



Halloween Outreach

How to not only host alternative
Halloween celebrations,
but how to imaginatively and
effectively use this season
to introduce people to the
Christian faith.

yvon prehn

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by
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For situations where you need formal permission, interviews with Yvon Prehn, or information about the ministry of Effective Church Communications, please go to www.effectivechurchcom.com or email: yvonprehn@gmail.com.

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Previous versions of bits and pieces of this material have appeared on my website: www.effectivechurchcom.com, in *Christian Computing Magazine*, and other materials written by Yvon Prehn.

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There is no neutral ground in the universe; every square inch, every split second is claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan.

Christian Reflections, C.S. Lewis

We put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. . . . I make myself a slave to everyone to win as many as possible. . . . I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

(1 Corinthians 9: 12,19, 22)

There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence.

The other is to believe, and to feel and excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors.

Screwtape Letters, C.S. Lewis

Overview of this Halloween Outreach book



Churches seldom fail in the events they do for outreach. The events themselves are almost always a success, (church folks put on great events!) at least for the church members who put it on and the church members who attend.

Where churches are sometimes less than successful, if they are honest with themselves, is with the impact the church had on the community that goes beyond providing a good time. Here are the questions that are sometimes hard to answer:

- Did people start coming to the church because of the event?
- Did people ask questions about the church based on the kindness of the people hosting the event?
- Did people check out your website? Email the church asking for more information?
- How many people came to church in the weeks following the event because of either experiences at the event, or the church follow up after it?
- How many people made progress on the road to getting to know Jesus as a result of your event?

If you find yourself asking these questions and you aren't happy with the answers, this book and the videos and publications on the CD that goes with it, (available at www.lulu.com/yvonprehn) can make a radical change in what you do at your Halloween Outreach events, how you prepare for and follow up from them.

We have an extraordinary opportunity to connect with our communities and to connect our communities with the church this Halloween season. Here is how the book and CD can help:

Section One: Articles

Over the years I've written quite a few articles about how to plan, host, put on, and follow up for a Halloween Outreach and the most useful of them are reprinted here. Because these are reprints (with some modifications) there may be a bit of repetition, but usually of recommendations worth repeating.

PLEASE take time to read and discuss them as a staff. It will make an unimaginable difference in the success of your outreach if your staff is united in vision and purpose for all you do in your communications surrounding the outreach event. Consider options and then pray together in your planning times.

You have my permission to make as many copies of the PDFs or articles as you want to share them with staff and volunteers.

If you purchase the CD, you can also copy and pass around the communication files and videos within your church and volunteers in print and on your website. You only need to buy one copy of the book and CD for your church. I created these materials and I'm giving you permission to make as many copies as you want.

Section Two: CASE STUDY

Many churches think they are doing a great job organizing and promoting events and then when they don't get the turnout they want, they wonder what happened. This case study uses a real promotional piece from a not-very successful church Halloween outreach.

It goes into detail on what went wrong, how to change it, and shows you the kind of PR you need to do for success. There is also a video on the CD that takes you step-by-step through the redo of the publication.

Section Three: The Gospel

The reason we do all we do in our churches at Halloween and all through the year is to work towards fully fulfilling the Great Commission given to us by Jesus to go into all the world and share the gospel.

This section contains resources about the Resurrection (which I greatly encourage you to copy and put on your website as Halloween answer links). Without the Resurrection, we would not have a Gospel.

This section also has a variety of gospel presentations that you can modify and incorporate into any of your outreach material. These come from things I've written as well as samples of how to become a Christian that were sent to me by generous church communicators.

Section Four: PDF Gallery

I don't just tell you why you should do things and then leave you with how to figure out how to do it: this section contains an overview and advice for using all the materials I talk about, plus full size images of all the items I tell you to create: invitation cards, postcards, bulletin inserts. There is also a sample of the brochure from the Case Study.

The materials are available in reproducible PDF format on the downloadable version of this book and on the CD. The CD also has editable MS Publisher files so you can personalize the materials. If you don't have MS Publisher, the PDF files are generic on one side and you can personalize them for your church on the other side.

I've also included MS Word files of the text of a number of the materials.

This collection of materials will give you many resources and combined with hard work and lots of prayer should result in your most effective Halloween outreach ever.



section one

Articles

The three steps of a strategic, multi-channel, all-church approach to fall outreach and evangelism

Fall is not only the time for back to school, but it marks the start of preparations for the most holiday intensive time of the year. Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas provide great opportunities for outreach and evangelism if you use them strategically and involve ALL the members of your church and if you use all the technology available from print to the web. Starting with Halloween, following are three steps on how to do it:

Step One: Teach your people the theology of OIKOS, of involvement for every church member

For fall and other holiday outreach times, you need to involve more than the pastors and staff if you want your outreach to be truly successful. People need to know why you want them to be involved in order for them to be motivated to do what you ask them to do. One way to do that is to teach your people about Oikos and to then use the Oikos strategy as a basis for your fall outreach.

