make announcements sent to them two to four weeks in advance. You may want to purchase some spots. They are not as expensive on some stations as on others.
- Direct mail-send two or three letters to each family during the weeks prior to your special day.
- Make announcements from the church platform. This promotion should be done by the pastor. The membership will respond more enthusiastically if the pastor makes these announcements. Remember, get excited about Favorite Sunday!
- Smaller children's departments can become excited about favorite activities that could be planned as a result of the promotion. These can be planned as a reward for good attendance in the class or department. In the adult or older classes, favorites among the membership can be used to have a special day in the class, prior to the regular church service.

CLOSING REMARKS

When Favorite Sunday arrives, make a big deal of the fact that the guest or guests are favorites of the congregation. You may want to announce at the close of the service that everyone or every family will receive a picture of the guests as they leave the building.

For additional ideas see: Appreciation Day; Pastor Appreciation Day; Certificate of Recognition; Surprise Guest Sunday.

ROOM DECORATION DAY



INTRODUCTION

The idea for a Sunday School room decorating contest began when I tried to motivate a church by calling it “The World’s Dirtiest Sunday School.” It was an obvious exaggeration and I thought they understood that I wanted them to prepare for guests who came to their services. The church responded by sponsoring a special attendance day with the slogan, “Prove Towns Wrong Sunday.”

When I first preached at this church, they asked me to evaluate their Sunday School. After visiting each class on Sunday morning, I met with the teachers and gave them my evaluation. I told them several positive things I had observed in their program, praising their excellent Bible teaching program. Then I remarked that they were similar to a beautiful lady with a dirty face. Their facilities were dirty and several things needed repair. Old paint cans were sitting on the window sills in the primary classroom and I’m sure no one could remember when the walls were last painted. The parking lot was full of potholes, the shrubbery was full of weeds. The basement piano was cluttered with Sunday School supplies that had not been used in six months and the corner of the assembly room had its own collection of old chairs covered with dust.

Perhaps I was just tired of seeing what is far too typical in otherwise good churches. In my report, I called them “the world’s dirtiest Sunday School.” I exhorted them to clean up their facilities and we all laughed about it. I forgot about the incident, but they didn’t.

A year later, I was called to speak in their services again. The carpets were clean and the building smelled fresh with new paint everywhere. Each classroom was decorated around a theme and the people were excited. A large sign greeted me entitled, “Prove Towns Wrong Sunday.” The Sunday School had sponsored a cleanup day. They held a contest to see which class could get their room the cleanest and best decorated. I saw a dirty, lifeless Sunday School come to life. The change defies explanation, but it happened.

I have told this story all across America and many Sunday Schools have sponsored their own Sunday School decoration contest. Not only have the facilities improved, but excitement has been pumped into some dying Sunday Schools.

GOALS

- Develop esprit de corps: A room decoration contest will help the teacher build class spirit. One Sunday School teacher hung paper daisies from the ceiling. At the center of each daisy she glued a picture of each class member. Not only were the students excited, but mothers and fathers came to visit the class to see their child's picture.
- Develop a teaching tool: A room decoration contest will provide an additional means of teaching Bible truth. One teacher wanted to teach his class of fourth through sixth grade boys biblical principles of discipleship. First, the class was given the name "The Disciples" and a large sign with that title hung over the door. The classroom was littered with paper footprints, each footprint containing a verse on the theme, "Following Jesus." The boys learned what it meant to be a follower as they thought up ideas to decorate their room. Every Sunday School class should be freshly decorated at least four times a year in connection with a new quarterly theme.
- Promote goals: Recently a class at one church was decorated with hundreds of paper tabs, the type used to identify filing folders. Each tab had the class attendance goal written in different colors to remind the class members of the attendance goal. In another church, a Sunday School teacher had a goal of 16 guests. To announce the goal, the teacher cut out block letters "16" and hung them with thread from the ceiling. Also, large block letters of "16" were attached to the wall.
- Encourage new life: Most Sunday School classes need new life every once in awhile. Enthusiasm exists when a new Sunday School building is completed. Over the months and years, the edge of appreciation for a building is blunted. But a room decoration contest will give a change in appearance and help restore enthusiasm for the facilities.
- Promote growth: Excitement will help your Sunday School grow. When people get excited about their church, they will begin to talk to others about it. Soon, guests will appear.
- Provide a positive testimony: Ask yourself, "What do people think about my Sunday School when they visit?" It would be great if they left remembering the Bible lesson, good visual aids, spirited singing, enthusiastic teaching or friendly teachers instead of the dirty bathroom or the broken window pane. The problem is that people in a church become used to dirty facilities or an accumulation of junk. A room decoration contest may be an important step toward getting your church to see their facilities as others see them.

PREPARATION

If you think a room decoration contest will help you accomplish the objectives of your Sunday School, then you should plan now to take the following steps:

DATE

First, decide on a date. Enthusiasm will spread through the entire Sunday School if every class is freshly decorated on the same date. Do your best to avoid making exceptions. Set a date so that teachers have three or four weeks to plan and organize their classes to help them.

TEACHERS

Educate your teachers concerning the project. Share some of the reasons why they need the campaign. No doubt you can think of additional reasons applicable to your specific situation. The teachers are the key to organizing their classes. It is important that they are convinced the campaign is necessary.

STUDENTS

You will want full participation in the contest. Every class member needs to be involved in preparing the class. Some classes will decorate the room together as part of a class outing. Others may divide the work into various groups assigning one or two people to make the final arrangement of the room a day or two before the final day. Total involvement of class members is one of the things you will watch for as you choose a winner.

ALTERNATIVES

You may have some classes that for one reason or another cannot decorate their room. This would probably be true of classes meeting in an auditorium or a gymnasium. In these situations, provide a list of alternatives that will help beautify the building. There may be gardens to plant, sidewalks to repair, kitchens to clean, etc., any place that needs cleaning or sprucing up. If a class does not have its own room, it could be assigned space on a wall in a hall or the gymnasium. They could hang pictures, posters or other things that relate to the theme.

The possibilities in decorating the classrooms are virtually unlimited. The best decorations are the ones that the pupils plan for their rooms, rather than the teacher doing some spring cleaning the day before the rooms are judged. Some examples might be:

- Take photos of individual students or of the entire class;
- Make mobiles-particularly for small children, i.e., animals, flowers, pictures, alphabet letters, etc.;
- Decorate door entrances-i.e., as a beehive, treehouse, etc.;
- Create wall-sized posters or murals;

- Draw a logo that describes the class theme.

CONCLUSION

One of the most difficult tasks in the entire campaign will be choosing a winner. You should also recognize one or two honorable mentions. When asked to judge a room decoration contest, consider the following criteria:

- Creativity. How original is the theme and decorating? Has the teacher put thought into this or is it simply a rehash of what someone else did? You should encourage the teachers to be creative in preparing for the contest.
- Personal Involvement: The prettiest room could be decorated by an interior decorator, but that is not what you really want. Wouldn't you rather see a class do an average job than an individual do a great job alone? Hopefully, the class can work together to do a first-rate job. Judge the rooms on the degree of participation by every class member. Your Sunday School students will only become excited about their classroom as they decorate it.
- Theme: How close does the room follow a single theme? This will help prevent the flea market look with a little bit of everything and a lot of nothing. Try to capture the imagination in every aspect of the decorated room.
- Quality: At the bottom of the list is quality. Expect the best from your teachers and consider quality as you choose the best decorated room in your Sunday School.

When the winner has been chosen, a simple recognition service will encourage others to follow his or her example. You may want to give the teacher a book to help him/her with teaching, a gift certificate to a Christian bookstore, or pay his/her expenses to an area Sunday School convention. In a smaller community, the local newspaper may be interested in printing pictures of the winning class and carrying a story about your church. A larger church could do the same thing in their church newsletter. A letter of appreciation should be sent by the Sunday School superintendent to the winning teacher for a job well done.

For additional ideas see: Church Cleanup Day; Youth Volunteer Service Day.

ROUNDUP SUNDAY



INTRODUCTION

This special day lends itself to more natural promotion than almost any you may try outside of Friend Day. The day should be built around the aspect of gathering together again the strays, those who have been absent from church and Sunday School for a number of weeks. Never forget that your best list of prospects are the absentees.

You should also concentrate on the mavericks, those who have visited occasionally, or those who have expressed some interest in the church but have never come.

Of course, all of the active people should be present and bring a visitor.

PREPARATION

The pastor should meet with certain key individuals to lay out general plans for the big day. This group should consider time schedules, leaders of major departments and the financing of the special day. The people best suited for each category should be considered and plans made for recruiting them. Overall goals should be decided at this meeting.

- Displays: if the church has a sizable foyer area, you might consider an interesting display of two mannequins dressed in western clothes. They may be standing near or sitting on a rail fence or bales of hay. A saddle, bridle, ropes, etc. could also be displayed on the bales of hay or the fence. Use your imagination. You might even make a display in the courtyard of the church grounds. A professionally made banner could be used effectively to remind the congregation. Put up the banners and displays three or four weeks prior to Roundup Sunday.
- Printing: A substantial amount should be included in the printing budget. Materials to be printed could be posters, handbills and commitment cards. Everything begins with a commitment. All of the printing should have a western slant!

- Advertising: A number of media should be used-radio, television, newspaper, telephone brigades, church newsletters and direct mail. This gets the church name before the community and can help in future promotions.

A complete written explanation should be submitted to the pastor or education director explaining all of the plans, in detail, to be carried on in each department and class. If the church has a churchwide promotion, the departments have a department-wide promotion and each class has a good plan of action, then the success of the day is assured. Of course, all of the planning, printing and preparation should be done with prayer and expectation of God's leadership and blessing.

PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Paper or straw cowboy hats can be obtained from novelty shops. They are popular with the children.

Have a contest in each class or department selecting the best-dressed cowboy or cowgirl. Give western prizes!

Invite a Christian cowboy to come and give a testimony for Christ. You might have everyone dress in western style on Roundup Sunday.

On the Sunday prior to the announced day, have someone give the definition and background of the old-fashioned western roundups, likening it to your special day.

BUSES

The bus workers can use similar preparation that the classes and departments use. In fact, the efforts should be coordinated. Each bus driver or bus worker should dress as a cowboy or cowgirl, ready for the roundup.

CLOSING REMARKS

A church cannot grow without a great deal of individual participation. One bringing one is the secret of numerical success. This is the Bible plan also. All ideas and plans should be carried out with a view to getting as many individuals involved as possible.