The comments below were inspired by both a series our church did on Oikos and from Tom Mercer, a pastor in California who started a church that now has 7,000 members based on the principle of Oikos.

Oikos is a Greek term, found in the New Testament that means “household.” It is used in the New Testament in numerous passages, but these will give you a good sense of how it is used:

The father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” So he and all his household (oikos) believed. John 4:53

They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household (oikos).” Acts 16:31

As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, “Go home to your family (oikos) and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” Mark 5:18-19

How to use the theology of Oikos for your Fall Outreach

The immediate household was the main area of witness for new believers in the early years of the church. The application is the same today, your most successful witness is with those closest to you.

Many people have a sort of floating sense of guilt that they ought to be “witnessing,” but most believers don’t know what that means or who they should witness to. It often helps when people realize that no one person in the church is responsible to win the entire world (or their entire community) to Jesus. Each person is responsible for their Oikos, the 8-15 people they interact with on a regular basis. Your Oikos obviously starts with your family, but then branches out to neighbors

and those you interact with professionally and as you go about your daily life. Your Oikos includes the barrista at Starbucks, the checker at the grocery store, people you work with, those with whom you share a class, hobby, volunteer opportunity.

After your people understand the theology of OIKOS, challenge them to write a list of the people in it and to begin praying for them. Later on in this book, you'll see materials you can give them to invite them to Halloween events.

The foundational essential is to give your people a theological and biblical motivation to invite people. The reason you need to do this first is that to put on an event that has lasting value and results in people connecting with and continuing with the church is much more work than simply hosting a fun time. When you get serious about your communications and people realize that the eternal destiny of a person can be changed as a result of your outreach event, you also enter into an area of spiritual warfare that your people need to be ready for.

Expect to be discouraged; expect the work to seem like too much. But also expect at the end of the event to have results that will give you great joy and make all the work worth it.

Step Two, decide on a holiday event, the underlying Biblical reasons to celebrate it and use technology to explore it in detail

As you were reminded, we are in a war for the eternal souls of people and though outreach for the sake of fun and a good time is a nice reason to host a holiday event such as an alternative Halloween celebration, we can do so much more, but we need a reason for doing more. We need a genuine spiritual connection.

If we have taught our people that they are the ones to bring their Oikos to the church and to put them in a situation where they can hear about the gospel, we need to provide opportunities for them to do that. Halloween provides this kind of opportunity.

Though it may not seem like a gospel-sharing opportunity on the surface, when we dig a bit deeper into how to celebrate Halloween and get beyond the importance of a safe, church-sponsored event and making sure kids and adults wear appropriate costumes, we see that:

- Halloween is a time when people are preoccupied about death.
- Halloween is a time when people are openly discussing the supernatural.
- Halloween is a time when people are looking for events to attend for their kids and themselves.

All of these factors make for great evangelistic opportunities. A harvest celebration, Trunk or Treat, or some other sort of alternative Halloween event is a great opportunity to reach out to your community.

It is a time for your people to invite their Oikos. It's a time to get unchurched friends and family on the church grounds for a time that isn't nearly as threatening as a regular church service might be to them. Later, we'll discuss how to create materials that you can use to equip your people to invite their Oikos to whatever events you host.

In addition to inviting people to physical events, with the church communication tools we have today, you can do more to make your Halloween outreach an eternity-changing outreach event. The internet gives us opportunities for information sharing that can challenge and answer, in depth, the questions of those who attend. Also for those may not attend, but who have your information and a link to your website, you can make a significant impact them if you link them to your website.

To make your website most useful, here is what you need to do:

To make your website useful as a Halloween outreach tool, you need to do more than simply provide a link to your church website as usual.

Prior to giving out your website on Halloween PR you need to:

- Have a section, with a link on the home page that goes to Halloween Resources
- On the section, you have non-threatening and practical ideas for ways to celebrate Halloween with your kids.
- In addition, have in-depth information and links on your website where you answer questions about death, life after death, if ghosts are real, etc. We must honestly confront and answer these false beliefs. Halloween is great time to do it and your website is a great place to do it. A well-constructed apologetic section with links to Bible passages and resources about Jesus as the only way to God, the reality of hell and judgment, and the offer of salvation should be easily accessible on your website.
- A Q & A section or a linked blog on your website with answers from the pastor or another staff member about Halloween-related issues can be very helpful.
- For material on how to create websites and blogs, go to my website: www.effectivechurchcom.com and type in “website creation” in the search box. Blogs and website creation does not have to be complex or costly. You can create very professional-looking sites and blogs using WordPress and it is completely free. For a tutorial on how to use WordPress, go to www.lynda.com. For \$25 (a month’s training cost of all kinds of software), you can take an online course on WordPress that will walk you through every step of using it. I’ve used other systems, tried other programs, but I always come back to WordPress for its ease of use and richness of features. I use it for my website and blogs I do for the church and special events and love it.

Once all this is in place, you have a 24/7 resource you can direct people to where their questions can be answered and where they can explore the Christian faith. You can pray without ceasing that your people will use it and direction their friends there, but you can’t begin to pray until you do the work of getting materials on the site. The Gospel section of this book will give you content and links.

One of the useful things about a website is that people can check things out, research and explore without being confronted face-to-face. Not only is this useful for the seeker who may want to search in their own way, but if someone is timid about sharing face-to-face with their friends and family, a referral to a website isn’t very scary. How to connect people and their friends to your website is what the next step is about.

Step Three: Develop tools to link your people and their OIKOS with the resources from the church.

As always with my communication examples and templates, you have my permission to take any text or idea, copy as is or modify and use it in any way you'd like on your website or in your church communications.

If you do something unique, I'd love it if you send me a copy at: yvonprehn@gmail.com. but if life is just too crazy and busy, don't worry about it, use it, pray for your outreach, and bless your community.

This is an essential step. Far too often, I've seen in my communication ministry how churches either create great communication pieces that advertise an event, but don't go beyond that, or the church hosts an event, but doesn't give people a way to tell their friends about it.

In some later articles and in the PDF Gallery section of this book are previews of church communications for Halloween. The files for these communications are on the accompanying CD for Halloween Outreach available from www.lulu.com/yvonprehn. If you have MS Publisher, you can edit the files. If you don't, there is a PDF version of the files that can be printed from any computer. The PDF is the front side of the church communication piece and you can personalize the back side. The back of the PDFs you can personalize with the specific information for your church. Pieces in this section include:

- A bulletin insert to encourage people to think about outreach at Halloween time and to let them know about the church events they can invite their Oikos to participate in.
- A postcard or handout that challenges people to think about the reality of death and lets them know that Jesus is the one who conquered death and offers the gift of eternal life to anyone who comes to him.
- Invitation cards, which can be printed business card size. There are two kinds of business cards, one is a simple invitation that can be personalized for any Halloween event and the second one is a business-card size piece that challenges people to think about eternal issues and on the back gives them some web-based resources to check out. It's sort of a business-card size gospel tract. Feel free to come up with any ideas of your own to modify or make these kinds of publications appropriate for your church.
- Additional pieces include a brochure to recruit volunteers, sign-up and follow-up cards for your Halloween event.

PLEASE NOTE: the CD also has videos that preview the Halloween church communications, that give an overview of how to do outreach and make the most of Halloween outreach for your church and one that is a CASE STUDY that takes a communication piece from ineffective to a complete and useful outreach resource. If you purchase the CD for your church you have my permission to copy and pass on any parts of it to the people in your church. This is a resource you can use year after year. It is available at www.lulu.com/yvonprehn.

More work, but greater results

It is a lot more work than putting together a candy-give away time to go to the trouble to create website resources, to teach your people about OIKOS, and to create materials they can use to involve and invite others, but if you do that, you'll not only provide a fun holiday celebration for your people, but an eternity-altering event for people who don't know Jesus. In the process you will also grow your people in Christian maturity and your church with the life and excitement that comes from new members.

The Apostle Paul, his biblical example for Halloween Outreach and why it's OK for us to follow his example

Halloween is huge—in marketing dollars spent, in candy sales, in the immense mind share it captures for almost two months prior to the actual day. Halloween stores, costume shops, many aisles in your local discount store—everywhere you go, Halloween confronts you. Though as Christians we might have genuine concerns about this, we can also make the most of this time and use Halloween as a time to connect with people and share the gospel.

To do that we first need to establish a biblical basis for the church to be involved in Halloween. Church leaders need to carefully consider this topic and carefully explain it to your congregation. If our people have genuine spiritual concerns about the appropriateness of Halloween outreach activities, we want to respect and answer those concerns.

Consider the Apostle Paul's example

When Paul got to Athens in Acts 17, before he shared the gospel, he took time to look at what people already worshipped. In Athens this consisted of many idols and altars to them. I'm sure many were beautiful and appealing (think of the Greek statues you see in museums) and the worship of these gods based, as many of them were, around feasting and sexual excess were appealing to many people.

It was not appealing to Paul. He had grown up with "Thou shalt have no other God's before me." Conservative, former Hebrew of Hebrews that he was, I'm sure these statues, altars, and what they represented were repulsive to him. But he didn't let his inner revulsion stand in the way of noticing the "altar to an unknown god."