For additional ideas see: Fall Roundup Celebration; Family Day; Friend Day; Taxi Sunday.

SPACE AGE SUNDAY



INTRODUCTION

For many years churches have used special days to build attendance. Long ago, they were called “rally days.” During those earlier times, methods of communication were not as readily available to the church as they are today. Today we have at our disposal unique modes of getting our messages to thousands of people almost at once.

One special day that uses all of these procedures is Space Age Sunday. In building up to this day in your Sunday School, you may want to use many of the marvelous electronic inventions of man for God’s glory. These are explained in detail on the following pages.

PURPOSE

Space Age Sunday is designed to get every member of your congregation involved in reaching people. Most of them will already be knowledgeable about several of the methods used. In fact, they use them day to day. In this campaign, it is possible to reach every person in your community with your message, no matter how large the city.

PREPARATION

One way to remind people of the special day is to build a spacecraft and place it in a position in the sanctuary where it will be seen, but will not be too conspicuous. There are several ways to reach a large number of people:

- Mail
- Telephone
- Television
- Radio
- Window posters

- Newspaper
- Bumper stickers
- Doorknob hangers
- Church bulletins
- Billboards
- Bus stop signs

The oldest and most widely used method of publicity is still word of mouth. If you get people talking about church activities, you will rarely need a great deal of additional advertising. The fact that it is last on this list by no means puts it last in priority. It should be emphasized more than any other form of publicity.

BUILDING A SPACECRAFT

The nose cone is made of sheet metal or chicken wire with papier maché to shape the cone. After it is built and dried, it may be painted any color. It is better to attach the wire to the cylinder before putting the paper on it. As the paper dries, it shrinks and becomes smooth.

The cylinder may be purchased from a construction supply house. They use them to make concrete pilings for bridges. Use one about two feet in diameter and about ten to twelve feet long. It should be painted the same color as the nose cone.

The fins are made of heavy cardboard or thin plywood. They are glued on or attached with heavy tape before being painted. They should be attached after the spaceship is stood on end in the room where it is to be seen.

For additional ideas see: Vision Sunday for the New Year; Roundup Sunday; Taxi Sunday.

SURPRISE GUEST SUNDAY



INTRODUCTION

There seems to be nothing more delightful to adults, teens and children alike, than a surprise. Why not let this element of wonder and intrigue work for you in building your Sunday School attendance?

PREPARATION

Promote this special day just like you would any other special rally day. Use all types of publicity methods in getting the word out, including newspaper, radio, television, mailings, posters, handbills, telephone calls, etc. Here are some ideas for you:

SURPRISE GUEST SPEAKER

Choose a speaker that is highly favored among the people. Keep his/her identity a deep, dark secret. Slip the person into the community and only make his appearance known when it is time for him or her to speak. Your church will be so excited it will give the service a lift.

SURPRISE GUEST SINGER

The singer should be chosen in much the same manner as the preacher. Make his or her entrance to the pulpit as mysterious and dramatic as the preacher. Your church will be delighted!

SURPRISE GUEST TEACHER

Have guest teachers in some Sunday School classes, especially the large adult classes and the senior high classes. These should be local people to keep down the expense. They should be well known to the students and favorites of everyone in general.

SURPRISE HYMNAL

Place a slip of paper with the word “Surprise!” written on it at a certain place in one of the hymnals. It should be at the page of one of the congregational hymns for that service. When that number is called, the person should stand and be recognized. Perhaps a gift certificate to a local Christian bookstore could be given as a prize.

SURPRISE BULLETIN

This is much the same as the hymnal idea, except that the person with the “Surprise!” in the bulletin should be recognized at a particular time in the service.

SURPRISE USHER

The thirteenth person (or whatever number you choose) that the usher shakes hands with receives a surprise from him which entitles him or her to a gift certificate.

SURPRISE GUEST

A special visitor, known only to the pastor, gives a surprise to the twenty-third person (or whatever number you choose) who shakes hands with him or her. This one is a great way for *all* your guests to really be welcomed!

SURPRISE CAR

The head parking lot attendant gives a surprise to the thirty-first (or whatever number you choose) car in the parking lot. Watch the expressions on the faces of people as they drive in!

SURPRISE SUNDAY SCHOOL SEAT

There should be a surprise seat in each Sunday School class with a small gift attached underneath.

SURPRISE BUS SEAT

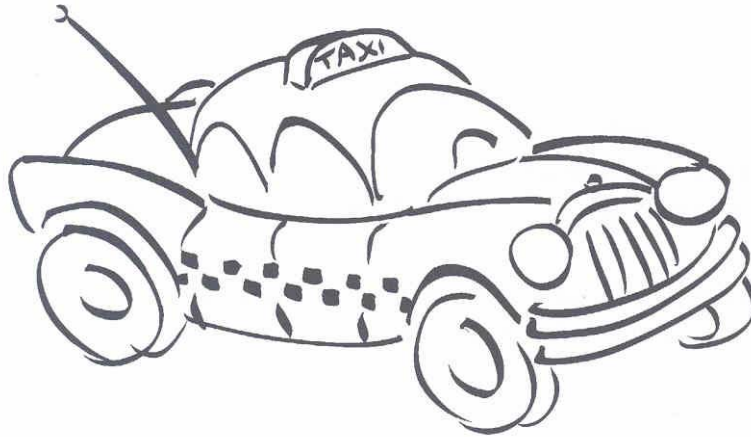
Have a surprise seat on each bus with a gift attached underneath. Once a person selects a seat, he or she cannot move.

SURPRISE BUS

The bus number is selected before Sunday to be the surprise bus. The whole bus load is taken by the local hamburger place on the way home and each person receives a burger, fries and a soda. They can only qualify for being eligible if they reached their goal-i.e., 10 new riders for that Sunday. All buses that reach their goals are given consolation treats on the way home, even if they are not selected as the surprise bus.

For additional ideas see: Appreciation Day; Pastor Appreciation Day; Certificate of Recognition; Favorite Sunday.

TAXI SUNDAY



INTRODUCTION

When the Good Samaritan showed compassion on the poor victim of the robbers, the Bible says that he put him on his own beast or horse (the Samaritan's) and carried him to a place of help for his problems (see Luke 10:34).

In the parking lot of almost every church on Sunday morning are multitudes of "horses" under the hoods of our automobiles. The sad commentary is that practically none of these are carrying sin-sick, wounded souls to the place of safety and deliverance. Let's have a Taxi Sunday!

PREPARATION

- Make every moving vehicle a taxi. It would be interesting to see how many different kinds of taxis you can employ on this day. You could use buses, vans, station wagons, sedans, convertibles, etc.
- Have each taxi "driver" plan to have a "fare" ready to pick up on the morning of Taxi Sunday.
- Use commitment cards. Since everything begins with a commitment, it is very important to get as many people committed in this definite "sign-on-the-dotted line" manner. The following is a sample of a commitment card:

Commitment Card for Taxi Sunday

Unless providentially hindered, I will use my car as a taxi on Taxi Sunday and bring as many as I possibly can to church.

Name _____

- Use posters. Have simple posters printed that can be displayed at strategic places around the church buildings.
- Use the buses. Have a contest between the buses to see which taxi/bus will bring in the greatest number on your special day. Get the children involved in this by encouraging them to bring other kids.
- Use vans as taxis. Give a reward to the person with the greatest number of people in the van.
- Make every vehicle a taxi. Push for every member to get involved with the special day. Have a special gift for every person who brings a guest with him or her in the vehicle.
- Get the teens who drive into a contest. Teens love to get their cars loaded, anyway. Funnel this interest and energy into this very special day in the Sunday School. Give a worthy award or gift to the teen with the most in his or her car.

CLOSING REMARKS

At the close of the service, give each taxi driver a small gift or reward for every person who rode with him or her.

Be sure to get the names and addresses of every person who visits and have the person who brought them contact them again the following week. These can be good prospects for the churchwide visitation.

For additional ideas see: Fall Roundup Celebration; Family Day; Favorite Sunday; Friend Day.

“WE LOVE YOU” SUNDAY SCHOOL CAMPAIGN



INTRODUCTION

Every church year should include a spring attendance climb culminating in a great Easter Sunday celebration.

PURPOSE

Spring promotions with Easter Sunday serving as the rally day will bring you increases in number as well as give your church a vision for greater attendance growth.

GOALS

- To reach unchurched persons for Christ
- To rally the local church in an attendance drive
- To market the church to your local community
- To build God's kingdom

PREPARATION

Form a ministry action team. Give them a clear ministry focus and assignments. For example:

- Select a theme
- Select campaign leaders for each Sunday
- Coordinate Sunday School lessons with the theme

- Focus on servanthood projects in the community
- Promote the celebration within the church
- Market the theme to your community, i.e., brochures, handouts, newspaper and radio ads

A perfect theme for the spring growth campaign: “We Love....”

FIRST SUNDAY: WE LOVE OUR CHURCH

- Clean up your facility.
- Hold a churchwide banquet.
- Cast a new vision for the future.
- Use slide presentation of the church family.

SECOND SUNDAY: WE LOVE OUR KIDS

- Have a children’s revival weekend.
- Schedule extra children’s workers.

THIRD SUNDAY: WE LOVE OUR NEIGHBORS

- Invite local community leaders and present them with an award, plaque, etc.
- Organize a community cleanup of a park, vacant lot, roadside, etc.
- Hold a free carwash.
- Paint an elderly person’s home.

FOURTH SUNDAY: WE LOVE OUR FAMILIES

- Celebrate a reunion/anniversary of the church.
- Honor families that have been loyal to the church.

FIFTH SUNDAY: WE LOVE MUSIC

- Sponsor a concert by the choir.
- Schedule a great music team or soloist.
- Encourage your regular attenders to invite their unchurched friends and neighbors. Almost everyone enjoys good music!

SIXTH SUNDAY: WE LOVE JESUS

- Celebrate His resurrection on Easter Sunday.

PROMOTION

Use clip art in bulletins, fliers, newsletters and posters. Add the words *Our Church, Our Kids, Our Neighbors, Our Families, Music* and *Jesus* next to the “We Love” balloon according to the promotion for the week.

For additional ideas see: Easter; Captured by the Spirit; Church Cleanup Day; A Call to Care; Conspiracy of Kindness; Church Picnic; Church Anniversary; Family Day; Friend Day; Certificate of Recognition; Pastor Appreciation Day; Appreciation Day.