I wonder what went through his mind as he considered how he might use it as a bridge to sharing the gospel message. I wonder if he stood and stared at it; I wonder if he walked quickly past and slowly returned as the Holy Spirit perhaps prompted him for a second look. He would use it as a bridge to share the gospel and in a similar way we can use Halloween if we look closely at it.

Consider also that he didn't do

Paul did not berate the Athenians for having so many idols. He could have. Like an Old Testament prophet, he could have loudly screamed, "Abomination, abomination, you are evil, wicked sinners for having so many idols!"

He didn't do that. His focus was not on condemnation, but on redemption. With the focus of wanting to do something that would lead people towards salvation instead of merely insulting them, he could say "What you worship without knowing it, the 'unknown god' –I want to tell you who he is and how you can know him." Paul looked past the obvious and offensive in the idols themselves and saw people who were searching for God.

Like the Apostle Paul we can take elements of our culture and use them as a bridge to share the gospel message.

At its core, Halloween is about life after death. Our culture may have twisted and trivialized it, but there is no denying that at this time of year people are thinking about death and the afterlife probably more than at any other time.

At the core of the Christian faith is also a focus on death and life beyond the grave. Though we may have the same core subject, the Christian view is not about trivialized demons and goblins or grotesque witches: our core belief is that Jesus died a real physical death and three days later physically rose from the dead. He conquered death. And he offers the same extraordinary gift to us: a freedom from fear of death and life everlasting to those who trust him as Savior and follow him as Lord.

Halloween brings up the topic of life after death into the cultural conversation. People are already talking about it, we simply need tools and activities to turn them to looking at the Christian view of these topics.

Tools to help you do this

I've created a number of tools with the purpose of helping you help your people effectively and caringly use Halloween as a time to get people to think about life after death. Three of them are:

1) A Postcard:

This postcard can either be mailed out or used as a handout.

Personalize it with your resources, events, and web links on the back.

Here is the text on it:



Halloween, a fun time for tombstones, ghosts and all things scary.

...

But what about when it isn't Halloween ?

We can laugh at death when it's part of a Halloween spook house, but we don't laugh when it touches someone we love or when we must face it.

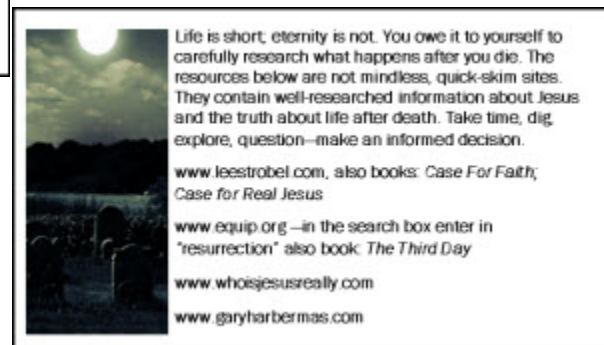
This Halloween, take some time to check out the one person in all of history who conquered death—Jesus. His resurrection is the key belief of the Christian faith and what makes Jesus unique among religious leaders.

On the back of this card are events, websites, and other resources for you to find out more. We invite you to be part of activities at our church or you can check facts online and in private. Take time, ask questions, research answers.

Halloween might be a fun time, but seeking serious answers to life-changing subjects is always important.

2. An business card size invitation card

You can either use both the front and the back sides as a Halloween gospel tract and include it in other outreach communications or you could use the front side and then personalize the back side of it.



3. Videos

There are three videos, all under 2 minutes, is available both on my website at www.effectivechurchcom.com and on my YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/yvonprehn. They are also on the CD (Halloween Outreach, available at www.lulu.com/yvonprehn) in MP4 format and you can post them on your website. They are not produced isn't very high resolution so it's best to either view them on the web or pass it on via email to folks. You can forward it via the YouTube link.

The two on this page are might be useful to motivate people to get involved with praying for, sharing with, and inviting friends to Halloween events where they can learn what the afterlife is really all about.

These were created with a church audience in mind.

I go the idea for the third video from a pastor friend. When I showed him this one to use as a motivator for getting people involved in church Halloween outreach, he suggested that I redo the video to use as a piece to give to the people who come to Halloween events or in websites for them.



The two videos on this page were created as thought-provoking, seeker videos. Again, they are on the CD in MP4 format, along with the screen shot of the cover and you can preview and link to them on www.youtube.com/yvonprehn.

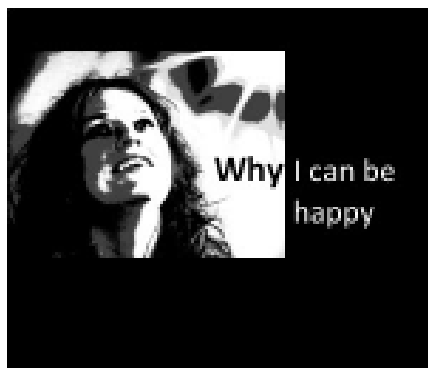
If you use these videos, be sure there is a link following them to a gospel presentation, more information, or someone to email or a way to ask questions about the Christian faith.

Think of your own unique way to share

Postcards, business cards, web videos—these are just a few ways we can be creative as we work to share our faith. I must admit to a tremendous amount of fun creating them and I'd keep at it, but I had to tell myself to quit and get this material out there for you.

For this Halloween, try different things, be as creative as you can, and lovingly share the good news. Be reverent as you work to be relevant; pray for wisdom and fearlessly create.

I'm sure the Apostle Paul would be proud.



What can happen if you if you work so hard on your event, but don't have time to work on event communications

This is a true story. Though the specific event discussed is Easter, the lessons learned from it can apply to any event. In addition to applying to any event, we can all identify with this. The challenges of ministry are so huge, it is very easy to get overwhelmed in one area and totally forget another one. May the Lord have mercy and help us all.

In one of my seminars at the break, a lady literally came running up the aisle to talk to me.

"Oh, thank you, thank you," she said, "Now I understand what went wrong."

I had just been discussing the same ideas I've presented in the articles in this section about the importance of an overall communication plan for maximum results from your holiday outreach. I asked her to tell me more about her experience.

She then told me about a special Easter service they did that was a huge amount of work and a huge disappointment in results. They were a new church plant and wanted to reach out to their community at Easter.

They were meeting in the grade school, but they committed to reach their community for Jesus this Easter. On faith, they rented the high school gym. They prayed hard and worked hard to get lots of community involvement. They got it—merchants put up posters; they got lots of media exposure. The day came and the church of 300 had over 1500 at the Easter service held at the local high school gym.

They were so excited. The next week back at the grade school, they set up hundreds more chairs, printed lots of extra bulletins.

They didn't need to go to the extra trouble.

Almost none of the 1500 showed up. The lady who shared this was now between laughing and crying as she continued, "Now I understand what happened!" she said. She was the pastor's wife and they had been beating themselves up emotionally for whatever had happened to give them so little lasting response.

"We didn't give them any follow up material!" she continued. She realized that a simple flyer or a business card that said something like "We are so glad you joined us today! Come back next week to our usual location..." and the card could go on with the church address, phone, map, times of service, some of the services offered would have made all the difference.

"We never told people where we met regularly! Can you imagine how many people were probably wandering around the parking lot of the high school the next Sunday wondering what happened to the church!"

Though her story was more dramatic than most, I almost never see the necessary follow-up publications given out at seeker events.

The reason is often that the staff is exhausted just getting the event put on that they don't have time to plan and reproduce the essential follow up documents that are essential. It seems like these don't have to be done so they aren't done.

A way to solve this problem and make your event one of lasting success

Prepare your follow up publications and the materials that you will give out to people at the event BEFORE you start to advertise the event.

That seems counter-intuitive, but the purpose of outreach events is not to get people to the event. It is to get them involved in the church and introduced to Jesus.

The communications that will do that are of vital importance and easy to not do once the staff is involved in the last-minute preparations for the actual event.

To help you do that is one of the primary reasons I put this material together and why I am encouraging people to get it, go over it, and begin planning communications over two months ahead of Halloween.

In addition to putting it together for you, know I am praying for you right now. I am both humbled and thrilled that our Lord who is as present with you now as you are reading as He is with me as I write will strengthen you, encourage you, give you wisdom and endurance to create the communications you need to so that people in your community will connect with your church, come to know Jesus and spend eternity with Him.

Have a joyful and fruitful Halloween season.

Clarify and Coordinate Your Fall Outreach Publications

Fall and winter are two prime times for churches to plan outreach events for their communities. Large amounts of time and money are spent on these events and often the church gets a great community response to the free Harvest Festival or Family Thanksgiving Dinner or Community Caroling and Hot Chocolate Party. But seldom do these activities generate the kind of continuing church involvement a church hopes for. Though this book has many ideas to help you do that, this article will help you with two key actions to keep in mind for every activity and event.

These key actions are:

CLARIFY and COORDINATE

If you constantly work to Clarify and Coordinate your message, your outreach events will have greater and longer-lasting impact. This article will help you do a good job with both actions.

Clarify your communication for maximum impact

Does a company sponsor a race car and be subtle about putting their name on it? Is a sporting event advertised without the name of corporate sponsor? Not likely.

When secular companies sponsor events they make sure everybody knows who is paying for them. Not only will their name be on the program, but on advertising, banners, soft-drink cups, take-home materials, anything that can be imprinted. If you had a good time at the event, whenever you remember it or look at an item from it, you'll think about the sponsor.