Section Seven DEDICATIONS

CHURCH DEDICATION



LITANY

Leader: We have gathered today to dedicate this church to the glory of God. His guidance was sought in the planning. His Spirit prompted the money given to provide for this place of worship. We do now dedicate this church to the worship of God, for

the use of our children and our children's families and for all those who may come to worship and discover God's will for their lives.

People: We do now dedicate this place of worship.

Leader: For the transformation of lives,

People: We do now dedicate this church.

Leader: For the encouragement of those who suffer from discouragement,

People: We dedicate this house of praise.

Leader: For the growth, development and guidance of those who earnestly seek after the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

People: We dedicate this church.

Leader: For the testimony of Christians and the prayers of the family of God,

People: We dedicate this church.

Leader: For the instruction of children and the enrichment of our youth,

People: We dedicate this place of praise.

Leader: For the preparation for service and the encouragement of leadership development,

People: We dedicate this church.

Leader: For the sharing of the gospel of Jesus Christ,

People: We dedicate this building.

Leader: For the love, health and happiness of every Christian believer,

People: We dedicate this place of worship.

Leader: For the strengthening of the family, for the guidance of our youth, and for the salvation of the unchurched,

People: We dedicate this church.

Leader: For love, peace and unity among our members,

People: We dedicate this church.

All: And now as members of God's family of believers we do set apart this church for the worship of the Lord. We offer ourselves as followers of Him to follow where

He leads and to live for Him every day, ever expecting the glorious appearance of our resurrected Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

A reproducible version of this service is available in Appendix III.

For additional ideas see: Church Anniversary; Homecoming; Pastor's and Church's Covenants.

HOME DEDICATION



INTRODUCTION

The home dedication is something that is becoming more prevalent and meaningful for Christian homes today. The service is initiated at the request of the family. The family can make this celebration as elaborate or simplistic as they choose.

The family may want to begin with an open house and social hour with refreshments or a meal. The guest list can be lengthy or brief. If the home is newly constructed, it may be a nice gesture on the part of the family to invite the builder or any other important people who were a part of the construction.

SERVICE SUGGESTIONS

MUSIC

A soloist could sing a suitable number such as: "A Christian Home" (lyrics by Dorothy B. Gurney; music by Joseph Barnby).

SCRIPTURE

Biblical passages such as the following would be appropriate with a brief exhortation:

Psalms 121:8	Proverbs 24:3,4	Isaiah 32:17,18
Matthew 5:14-16	Matthew 7:24-27	Luke 19:1-10
John 13:34,35	1 Corinthians 9:7-10,13,14	1 Corinthians 13
1 John 4:11-21	Revelation 3:20	

POETRY

The House

The cornerstone in truth is laid,
 The guardian walls of Honor made,
 The roof of Faith is built above,
 The fire upon the hearth is Love:
 Though rains descend and loud winds call,
 This happy house shall never fall. –Anonymous

House Blessing

Bless the corners of this house and be the lintel blest;
 And bless the hearth and bless the board, and bless each place of rest;
 And bless the door that opens wide to stranger as to kin;
 And bless each crystal window pane that lets the starlight in;
 And bless the roof-tree overhead and every sturdy wall;
 The peace of man, the peace of God, the peace of love o'er all. –Arthur Guiterman

Bless This House

Bless this house, O Lord, we pray,
 Make it safe by night and day;
 Bless these walls, so firm and stout,
 Keeping want and trouble out;
 Bless the roof and chimneys tall,
 Let Thy peace lie over all;
 Bless this door, that it may prove
 Ever open to joy and love.

Bless these windows shining bright,
 Letting in God's heav'nly light;
 Bless the hearth a-blazing there,
 With smoke ascending like a prayer;
 Bless the folk and free from sin;

Bless us all that we may be
Fit, O Lord, to dwell with Thee;
Bless us all that one day we May dwell,
O Lord, with Thee. –Helen Taylor

SUGGESTED SCRIPT FOR SERVICE

SCRIPTURE READING

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in” (Revelation 3:20, *NASB*).

DECLARATION OF PURPOSE

Dear friends, we have gathered here to seek God’s blessing upon this house which, by God’s help and human labor, has been completed.

The ancient Jews called the home, “the other sanctuary.” A house is a sacred dwelling—a symbol to us of God’s love and care. Let us bring praise to God for His mercy and goodness.

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

SCRIPTURE READING

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The man who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother (I John 4:11-21).

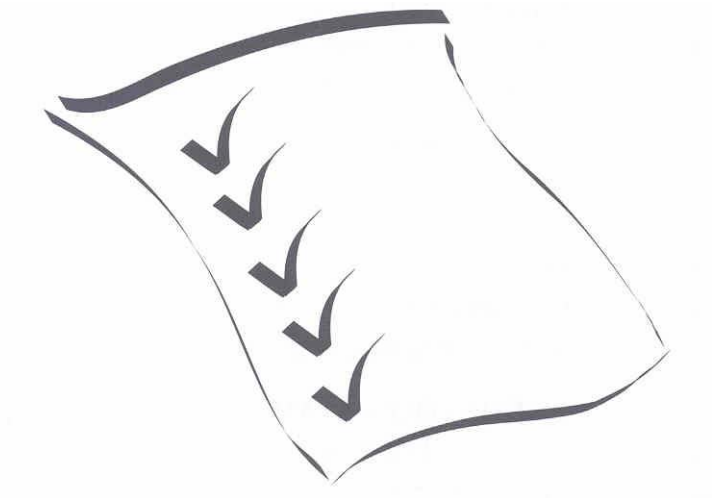
ACT OF CONSECRATION

THE LORD’S PRAYER

(A reproducible version of this sample script is available in Appendix III.)

APPENDIX I

CHECKLISTS



EVENT CHECKLIST MINISTRY ACTION TEAM

Goal Date Done

PLANNING TEAM

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | _____ | Propose event. |
| _____ | _____ | Announce event in conjunction with Publicity Team. |
| _____ | _____ | Call for volunteers. |
| _____ | _____ | Schedule meeting with other M.A.T. leaders and teams. |
| _____ | _____ | Meet with leaders and committees. |

PUBLICITY TEAM

- | | | |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | Meet with Planning leader and team. |
| _____ | _____ | Begin generating publicity items: posters, media ads, etc. |
| _____ | _____ | Get bids for publicity items: posters, banners, etc. |
| _____ | _____ | Coordinate with Program and Food team leaders. |
| _____ | _____ | Contract for publicity printing. |
| _____ | _____ | Write press release, bulletin announcements. |
| _____ | _____ | Send out press releases. |
| _____ | _____ | Print announcements in bulletin/church newsletter. |
| _____ | _____ | Announce event from the pulpit. |

PROGRAM TEAM

- | | | |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | Meet with Planning and Publicity teams. |
| _____ | _____ | Generate program ideas: theater, live music, storyteller, etc. |

_____ _____ Invite entertainers to participate in event.
_____ _____ Coordinate with Decoration and Food leaders and teams.
_____ _____ Notify Publicity of entertainment/program.

DECORATION TEAM

_____ _____ Meet with Planning, Publicity and Program teams.
_____ _____ Determine atmosphere of decorations based on type of event: candlelight
dinner, church picnic, wedding, etc.
_____ _____ Decide on decorations.
_____ _____ Print bulletin announcement seeking volunteers to make decorations.
_____ _____ Print bulletin announcement seeking volunteers to decorate.
_____ _____ Request bids for decorations.
_____ _____ Contract for decorating.

FOOD TEAM

_____ _____ Coordinate with Planning, Publicity, Program and Decoration teams.
_____ _____ Plan menu.
_____ _____ Determine method of preparation: potluck, catered, prepared by church
members, BYOM barbeque, etc.
_____ _____ Purchase food or request bids for catering.
_____ _____ Contract for catering.
_____ _____ Notify Publicity of menu.
_____ _____ Plan cooking schedule (if applicable).

PASTOR'S CHECKLIST

- ___ Name of celebration or event: _____
- ___ Appoint a team leader and a ministry action team to support the leader.
- ___ Go over dates, times and locations for the event/celebration.
- ___ Announce the event/celebration to the congregation at least seven times. (Tip: Delegate someone else to make the announcements.)
- ___ Organize publicity: letters, faxes, advertising.
- ___ Remind the congregation often of the importance of the event/celebration. Emphasize the opportunity to fulfill the Great Commission by inviting their unchurched friends.
- ___ Focus on the reason for the occasion. (I.e., The purpose of "Harvest Celebration"-to provide food for families in need.)
- ___ Conduct a special training event for ushers and greeters.
- ___ Survey guests after the event. (See sample Harvest Celebration Guest Survey.)

WEDDING SERVICE CHECKLIST

Couple's Full Names:

Groom _____

Bride _____

Date of Wedding _____ Date of Rehearsal _____

ORDER OF SERVICE

The Worship of God in Sacred Music

Seating of Family and Friends by Ushers: Ushers' Names _____

Mother/Father of Groom Seated by: Usher's Name _____

Mother of the Bride Seated by: Usher's Name _____

The Lighting of Candles _____ Time _____

Solo _____ Soloist _____

The Bridal Procession: Maid/Matron of Honor _____

Bridesmaids _____

Best Man _____

Groomsmen _____

The Unrolling of the Bridal Carpet by: Usher _____

Entering of the Flower Girl & Ring Bearer: _____

Flower Girl _____

Ring Bearer _____

Entrance of the Bride

Solo _____ Soloist _____

The Marriage Ceremony Addressed to the Couple

Holy Communion Served to the Couple*

Solo _____ Soloist _____

Lighting of the Unity Candle

Kiss of Unity and Devotion

Introduction of the Couple to the Congregation as Husband and Wife

Recessional

(A reproducible version of this sample form is available in Appendix I.)

*Only for Christian couples

APPENDIX II



SAMPLE RESOURCES

EVENT PROPOSAL

NAME OF EVENT _____

Description

Purpose

Who will help

What is needed

Budget

MINISTRY ACTION TEAM (MAT)

Planning Leader _____ Phone _____

Planning Committee _____ Phone _____

_____ Phone _____

_____ Phone _____

Publicity Leader _____ Phone _____

Publicity Committee _____ Phone _____

_____	Phone _____
_____	Phone _____
Program Leader _____	Phone _____
Program Committee _____	Phone _____
_____	Phone _____
_____	Phone _____
Decoration Leader _____	Phone _____
Decoration Committee _____	Phone _____
_____	Phone _____
_____	Phone _____
Food Leader _____	Phone _____
Food Committee _____	Phone _____
_____	Phone _____
_____	Phone _____
Cleanup Leader _____	Phone _____
Cleanup Committee _____	Phone _____
_____	Phone _____
_____	Phone _____

PRAYER COMMITMENT CARD

Prayer Commitment Card

Realizing that prayer makes a real difference, I pledge to pray daily for our upcoming _____.