Secular companies are not the only groups who take great care to help people know who is sponsoring an event. Look at television or news programs that feature work by police and government agencies. CSI, ATF and other crime teams often have vests or shirts that clearly label who they are. Last night, there was a feature on television that highlighted a police community relations team in a large ethnic part of a major city. The shirt worn by the officers involved in large letters on the back said something like: City Community Relations Outreach Team.

Though the man wore a badge on the front of his shirt, his back literally had a large label stating his purpose.

Follow their lead as you plan your fall outreach and winter outreach events.

To do that you need to CLARIFY:

1. Who you are
2. Why you are doing the event
3. Why they should care and come back

Who you are

You don't need to hide the fact you are a church. You are putting on a positive event for your community. You are doing a public service, an act of kindness.

Whether you use the materials printed in this book for ideas or create your own from the files on the companion CD, be sure to personalize everything you do so people are very clear that the sponsorship of the Halloween event comes from your church.

Don't be a secret agent when you host a great event for your community—let people know who is responsible so they can come back.

Recruit people in your church who would be willing to answer email questions from your special event visitors. Then print their emails in take home materials. This provides a non-threatening way for guests to learn more.

Here are some ways to let guests know who you are:

- Be sure all helpers from the church are clearly identified as being from the church. A colorful t-shirt is great, a hat or scarf, or anything that clearly has the name of the church on it will work well. It will also let people know who to go to for questions. Again, take police and government groups as an example—they want people to know who they are, where they come from. People need to be labeled as clearly as your publications.

There is no disrespect intended in the previous statement. Everyone has a better time at events if it is clear who is in charge and who are the sponsors.

- Be sure all explanatory materials from welcome info, program for the event, follow-up materials they get as they leave, clearly displays your church information: website, address, phone, and all the ways people can contact you. Be sure to give contact information of a specific person or persons who are in charge of ministry areas, such as the children's ministry. In addition, email contacts of people willing to discuss spiritual issues could be a great addition to your printed materials.

- On all printed and digital materials invite them to contact you for more information and give complete contact information.

Why you are doing the event



Don't just assume that if you host an event, people will know why you are doing it or that you want them to return to the church for other activities. You need to clarify through some sort of information card, flyer or brochure for people that everyone receives during or after the event. You can let people know you want to provide a great time for the neighborhood as a service to them, that your church loves little kids and wants them to know it.

Be honest and let people know you are doing this event so that they can sample what your church is like. In addition, let them know that you hope they come back.

Don't assume that just because you've hosted a great community event at your church, that people will automatically come back the following week.

Along with the previous information, you need to be specific on what you can do for them and why they should come back. For example, the little postcard size publication on this page, could be put into bags as they come in.

You can also explain what you were doing and that you want them to return in a follow-up email (you did capture all attendees email addresses didn't you?) you might say something like:

"Did your kids have fun at the Harvest Festival? We hope so! But in addition to having fun at one event, we want your kids to have a great life and at First Church we believe that part of a great life means growing up with the values and virtues that will serve them well all

You must clarify what you are doing and that you want people to return to the church for your outreach to have lasting impact. This card is available in editable format on the Halloween Outreach CD.

their lives. To help make that possible, First Church is excited to announce a new program called Kid's Stuff! We're starting a church service for kids and parents together that is value and virtues based. It's lively, upbeat and more fun than church ought to be. For more info, check out our website at www.samplechurchwebsite.com."

Coordinate all the parts of your communication

This has to do with the various ways you advertise your event before it takes place and the follow up after the event. You want to coordinate your preliminary, at the event, and post-event communications by being sure they have a:

1. Similar message
2. Similar look

Similar message

In the section above you've clarified what you are doing and why.

Boil that down to one key message you want people to remember. For example maybe for the children's event, if you want people to come back to your new program, repeat your advertising slogan and key phrases about it.

In your literature for one event, focus on getting people back to one ministry. Plan on a continuing relationship with your community. You don't need go into how you also have wonderful men's and women's small groups in addition to a great children's program. If you get the kids wanting to come back and you highlight that, you can fill in the details of your church and let guests know about more programs when they return for a visit.

Stick with one message and repeat it again and again. At another event, you can highlight another ministry you want people to come back to.

Remember also that advertising theory tells us people need to see or hear a message at least 7 times before they remember it. You don't need to change the message for this kind of repetition, in fact you shouldn't change the message or presentation or people might be confused. Simply repeat the message in a flyer, on a postcard, on your website, in handouts and emails.

A later article will go into more depth on this, but also be sure each time you talk about an event to include all the connecting details. Remember it may be the 14th time you created a church communication piece about the event, but for every piece you create there are some people for whom that may be the first and only piece they see. They need all the details to make a connection.

A similar look is as important as a similar message

One of the most important parts of this reminder has to do with color.

We all respond to and remember colors. Similar colors are essential if you want people to recognize your message even before they read the specifics. Think about the impact of team colors and how important it is that they stay the same. If your team changed colors for every game, you'd wonder what they were doing.