Pastor _____,

I will join you in prayer believing that many will come to know Christ as a result of this great celebration.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Special note: The prayer card should be distributed on Sunday morning 30 days in advance of your event or celebration.

PUBLICITY

STEPS TO GOOD MARKETING OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

- Step One: Always cover the “who, what, when, where, why and how” in each publicity release.
- Step Two: All articles should be brief in nature—short paragraphs, etc.
- Step Three: Be specific about the events. Dates, times and cost (if any) should be on all press releases.
- Step Four: Be sure to have your church name, address and phone number on all communication pieces.
- Step Five: Type all materials for releases to community, newspapers, radio stations, etc.
- Step Six: Release materials at least two weeks before your special events.
- Step Seven: Remember, excellence is the key!

SAMPLE OF MEDIA PUBLICITY RELEASE

From: _____ (John Doe) _____, Director of Communication

Church: _____ (First Church. USA) _____

To: _____ (Newspaper/Radio Station/TV Station) _____

_____ (City, State) _____

----- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -----

FIRST CHURCH HARVEST CELEBRATION PRESENTS “THANKSGIVING IN NASHVILLE”

The youth choir of First Church will present “Thanksgiving in Nashville,” November 21 & 22 at 6:30 P.M. under the direction of _____ (John Doe) _____.

_____ (Name) _____ will be the featured soloist. This exciting musical will take place in the sanctuary of First Church located at _____.

The public is invited. There is no admission, but a canned food item would be appreciated to help with the annual distribution of food to the needy in our community.

MEDIA PUBLICITY RELEASE

From: _____
Church: _____
To: _____

----- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -----

TELEPHONE CALL SCRIPTS

Good day, Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____

I'm calling from _____
church name

on behalf of Pastor _____

The reason I'm calling is to let you know that our _____
name of event

is on _____ starting at _____
date time

(Give brief details of program.)

It is our hope that you will be present for _____, but
that you will also join us in prayer for God's blessing on this special time together.

Thank you. I look forward to seeing you there!

SAMPLE PROMOTIONAL SKIT

I'm here to invite all of you to our annual church picnic. (*Slap side of neck, then continue.*) If you want plenty of good food, fun and fellowship, then come on out this (fill in date).

We have lots of games planned-like the egg toss. Only this year we've had a change of rules. It's going to be everyone against (*Fill in name of one of your church members. Probably the jokester of your congregation*)

(*Slap side of neck again, then continue.*) As always the potluck is sure to be fabulous. Just try not to get stuck in line behind (*fill in the name of another one of your members*). I'm not saying how high he piled his plate last year, but I think I saw snow at the top of his mashed potatoes.

The horseshoe tournament will take place as usual, but (*fill in a member's name*), take my advice. It'll improve your game if you take them off the horse first.

(*Look down at shoulder, then slap it as if trying to hit something off.*) We will be having entertainment again this year. I regret to announce, however, that I will not be singing. The members of the Picnic Planning Committee were afraid my voice would curdle the homemade ice cream.

So, come on out to the annual church picnic for the time of your life. You're all invited. (*Slap side of neck again.*) Uh, on second thought there is someone who isn't invited. (*Pretend to pick up the dead mosquito from off your shoulder and hold it up.*) But don't worry. As in years past, my meat-loaf * will serve as the official bug repellent.

See you there!¹

*Or any other culinary disaster well-known in your church.

1. Martha Bolton, *Home, Home on the Stage* (Kansas City, Mo., Lillenas Publishing Co., 1991) p. 48. Used by permission.

INVITATIONS

BAPTISM

You are cordially invited to attend the baptism of

ON _____

AT _____ O'CLOCK

Your presence will make this special occasion even more meaningful.

You are invited to an Ice Cream Social

At: _____

Time: _____

FORMS, SURVEYS, SCRIPTS AND CERTIFICATES

FACILITY USE REQUEST FORM

UTILITY AND CUSTODIAL FEES FOR USE OF THE CHURCH FACILITIES

For Members and Regular Attenders of First Church:

Sanctuary (seats _____)	\$ _____
Chapel (seats _____)	\$ _____
Use of fellowship hall	\$ _____
Use of kitchen	\$ _____
Use of classroom space	\$ _____
Custodial help	\$ _____
Use of sound equipment	\$ _____
Sound technician	\$ _____
Security deposit required (refundable)	\$ _____

All monies are due and payable to _____

Payment should be made in full two weeks before the activity. Please give to church secretary.

Your security deposit will be returned to the person in charge of the event no later than _____ if the church is left in good condition.

To prevent scheduling conflicts, the following form should be filled out and returned to the church immediately.

REQUEST FORM

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Purpose of Event _____

Group Requesting Use _____

Rooms Requested ☐ Chapel ☐ Sanctuary ☐ Patio
 ☐ Fellowship Hall ☐ Classroom(s) _____
 ☐ Kitchen

Dates Needed _____ Number Expected _____

Will you need to decorate the building in advance? _____ When? _____

I understand this is a building designed for Christian usage and I pledge to abide by the rules of the church.

Signed _____

----- For Office Use Only -----

Amount charged _____ Amount of deposit received _____

Date deposit received _____ Approved by _____

Amount of deposit returned _____ Date returned _____

PASTOR APPRECIATION DAY

Pastor,

For all those times we called you in the middle of the night because life's problems don't keep banking hours, we thank you.

For being a good shepherd to your sheep—even on those occasions when we may have acted more like stubborn mules and old crows, we thank you. We thank you, too, for the banquets, bake sales, prayer breakfasts, and all the other calorie-filled events you've had to attend as pastor of our church. I mean, let's face it, after one of our spaghetti dinners, "church growth" takes on a whole new meaning.

We also admire your vision, Pastor—except on the golf course. And we want you to know we'll always stand behind you—far behind you when you're teeing off.*

But we're mostly thankful, Pastor, for the love you've shown, the faith you've demonstrated, and the wisdom with which you've led. You set the example. You don't merely teach us how to live. You live what you teach.

We love and truly appreciate you Pastor, and we're counting on being able to call you "pastor" for many, many years to come! (Excerpted from Martha Bolton's book *Home, Home on the Stage*)²

* Or other hobby or interest of your pastor.

2. Martha Bolton, *Home, Home on the Stage* (Kansas City, Mo.: Lillenas Publishing Co., 1991), p. 48. Used by permission.

THE PERFECT PASTOR

At last we have developed a model for a perfect pastor that will suit everyone! He's guaranteed to please any church that calls him. He preaches exactly fourteen minutes. He condemns sin, but never hurts anyone's feelings.

He works from 9:00 in the morning until 11:00 at night, in every type of work—from preaching to custodial services. His salary is \$60.00 a week. He wears good clothes, buys good books, has a nice family, drives a nice car, and gives \$30.00 a week to the church.

This perfect pastor is thirty years old, but has been preaching for 35 years. He is tall, short, thin, heavy-set and very handsome. His hair is parted in the middle, with the left side dark and straight and the right side light and wavy. He has a burning desire to work with young people, and spends all his time with the older folks.

He smiles all the time with a straight face because he has a sense of humor that keeps him seriously dedicated to his work. Although he makes ten calls a day on church members, ten on the unchurched, and five on those in the hospital, he is always available for telephone calls in the office. –Author Unknown

GUEST SURVEY

1. Name of the event _____
Date of the event _____
2. How would you rate this event on a scale of 1 to 10? Circle one.
Poor 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Excellent

3. Who invited you to the event? (Please check one)

☐ Friend ☐ Church member ☐ Family member ☐ Other

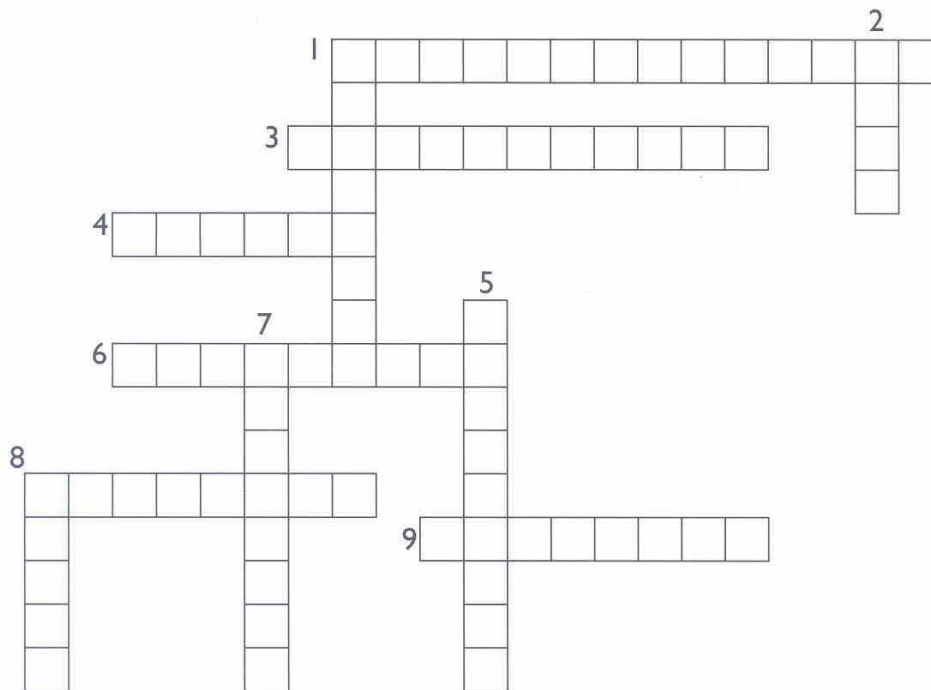
4. What did you enjoy most about this event?

5. What did you enjoy the least about the event?

6. Do you think the church should continue to present this event? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Comments:

STEWARDSHIP CROSSWORD PUZZLE



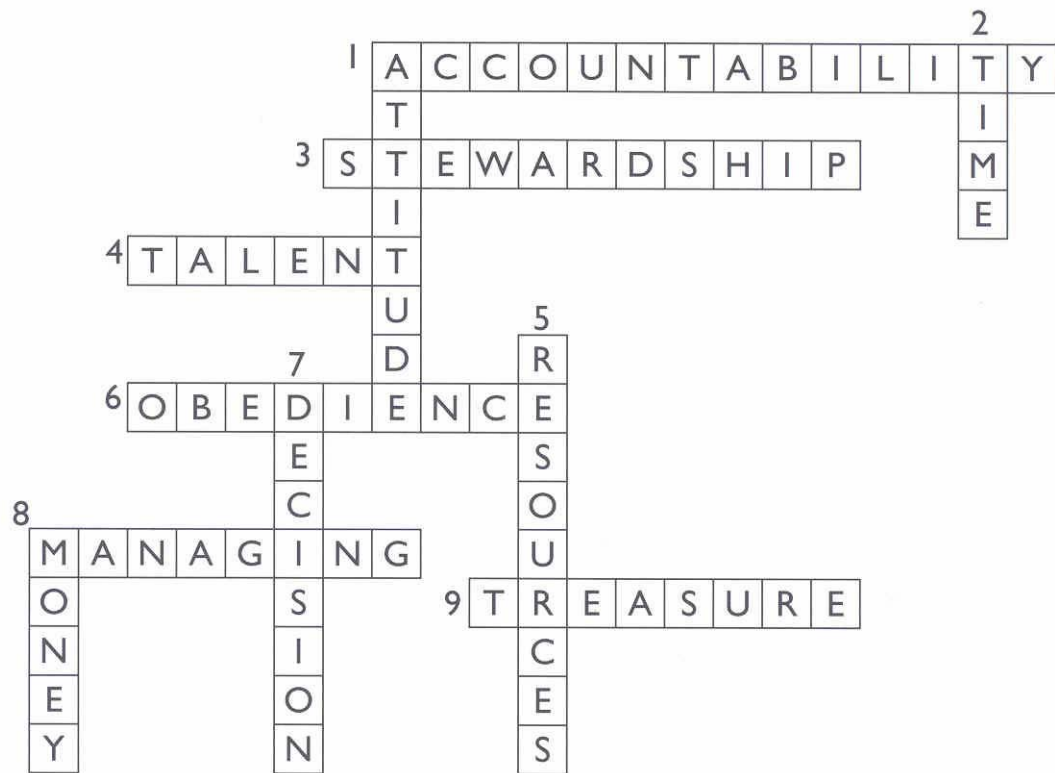
ACROSS

1. Not the ability to account, but the ability to accept responsibility
3. The subject of this puzzle
6. What God wants more than sacrifices from us (see 1 Samuel 15:22).
8. Directing or handling available _____ (see 5 Down) with a degree of skill
9. "For where your _____ is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21).

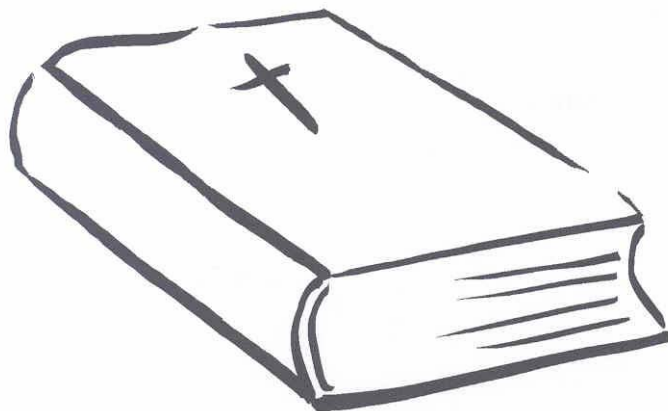
DOWN

1. "Your _____ should be the same as that of Christ" Jesus (Philippians 2:5).
2. We are admonished by Paul to be wise and make the most of our _____ in Ephesians 5:15,16 (NASB).
4. The natural ability of a person
5. Our physical and natural abilities as well as our possessions
7. God asks each of us to make a _____ about our attitude toward giving (see 2 Corinthians 9:7).
8. The subject of 1 Timothy 6:6-10

THE SOLUTION:



APPENDIX III



SERMON BIBLE TUCK-INS

These Sermon Bible Tuck-Ins™ are printed so that you can pull them out, fold them in half and tuck them into your Bible to have a handy reference for any service you want to use.

said that in one town in medieval England, a bough of mistletoe was brought in and put on the altar, and the priest then declared a pardon for all sins. Originally, the kiss under the mistletoe was thought to have been the "kiss of peace," symbolizing reconciliation, not the romantic kiss of a man and a woman. It is in keeping with this more ancient meaning that we decorate this house with mistletoe, in anticipation of the coming of the healing presence of Jesus the Christ.

Hymn: "Joy to the World" (second stanza)

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 53:1-6

Explain:

The holly: Tradition holds that this passage from Isaiah describes the sufferings of Jesus, who saved us from our sins by His death on the cross, and by His being raised from the dead. In ancient times, the holly was considered the symbol of Christ's passion: its prickly leaves suggested the crown of thorns, its red berries the blood of the Savior, and its bitter bark the drink offered to Jesus on the cross. As we hang the holly, let us rejoice in the coming of Jesus, our Savior.

CHOIR SPECIAL MUSIC

OFFERING

Scripture Reading: John 1:1-5,9-14

Explain:

As our final preparation for the coming of Christ, the Light of the World, we will light the Christmas tree. And in this time of Advent, whenever you see a lighted Christmas tree, let it call to mind the One who brings light to our darkness, healing to our unwholeness, and peace to all who will receive Him.

Hymn: "Joy to the World" (third and fourth stanzas)

Benediction



HANGING OF THE GREENS THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND PRAYER

Refrain: "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

Introit: People, look east. The time is near
of the crowning of the year.

Make your house fair as you are able,

Trim the hearth, and set the table.

People, look east, and sing today;

Love the Guest is on the way.

Hymn: "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" (lyrics by Charles Wesley; music by Rowland H. Prichard)

THE PROPHET'S CANDLE

Read Micah 5:2, then explain:

The prophecy which I have just read is but one of 80 specific prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah. The accuracy of all of these prophecies is truly amazing. Consider this: Prophets predicted the birthplace of the Messiah; that the Messiah would be preceded by John; that the Messiah would make a triumphant entry; that the Messiah would be betrayed. Prophets also predicted that he would be sold for 30 pieces of silver. They also prophesied of His denial and crucifixion with transgressors.

Phillip Stoner, a mathematician, calculated the likelihood of only 8 of the 80 prophecies being fulfilled in one man.

He calculated that the odds of these predictions, made

hundreds of years before, coming true in Christ were 1 in 100 trillion.

To illustrate the point, he said that if the state of Texas were covered by silver dollars, two feet deep, that would equal 100 trillion. If you were to be blindfolded and were to pick one special silver dollar from the 100 trillion dollars, on the very first try, you would accomplish a comparable feat.

Today we light the first candle reminding us of the prophets who announced Christ's coming.

LITANY OF THE GREENS*

Leader: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the King?

People: With branches of cedar, the tree of royalty.

Leader: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the eternal Christ?

People: With garlands of pine and fir, whose leaves are ever living, ever green.

Leader: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, our Savior?

People: With wreaths of holly and ivy, symbolizing His passion, death and resurrection.

Leader: How shall we prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus, the Son of God?

People: By hearing again the words of the prophets who foretold the saving work of God.

Leader: For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

People: Glory to God in the highest!

*Congregation stands

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 40:1-5

Hymn: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" (translated by John M. Neale and Henry S. Coffin)

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 23:5,6

Explain:

The cedar branch: In ancient times the cedar was referred to as the tree of royalty. It also signified immortality, and was used for purification. We place this branch in the sanctuary as the symbol of Christ, who reigns as King forever, and whose coming, in justice and righteousness, will purify our hearts.

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 9:2,6,7

Explain:

The evergreen wreath: Because the needles of the pine and fir trees do not die each season like the leaves of most trees, the ancients saw them as symbols of things that last forever. In the Scripture passage just read, the prophet Isaiah tells us that there will be no end to the reign of the Messiah, and so we hang this wreath of evergreens shaped in a circle, which itself has no end, to signify the eternal kingdom of Jesus, the Christ.

Hymn: "Joy to the World" (first stanza)

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 61:1-3

Explain:

The mistletoe: Because this is the passage that Jesus reads at the beginning of His ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth, and which He applied to Himself, we cannot hear these words of Isaiah without thinking of the healing that the coming of the Christ will bring. The evergreen most associated with healing properties in the ancient world was the mistletoe. It was called the "all-healer." People thought its special powers came from the lightning bolt that fixed it high up in a tree, and therefore, they believed it came, as did the lightning, from heaven itself. This healing power was not only for physical ailments, but for the healing of relationships as well. It is

Leader 1: And in this world where it so often seems that evil has the upper hand,
People: May we always remember that we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.
Leader 2: We will survive!
Leader 1: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"
Women: "Shall trouble or hardship or persecution,"
Men: "Or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?"³
All: "No,...for I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."⁴

1. Hebrews 12:2
2. 2 Corinthians 5:17
3. Romans 8:35
4. Romans 8:37-39

COMMUNION NOTES



COMMUNION CELEBRATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Psalm 139:23,24; Psalms 51:1, 19:14; 1 Corinthians 10:1-4

SONGS OF CELEBRATION

"Let Us Break Bread Together" (lyrics and music by Floyd W. Hawkins and Lyndell Leatherman)
 "I Come With Joy" (lyrics and music by Brian Wren)
 "Here at Thy Table, Lord" (lyrics and music by May P. Hoyt)
 "Here, O My Lord, I See Thee" (lyrics by Horatius Bonar; music by Edward Dearle)

COMMUNION MEDITATION

Matthew 26:20; John 14:1-3; John 6:35; Hebrews 9:13,14

Important Statements as Communion Is Being Served:

While the bread is being distributed, let the Communion leader say:

The emblem of bread reminds us of the broken body of our Lord Jesus Christ. May He preserve you blameless, into everlasting life. You may eat of the bread.

As the cup is served, let the Communion leader say:

The cup, the fruit of the vine, helps us recall the red blood of

Jesus on calvary's cross. Drink from this cup of life and be grateful.

It is especially effective to ask everyone in a church Communion service to hold the elements until all have been served. Ask them to eat and drink together to symbolize the unity of the church family.

PRAYER OF HOLY COMMUNION

Our Father, who of tender mercy gave to us Your only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for our sins. We humbly approach Your throne of grace. Please grant that as we receive these emblems of bread and wine that we be made caretakers of the benefits of His glorious atoning work on the cross.