It's the same for recognition of a ministry or church event. Pick some theme colors for your event and be consistent in your use of them in all your materials from printed ones to how the event is advertised on your web site.

Tips on choosing and using colors

If you decide to make your theme colors dark colors, say dark red or purple, only use these as accent colors. Don't print on dark colored paper. Printing is too difficult to read on dark colored paper. Fall and winter is a time when it is very tempting to print on dark orange, red, or green paper. Please don't do it. Print on white paper and use dark colors as an accent only.

It is especially important not to print something on red or green paper that has men as a primary audience. A significant percentage of the male population is color blind. For a color blind person, red or green paper appears medium to dark grey. Black ink on dark grey paper, needless to say, is very hard to read. I have on my desk a flyer for a Pastor's Prayer Meeting printed on very dark red paper. I'm wondering how many pastors showed up for it.

Think about how the colors will show up on the web.

You want to repeat your PR communications in print and online in the same colors. This is another reason why, if at all possible, you want to use white paper with colored ink or accent colors. If you print on colored paper, you'll have to make the background of your message a color on the web if you want your pieces to coordinate. Its easy to do that on the web, but it looks odd and at the lower resolution of the web is much harder to read.

From the start, design with output in mind

If you are able to afford full color or high resolution printing you can use photos and more complicated graphics. If you have a lower resolution printer, spot color, or a black and white printer, you will get better print results using clipart graphics.

PLEASE remember, one is not necessarily more effective than the other. Much of this has to do with the budget, location, and preferences of your church.

On the CD and in the examples, I did up versions of most of the pieces two formats: one using photos, another using clipart--and of course you are more than welcome to use any of your own graphics. Though graphics are useful and fun, it is never the graphics or the quality of printing that ultimately connects people to your activities--it is your message.

Finally, communicate effectively for ministry results

You'll be working very hard on your church outreach this fall--so remember to Clarify and Coordinate your communications for them to have the greatest impact for the kingdom of God.

Successful special event publications

This article is a summary and overview of the church communications you need to include for successful fall outreach.

In many books about reaching our communities for Jesus, the importance of outreach events used as “bridge” events to bring people to your church is often discussed. In my experience in ministry and in observing the outreach events of many churches, some bridge events can be very successful at connecting community members with the church and others aren’t.

Most of the time the success or failure of the event to link people with the church on a continuing basis has little to do with the event itself. Most churches do a great job of actually putting on special events.

Continuing the connection with unchurched people, however, is more often the result of the publications you give people at and after the event than the event itself.

People don’t take home the experience itself in tangible form. They take home the little handout you give them that explains who you are as a church, why Jesus is important, and specifically invites them to join you in the eternal adventure of knowing Him.

Following are some additional ideas to make these communications most effective:

Partners in outreach for special events: print and online

When both print and online communication is used, they reinforce and amplify your message. Your print publications can grab attention, generate response, and refer to your web site. Your online/web communications can go into detail about your event, your church and provide resources.

To see how this can work, let’s use as an example your church sponsoring some sort of Halloween alternative or Harvest festival for families in your neighborhood. Use this same method of a variety of publications and communication channels for all of the outreach events you do in the upcoming holiday season.

Pre-event communications

One of the most effective outreach methods is to create postcards and then have your congregation give or mail them out. Sample ones are in the back of this book and editable files are on the Halloween Outreach CD.

First, create postcard invitations for your church members to send out. Programs like Microsoft Publisher make creating postcards very easy using the postcard templates. Do them yourself at church; run them off inexpensively on cardstock at the church office or if you want to do fancy ones, use an online, quick printer like www.Vistaprint.com. Then, on Sunday give every person in the congregation 5 cards in their bulletin. At some point in the service, the pastor can stand up and say, “You notice you all have 5 postcards in your bulletin advertising our Harvest Festival. I’m sure all of you have 5 friends, families who would love to come to this. Pray about it, address the postcard to them with a little note, and please use your own stamps to mail them.” By doing this you involve everyone in your church in outreach and you’ve just created a targeted personalized direct mail marketing campaign.

Bulletin inserts can serve a number of PR purposes

Design them as mini-posters will all the important information. They will end up on the refrigerator (the communication center of every home in North America) and people attend what they are reminded of.

One additional note on bulletin inserts. Though they are one of the most effective communication pieces you can produce in terms of people taking action on what they say, a lot of church offices don't like to produce them (too much work, people throw them on the floor...etc.). It sometimes helps if you rename them as one of my seminar attendees suggested. Call them "Refrigerator Reminders." That is really what they are and they do get people to your events.