We come before You remembering that Jesus took the bread the night He was betrayed and blessed it, then broke it with thanksgiving. Also, He took the cup and giving thanks, He shared it with His disciples, reminding them of His shed blood. In this service of Communion, we humbly give thanks and once again bless these emblems of sacrifice at the Lord's table.

May we humbly show in these special moments our love, faith and belief in Jesus Christ, Your Son. As we partake in this holy sacrament we await His second coming without sin, unto salvation. Amen.

SUGGESTED SCRIPT FOR SERVICE

- Leader 1:* Father, as we gather together, we acknowledge that we are a needy people.
- People:* We admit the fact that we need Your help and direction.
- Leader 2:* Too often the problems of life and the conditions of this fallen world seem to get the best of us.

- Women:* We want to know where to turn when we run out of answers.
- Men:* We want to know how to live our lives in these changing times.
- Leader 1:* Then "let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."¹
- People:* Teach us to take our eyes off of this fickle world and look to Jesus.
- Leader 2:* For it is Jesus Christ who calls us to learn a new way of living, it is in Him that new life is found.
- People:* We need to remember that "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"²
- Women:* Where can we go to learn Christ's point of view?
- Men:* Where may we see Christ's way of living?
- Leader 1:* I invite you to the table of the Lord.

COMMUNION IS SERVED.

- Leader 2:* As we leave Your Table, Lord, remind us of the lessons of this summer.
- Men:* Help us learn to scale back, to stop chasing the things that would tempt us to try to serve two masters.
- Leader 1:* And when the problems of life weigh down on us so much that it seems we will break from the stress,
- Women:* May we find calm in Your nearness and take courage from Your presence.
- Leader 2:* And continue to remind us that we are not alone.
- People:* We are Your Body and as we all do our part, together, we will survive.
- Women:* So help us to care for those who are hurting.
- Men:* And teach us to guard the dignity of each man and woman.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.



"I HEARD THE VOICE OF JESUS SAY"

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 "Behold I freely give
 The living water! Thirsty one,
 stoop down and drink, and live."
 I came to Jesus, and I drank
 Of that life-giving stream:
 My thirst was quenched, my soul revived
 and now I live in Him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"I am this dark world's light;
Look unto me, thy morn shall rise,
And all thy day be bright."
I looked to Jesus and I found
in Him my star, my sun;
And in that light of life I'll walk,
Till traveling days are done.
—Horatio Bonar

SERMON OUTLINE: ROMANS 5:1-8

1. A life of faith (see Romans 5:1)
2. A grace-filled life (see Romans 5:2)
3. A life of integrity (see Romans 5:3,4)

Reputation is what people think you are;
character is what God knows you are.
Circumstances determine your reputation;
what you believe and what you love
determine your character.
Reputation is your photograph;
character is your face.
Reputation is what you have when you come;
character is what you have when you go.

Reputation grows like the mushroom;
character grows like the oak.
Reputation goes like the mushroom;
character is as lasting as eternity.
Newspapers can make one's reputation;
toil and consecration can make one's character.
If you want to get a position, have a reputation;
if you want to keep it, have a character.
Reputation makes one rich or poor;
character makes one happy or unhappy.
Reputation is preserved on tombstones;
character is preserved in the books of heaven.
—Roland Q. Leavell

4. A life of hope (see Romans 5:5)

Remember we sleep to wake.
Remember that today prepares us for tomorrow.
Remember that we never tear the last page off
God's calendar.
Remember God's tomorrow.
—Anonymous

[illegible]

SCRIPT FOR DEDICATION SERVICE

Your child was hand stitched by the Lord, not mass manufactured in some sweatshop. His/Her mind is intricately woven with the finest of neurological threads. His/Her emotions are given a distinct texture, with a feel all their own. His/Her personality is cut from a unique bolt of cloth. Like snowflakes and fingerprints, no two children are alike.

Your child is "fearfully and wonderfully made" according to Scripture (Psalm 139:14). Celebrate the uniqueness of your child for he/she is a one of a kind. You will have this special, unique creation for just a short time.

When the parents (or guardians) have presented themselves with the child (or children) before the minister at his call, the minister should say:

Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19:13,14, *KJV*).

In presenting this child for dedication you not only signify your faith in the Christian religion, but also your desire that he/she may early know and follow the will of God, may live and die a Christian, and come unto everlasting blessedness.

In order to attain this holy end, it will be your duty, as parents [guardians], to teach him/her the fear of the Lord early; to watch over his/her education, that he/she be not led astray; to direct his/her youthful mind to the Holy Scriptures, and his/her feet to the sanctuary; to restrain him/her from all harmful associates and habits; and, as much as in you lies, to bring him/her up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Will you endeavor to do so by the help of God? If so, answer, "I will."

The minister addresses the congregation:

I now ask you, the congregation: Will you commit yourself as the Body of Christ to support and encourage these parents [guardians] as they endeavor to fulfill their responsibilities to this child and to assist them by nurturing his/her growth toward spiritual maturity? If so, answer "We will."

Our loving Heavenly Father, we do here and now dedicate
(child's name)

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

CHALLENGE TO PARENTS

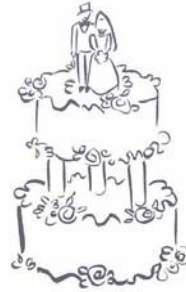
"The father of Jonathan Edwards was a minister and his mother was the daughter of a clergyman. Among their descendants were:

14 presidents of colleges
100+ college professors
100 lawyers
30 judges
60 physicians
100 clergymen and missionaries
60 authors

"Such is the product of one American Christian family."
—J. Oswald Sanders⁵

5. J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1994), p. 142.

WEDDING NOTES



THE WEDDING CEREMONY

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered together in this Holy place and in the presence of family and friends to unite this man and this woman in holy matrimony.

"Marriage is indeed an honorable estate, instituted by God in the Garden of Eden, when He saw that it was not good that man should be alone. Marriage was given a crown of glory by the apostle Paul, who likened it unto that holy union which exists between Christ and His Church, in which Christ is called the Bridegroom and His Church, the bride. Surely it is a blessed union and it is a holy one. The Holy Scriptures set before you the love of Christ for His Church as an example for your devotion to each other. You are not left without guidance concerning the meaning of that love. The words of the Apostle Paul tell us the meaning of love in 1 Corinthians, chapter 13:4-8 (*TLB*):

Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong. It is never glad about injustice, but rejoices whenever truth wins out. If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him,

WEDDING NOTES

As parents, you come releasing your children. Jesus said that we must leave our father and mother and become one, so you parents come with your children to present them to each other and give blessing to their unity. In giving them to each other, you are giving yourselves to be a part of a new family and thus will now assist this new family in finding their place among other families.

Father: "Her mother and I do."

INTRODUCTION TO THE VOWS

_____ , you are about to take upon yourself a pure resolve, a solemn vow, incurring grave and lasting responsibilities. The woman of your choice is now to become a partner of your life, the coheir of your possessions, the queen of your home. In no other way could she so manifest her love for you. She leaves her home ties, the companionship of friends—all of these—to share with you the joys and sorrows of life. With you will she now abide and for you will she live.

_____, you are also to assume

wife,...to have and to hold...from this day forward...for better,
for worse...for richer, for poorer...in sickness and in health,...
to love and to cherish...till death do us part...according to
God's holy ordinance...and thereto I pledge you my love.

Pastor to bride:

_____, please repeat after me. I,

(bride's name) _____, take you,

(groom's name) _____, to be my wedded
husband,...to have and to hold...from this day forward...for bet-
ter, for worse...for richer, for poorer...in sickness and in
health,...to love and to cherish...till death do us part...accord-
ing to God's holy ordinance...and thereto I pledge you my love.

Solo: "The Lord's Prayer"

RING CEREMONY

When God made a covenant with Noah, He set His bow in the cloud as a reminder of that covenant, and said, "I will look upon it that I may remember it was an everlasting covenant." So, from this we learn that it is well for us, when entering into solemn agreements, to set aside some token as a reminder. You have, therefore, chosen these rings as the token of your marriage covenant. Being made of gold, it is a type of that which is the least easily tarnished and the most enduring, fittingly representing the ties that bind husband and wife together.

The ring, an endless circle, until broken by some outside force, is a symbol of the unbroken marriage union which God has ordained and shall continue until broken only by death.

May I have the rings, please.

Pastor to the groom:

(groom's name) _____, take the ring and place it on

(bride's name) _____'s finger, and let it be the seal
of your mutual love and fidelity, and a memorial of this sacred
service. You will repeat after me: "I give you this ring...as a
symbol of my love...and as a pledge of my faithfulness."

Pastor to bride:

(bride's name) _____, take the
ring and place it on _____
(groom's name) _____'s
finger, and repeat after me: "I give you this ring...as a symbol
of my love...and as a pledge of my faithfulness."

COMMUNION

Bride and groom kneel at the altar.

Pastor asks the congregation to pray for the couple.

Please join me in a prayer of blessing for _____
(groom's name) _____
and _____
(bride's name) _____.

PASTOR'S PRAYER

Bride and groom stand up and move to the unity candle.

LIGHTING OF THE UNITY CANDLE

You have chosen to symbolize your union in yet another way. There are three candles—two of them lighted, one yet unlit. You came into this sanctuary as two and you leave as one, husband and wife, no longer walking separate paths, but walk-
ing together in one path in a oneness you will find richly
rewarding. You will spend all your years together learning and
enjoying what this oneness means, as you live, work, play,
laugh and weep together.

From now on, your lives will be shared and you will have new strength as two hearts beat as one and two pairs of hands carry the burdens of life.

Bride and groom light the candle.

Bride and groom move back to the center.

PRAYER OF BLESSING

PASTOR'S PRONOUNCEMENT:

And now, having heard you make these pledges of your affection and take these vows of fidelity, I do, by virtue of the authority vested in me, as a minister of the gospel and in accordance with the laws of God and the State, pronounce you husband and wife, no longer twain, but now one, in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

You may kiss your bride.

It is my privilege to present to you,
Mr. and Mrs. _____.

INVITATION TO THE RECEPTION

DISMISSAL

grave responsibilities. He whom you are about to wed will look to you for solace in the hour of trial. Your smile should be his brightest day, your voice his sweetest music, your industry his greatest wealth, your economy his safest steward, your life his faithful counselor and your prayers his most able advocate in heaven's court.

VOWS

To the groom:

Will you, _____, have this woman, to be thy wedded wife, to live together according to God's holy ordinance in the holy state of matrimony? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health and forsaking all others, keep yourself only for her, so long as you both shall live?

Groom answers: "I will."

To the bride:

Will you, _____, have this man, to be thy wedded husband, to live together according to God's holy ordinance in the holy state of matrimony? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health and forsaking all others, keep yourself for him, so long as you both shall live?

Bride answers: "I will."

Pastor: "Join hands."

Pastor to groom:

_____, please repeat after me.

I, _____ (groom's name)take you,

_____ (bride's name)to be my wedded

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Leader: We have gathered today to dedicate this church, to the glory of God. His guidance was sought in the planning. His Spirit prompted the many dollars given to provide for this place of worship. We do now dedicate this church to the worship of God, for the use of our children and our children's families and for all those who may come to worship and discover God's will for their lives.

People: We do now dedicate this place of worship.

Leader: For the transformation of lives,

People: We do now dedicate this church.

Leader: For the encouragement of those who suffer from discouragement,

People: We dedicate this house of praise.

Leader: For the growth, development and guidance of those who earnestly seek after the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no text or other markings on the paper.



SCRIPTURE READING

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in." Revelation 3:20, NASB

Dear friends, we have gathered here to seek God's blessing upon this house which, by God's help and human labor, has been completed.

The ancient Jews called the home, "the other sanctuary." A house is a sacred dwelling—a symbol to us of God's love and care. Let us bring praise to God for His mercy and goodness.

SCRIPTURE READING

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. We

THE LORD'S PRAYER

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper appears to be a standard notebook page or a sheet of stationery. There is no handwriting or other markings on the page.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



"Recognizing God's method of setting apart certain leaders for specific areas of Christian service, we come to this moment of commissioning these before us today. Let us consider God's instructions to us from His Word."

Matthew 20:26	Ephesians 4:1-3,7,11-13
Acts 2:41-44; 6:1-7	Colossians 3:16
Romans 12:1,2,4-15	1 Timothy 3:8-13
1 Corinthians 12:4-12	2 Timothy 2:15
Galatians 6:6	Titus 1:5-9

PRESENTATION OF LAY MINISTERS

I present _____
to you to be commissioned as _____

Then the senior minister addresses the congregation, saying:

Church, today we purpose to commission these ministers who stand at this altar. After training and examination, we believe them to be worthy for this service.

ADDRESS TO LAY MINISTERS

The senior minister addresses the lay ministers, saying:

We now come to this important moment when you who stand at this altar take upon yourselves the work of ministry. God has gifted you and empowered you through the Holy Spirit. With joy and anticipation we have watched God reveal His will for your life in ministry, and you eagerly desire to use your spiritual gifts for His glory and the building of His church.

Yours is no easy assignment. The destiny of souls are in your hands. May God grant you wisdom and strength as you serve Christ and His church. What you have done alone with God, you do now formally and publicly in the presence of this Body of believers.

LAY MINISTER'S COVENANT

The senior minister then leads the lay ministers in reading in unison the covenant as follows:

As a minister of Jesus Christ and His church, I hereby covenant:

- To maintain a high standard of Christian living and example in harmony with the ideals and standards of the church;
- To cultivate my relationship with Jesus Christ by setting aside time for prayer and Bible study;
- To continue my education as opportunity is afforded;
- To faithfully support the mission of the church, to know Christ and to make Him known through (insert your church's mission);

- To attend all meetings for which I am responsible.

ACT OF COMMISSIONING

Senior minister extends right hand to lay minister and says:

(name of minister)
I commission you to service as a member in

(name of church)
in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

ADDRESS TO CONGREGATION

Senior minister says:

You have heard the covenant of these lay ministers. Now, I charge you, as a congregation, to faithfully support them with your love, prayers and affirmation. If you, the church, will accept this charge, answer "We will."

PRAYER OF BLESSING

INSTALLATION OF CHURCH BOARD AND STAFF NOTES



Invite the church board and pastoral staff to come to the altar.

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men" 1 Corinthians 12:4-6.

Pastor: You have been elected by the fellow members of this church to serve as leaders, and you have declared your willingness to serve. Do you accept the responsibilities of the office into which you are installed and do you promise to faithfully and efficiently discharge your duties? If so, answer "I do."

Pastor: Will you seek to promote and maintain a sympathetic and friendly relationship with those with whom you work, so that the bond of fellowship throughout the church may be strengthened? If so, answer "I do."

Response: I do.

Pastor: Do you promise to honor God and your church in your service, behavior and conduct? If so, answer "I do."

Response: I do.

PASTOR'S CHARGE TO CONGREGATION

Pastor: The responsibilities which these leaders are now called upon to assume cannot be discharged by them alone. They have promised to serve their offices well, God enabling them, but their best efforts will fail unless they are supported by the wholehearted and consistent cooperation of the entire congregation.

Pastor: Do you, members of this congregation, acknowledge and receive these leaders as duly elected officers? If so, answer "We do."

Response: We do.

Pastor: Do you promise to give them the honor, encouragement, and cooperation to which their offices entitle them? If so, signify by standing.

Response: *(Everyone stands)*

Pastor: *(to congregation)* You may be seated.

Pastor: *(to board and staff)* I now declare you duly installed board and staff members. May the grace of God be with you, and may you enjoy the confidence and loving support of your fellow members.

Pastor: *(to board and staff)* At this time I want to present each of you with special remembrances of this installation service.

Each of you will receive:

1. A cross—the emblem of sacrifice
2. A towel—the symbol of servanthood
3. A shaft of wheat—symbolic of sowing and

reaping the seed of the gospel

4. A journal—to symbolize the daily need for solitude, prayer and reflection

(Pastor invites them to come take the symbols and then kneel for prayer.)

PASTORAL PRAYER

SPECIAL MUSIC: "WE ARE STILL THE CHURCH"

MINISTRY COVENANT RESPONSIVE READING

Pastor: Father, we are Your people.

Congregation: We are the people of God.

Pastor: We are living stones.

Congregation: We are holy priests.

Pastor: You are a chosen race, the King's priests;

Congregation: Yes, Father, we are Your priests.

Pastor: Though we are unworthy, we are priests.

Congregation: We are humbled to be called Your priests, Father.

Pastor: We offer the sacrifices of praise, service and deeds of love.

Congregation: We offer ourselves as sacrifices, desiring that our lives would be spent in ministry.

Pastor: We are the Body of Christ.

Left Side: Yes, we are part of Your Church.

Right Side: And You are the Head.

Pastor: The incarnation continues.

Left Side: Yes, it continues in us.

Right Side: We reach, but You touch.

Pastor: We want to minister in Your name.

Congregation: Yes, Father, we covenant together and with You that we will use our gifts to minister.

Pastor: We see gifts in each other.

Leader:

Pastor, what covenants and commitments do you make to these who are now your people?

Pastor and Spouse:

We offer ourselves to you now—without reservation. You will be our people, our flock. We will love you. We will trust you. We will believe in you. We will honor each one of you as people of worth and importance to our loving Lord. We cannot offer to you perfection, neither do we expect perfection from you. We are people together—real human people. Both of us, like each of you, have strengths and weaknesses, gifted areas and ungifted areas. We covenant with you that all of us together will celebrate the strengths that our Lord has distributed among us by His grace and we will lovingly accept each other's weaknesses without unworthy expectations.

Congregation:

We accept your love. We accept you. Teach us from God's Word. We need that. Pray for us in our needs. We need that—and we'll pray for you. Today we begin together.

Everyone:

Today we begin a journey together. It is not a new journey for any of us, but today our paths merge. We want the journey to be good and long. Our spirits blend in the words of the song, "I'm So Glad I'm a Part of the Family of God."

May His grace and presence be ours for the journey!



A SERVICE OF COVENANT AND COMMITMENT BETWEEN A PASTOR AND THE CONGREGATION

ORDER OF SERVICE

Leader:

Other than the family, the closest relationship is that of a people and their pastor. Our Lord pictured this relationship, with its warmth and meaning, in the imagery of a shepherd and his sheep. People of the congregation, what covenant and commitment do you make to your new pastor?

Congregation:

Before God, we make this covenant with you **FULLY** this very first day, as our leader and shepherd. As our lives become more and more intertwined, you will be more and more our pastor. It is not that we will hold you out...but as you probably know better than we, pastor, bonding at its most meaningful level happens as we...

Celebrate together;

Sorrow together;

Laugh together;

Weep together;
Dream together;
Achieve together.
We will give you time, as you will give us
time. We start loving you and your family
NOW. That love will grow and deepen, and
never end.

Leader: (to the church board) As your pastor,
(name) will also be your leader.
Members of the Church Board, what
covenants and commitments do you make
to your pastor?

Church Board: Pastor, we want you to lead us in thinking,
dreaming and planning. We want you to
share with us the visions God gives you
for this people. We promise to...
Dream with you;
Think with you;
Pray with you;

for God's great plans for us to become a
Great Commission church. We do not
expect to dictate what you think and do.
And we know you will not dictate to us.
We covenant to seek God's direction with
you, so we can come in all things to say, "It
seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us."

Pastor: Because God has called me to this min-
istry...
I will establish my ministry upon the Bible
as the Word of God. As your pastor, I
intend to be a growing son of my
Heavenly Father.
I will be honest with the use of my time
and work at my job of being a
pastor/shepherd.

I will be fair with my family—giving them
the time and consideration they need by
being a good mate and parent.

I will handle responsibly all confidences
shared with me.

I will seek to use my gifts in developing
and equipping you, my people, for works
of ministry.

I will strive to remain open to construc-
tive criticism and receptive to suggestions
intended to strengthen our ministry
together.

I will exercise the necessary discipline to
stay mentally, spiritually and physically fit.

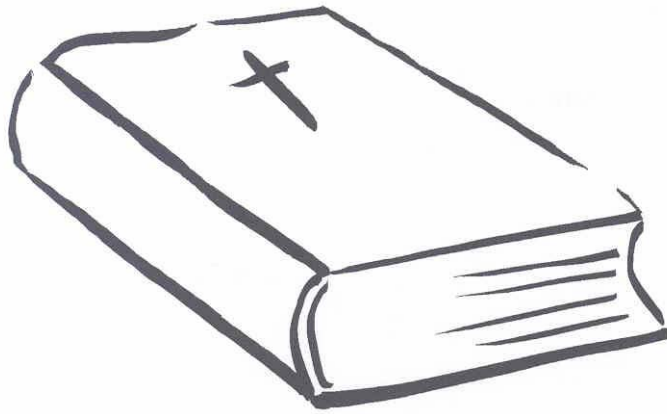
I will be honest in my stewardship of
money, endeavoring to live within my
income and securing my debts.

I will guard my integrity and the integrity
of my staff by being open and honest
regarding our ministry.

Leader: People, what covenant do you make with
your pastor's mate?

Congregation: We want to get to know you. Really know
you! And we offer all our love and accep-
tance to you. We would like to make
another commitment not often thought
of. We'll not think of you as just a pastor's
spouse. You are a person of value and an
equally important part of the team. We
want you to be a real down-to-earth per-
son among us. You are a special person to
us...who happens to be married to our
pastor. We need you. We need you to
need us. Our hearts...our arms...are open
to you.

APPENDIX IV



EVENT DIARY

Event _____ Date of Event _____

How many attended? _____

Ministry Action Team Leaders

Planning: _____ Phone: _____

Publicity: _____ Phone: _____

Program: _____ Phone: _____

Decoration: _____ Phone: _____

Food: _____ Phone: _____

EVALUATION

DESCRIPTION	CHANGES TO MAKE
Program	
Entertainment:	Next time:
Cost of entertainment:	
Where to contact entertainer(s) for future events:	
Decoration	
What:	Next time:
Who decorated:	
Cost of decorations:	
Where to contact decorator/ decoration supplier:	
Food	
Menu:	Next time:
Who:	
Cost:	
Where to contact caterer/cooks:	

VOLUNTEERS

Who assisted with:

Planning: _____ Decoration: _____

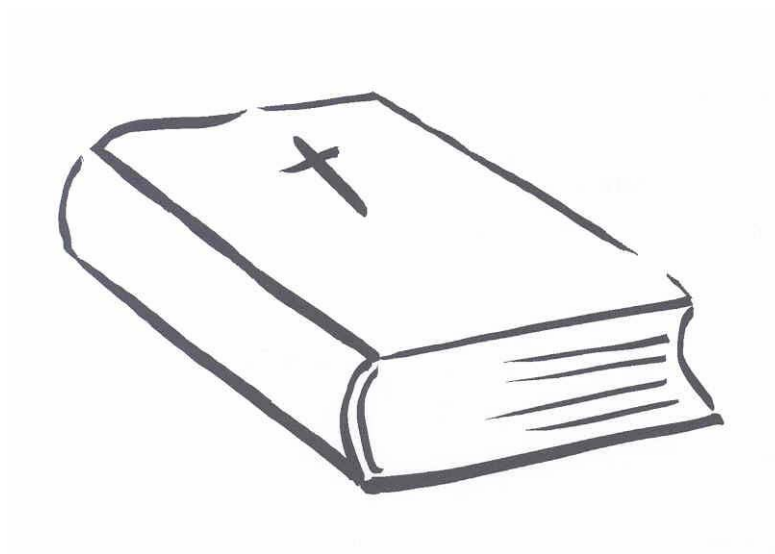
Publicity: _____ Food: _____

Program: _____ Cleanup: _____

What worked?

What needs to be improved?

APPENDIX V



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources are available from Regal Books/Gospel Light Publications:

BOOKS

Can the Pastor Do It Alone? by Melvin J. Steinbron

Here is a proven program for equipping laypeople to help pastor the congregation.

ClergyTax (for the present year) by J. David Epstein, J.D.

Today's tax laws are notoriously confusing, especially for clergy. As a result, many ministers may be paying more taxes than they actually owe, while others run the risk of an audit and penalties. Tax attorney J. David Epstein simplifies the process, making it easy to render to the government only what you owe-legally and safely.

Healing America's Wounds by John Dawson

This resource is the foundational, cutting-edge text on national repentance and reconciliation. This is a powerful message of hope from the author of *Taking Our Cities for God*.

How to Use Your Computer to Create Better Bulletins, Newsletters and More! by Yvon Prehn, available in book and video formats.

A step-by-step guide to creating better communications through desktop publishing. This book and video will show you everything you need to know whether you're a computer whiz or don't know your RAM from ROM!

How to Increase Giving in Your Church by George Barna

How does a pastor convey God's heart for stewardship to His church? Based on years of research and study on patterns of giving in the Church and in the nonprofit sector, this is a sensitive, step-by-step guide to raising funds for the work of ministry scripturally and successfully-without compromising biblical integrity.

The Lay-Driven Church by Melvin J. Steinbron

Learn how to make your ministry more effective by getting more of the congregation involved in the work of your church. Not just theories from a classroom, these principles are ministry-tested, biblical ideas that have helped hundreds of churches across the world. Shift your laity involvement from neutral to overdrive with wisdom from one of the pioneers of lay-driven ministry.

Leaders on Leadership edited by George Barna

How should a Christian leader lead? By following today's secular business models or by pursuing a Christlike, servant-based style? George Barna, Jack Hayford, C. Peter Wagner, Leighton Ford, Doug Murren, H.B. London Jr. and other Christian leaders talk about leadership and provide practical guidance and mentoring for God's shepherds.

Leading Your Church to Growth by C. Peter Wagner

Discover the fine art of "lay followership." Learn how to forge a pastor-people partnership that will set the stage for dynamic growth in your church.

Pastors of Promise by Jack Hayford

Jack Hayford calls men in ministry to a deeper, more passionate fellowship with Christ, challenging them to be men of integrity amidst the challenges and pressures of leadership. With insightful and compassionate mentoring Hayford will help you cultivate God's promise of fruitfulness in your life as a shepherd in today's Church.

The Power of Vision by George Barna

Understanding God's vision for your ministry is not an option. This is a message of encouragement for church leaders trying to bridge the gap between their own strategies and God's plan for their future.

Turning Vision into Action by George Barna

This companion to *The Power of Vision* shows pastors how to put vision to work at church and at home.

Your Church Can Grow by C. Peter Wagner

Is your church healthy, vibrant and growing-or is there something missing? Drawing upon 20 years of experience in the biblical and scientific analysis of church growth, Dr. Wagner shows you how to read the vital signs of your church, and how to bring people into responsible church membership.

MISSIONS CURRICULUM

A Sunday for the World! by Bill Stearns

A complete guide for helping your church catch a vision to share God's message with others at home and around the world. Includes a sermon outline, Sunday School lessons for every age group from nursery to adult, promotional materials and much more!

The Great Kidmission

A fun, easy and complete 5-to 10-day missions program that will mobilize the most energetic group in your church-the kids! Includes stories, activities, crafts, games and much more to spark their enthusiasm for sharing the gospel-at home and around the world.

CLIP ART FOR COMPUTERS

The Complete Bible Story Clip Art available on CD-ROM for Windows/DOS and/or Macintosh

Church Bulletin Clip Art available on CD-ROM for Windows and Macintosh

Church Ministry Clip Art available on CD-ROM for Windows/DOS or Windows and Macintosh

Kids' Worker's Clip Art available on CD-ROM for Windows and Macintosh Summer Ministries Clip Art available on disk for Windows/DOS or Macintosh

Sunday School Clip Art available on disk for Windows/DOS and Macintosh and on CD-ROM for Windows and Macintosh

Super Clip Art for Youth Workers on CD-ROM for Windows and Macintosh

CLIP ART BOOKS

Magnetic Fliers

More than 70 ready-made fliers, handouts and brochures for virtually any type of youth activity.

The One-Minute Poster

Reproducible posters and fliers for every conceivable church event. Just add your information and photocopy.

Reproducible Maps, Charts, Timelines and Illustrations

Pastors, teachers and Bible students of all ages can use this resource for handouts, overheads, communications and personal study. Besides the items mentioned in the title, this reproducible book contains teaching outlines for every book of the Bible.

VIDEOS

THE LEADING EDGE CHURCH LEADERSHIP SERIES FEATURING GEORGE BARNA

How to Increase Giving in Your Church

Valuable insights into overcoming the barriers to effectively raising funds for your ministry.

How to Turn Around Your Church

Learn how to facilitate a comeback while avoiding turn-around obstacles.

The Power of Vision

Learn to discern God's vision for your church, your life and your community.

Turning Vision into Action

Experience joy and fulfillment in your ministry as you begin to implement God's vision for you and your church.

Ten Myths About Evangelism

Help your church become truly evangelistic by asking a few simple questions.

Trends That Are Changing Your Ministry World

Discover how the world views religion, the Church and spiritual issues.

What Evangelistic Churches Do

Examine evangelistic efforts that are really working—and those that aren't.

**THE CHURCH ADVISORY SERIES
FEATURING J. DAVID EPSTEIN, J. D.**

How to Protect Your Children's Ministry from Liability

Create an environment for your children's programs that is safe and secure—for children and the children's workers. Learn how to set policies and procedures that keep parents happy and protect your church.

How to Hire and Fire Church Staff and Recruit Volunteers

Churches need to know how to manage and protect their most valuable resources—their employees and volunteers. Learn how to establish legal and proper personnel procedures.

How to Maximize Your Clergy Salary & Benefits Package

Prepare a salary and benefits package within IRS regulations. This resource shows you how to prepare taxable and nontaxable fringe benefits and addresses all major salary issues.

How to Protect Pastors, Staff and Board Members from Liability

Legal advice on critical yet often overlooked liability issues. Know what never to say in church counseling, when you need an attorney, how to respond to lawsuits and more.

One Year Events and Celebrations Calendar



Here are our ideas for when to use these events in your church. But don't be overwhelmed by this full calendar. We recommend that your church plan for *only* four to six special events each year.

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
Week 1	Stewardship	"We Love You" Campaign	Infant Dedication	Easter Musical
Week 2	Holy Communion	Valentine's Banquet	Home Dedications	Baptism
Week 3	Commissioning Lay Ministers	Reception of New Members	Easter/Lent	Victory Sunday
Week 4	Sanctity of Life Sunday	Surprise Guest Sunday	Holy Communion	Family Day
	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
Week 1	National Day of Prayer	New Member Introduction	Independence Sunday	Homecoming/Anniversary
Week 2	Mother's Day	Church Picnic	Baptism	Holy Communion
Week 3	Faith Campaign	Father's Day	Block Party	Ice Cream Social
Week 4	Graduation	Vacation Bible School	Installation of Church Board	Sunday School Promotional
	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Week 1	Labor Day	Concert Series	Old-Fashioned Day	Advent
Week 2	New Member Introduction	Pastor Appreciation Day	Infant Dedication	Hanging of the Greens
Week 3	Churchwide Fast	Friend Day	Harvest Celebration	Christmas Musical
Week 4	Commissioning Lay Ministers	Pumpkin Festival	Thanksgiving	Holy Communion