Pre-event online communications

Be sure the web site for your church is prominently displayed on each invitation and community calendar listing. Better yet design a special web section or an entirely separate web site for your event. For example you might say, "Want to know the real history of Halloween? Go to [www.your church website](#) for answers—you might be surprised." You'll have a greater chance of unchurched people reading your online communications if they are first presented with something of interest to them rather than a listing of the church events for the week, so make sure they immediately connect with a section that is of interest to them.

There are lots of things you could do on this section of your site: have a section about Halloween with questions and answers from your senior pastor, provide links that answer questions such as: How can I really know what happens after death? Always include a gospel presentation and a link back to your home page to give people information about you as the sponsor of the Harvest Festival.



The screen shot here is an example of the kind of website you can set up for a special event.

This is from a WordPress blog. It could either be a stand-alone site with a distinct URL that you put on your outreach communications or you can link to it from your main website.

WordPress blogs are completely

FREE to produce—you don't even have to secure a domain name to do one. This makes them a great tool for Halloween or any other special event outreach. My website has lots more information on WordPress blogs, a video on how easy they are to create and other helpful resources. Just go to www.effectivechurchcom.com and type in Website Creation into the search box.

At-the-event communications

Many churches put so much effort into putting on an event they miss some of their best outreach opportunities during and after the event. It is critical to do these things because you don't just want people to come to your church for a fun evening. You want to use this event as the beginning of a relationship with your visitors. You want to get them coming back to your church, you want to influence their lives for eternity, and that takes more than one fun night. To begin that process, do all you can to capture names; street addresses and email address of the people who attend your event. One way to do this is to have a card folks fill out for fun prizes at drawings you'll hold during the evening. Have lots of people at welcome tables helping fill these out, so people don't have to wait in long lines to get into the fun.

Some additional PR ideas for print and media

1. Place an ad in your school sports programs or any publication the school produces that goes out to parents. The ad rates are often quite inexpensive for the amount of space you get.
2. Check into placing an ad for your event in the advertisements that precede movies these days. A number of churches are doing this and the attendees in who my have done them report a great response from them.
3. Don't forget the community calendar listings in your newspaper on cable TV and various radio stations. Be sure you also get your event listed on all the free community calendar listings in your local newspapers, radio and community web sites. Many Christian radio stations run free announcements. When you use a Christian radio station, don't try to target your ad to church people—they often attend no matter what. In a recent report George Barna reported that a large number of non-Christian people regularly listen to Christian radio. Keep them in mind as you create your ads.

Exit and after-the-event church communications

When people leave your event, be sure you have some sort of goodie bag for them to take home. In it, you might include some yummy candy and a Halloween gospel tract. The American Tract Society (www.ATStracts.org) has some great resources for all holidays. In addition, be sure you have enclosed something that talks about the do you at your church on a regular basis, done on colorful Halloween paper and written in a cheery, upbeat style that says something like this: "We're so glad you came to our Harvest Festival and we trust you enjoyed yourself! We really care about kids at OUR CHURCH and your experience was just a sample of the fun and exciting ways we show that caring. For more positive times for your children,

please join us next Sunday at our Kids Kove for fun and lessons with a purpose.
We meet at: time, location, etc.

Repeat this message in postcards and on follow-up emails using the information you collected at sign-in time for follow-up. You aren't being too pushy in doing this—you are helping introduce people to a relationship with Jesus.

Complete details in church communications are essential for people to connect with church events

Important intro note: I am reprinting this article (it has been in many church communications) because as you create outreach materials for Halloween and other fall events, it is vitally important that you follow the advice in this article and be certain to include connecting details. Beyond any other advice I can give you, the inclusion of church communication details is absolutely essential for event success.

“He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much,” (Luke 16:10), is a biblical principle we are all familiar with. It is also an important principle to remember in your church communications when you want people to respond to your church communication with concrete action. We don’t do church communications for people to think they look fantastic or to impress them with our technological prowess—we do them so lives and eternities will be changed. The details must be included for action to take place.

If you don’t include the little details (time, date, location, duration, contact information) completely and consistently in every church communication you produce, the great design, writing, typography choices, and graphics will not mean anything. All of these things are virtually useless if you don’t have the details included that will actually connect people to the church events. In the rest of this article I’ll talk about why we leave out church communication details and then I’ll give you a list of the details that are essential to include. PLEASE take time to read/review this article for maximum results from the hard work you will be doing to create outreach communications this fall. Pass it on, make copies of it for your staff to discuss.

Why we leave out the details in our church communications

Our default mode when creating church communications is to leave out connecting details. We do this for a number of reasons and here are some of the most common reasons why we leave out essential details in church communications:

Over-familiarity

This is a natural occupational hazard of working in the church office for more than a few years. Without thinking, it is easy to assume that everyone knows the people, time, and location of events, as well as the people who do in the church office. But they don’t. I sometimes refer to this as the “Oh, everybody knows” fallacy in church communications. Whenever you hear yourself making that statement, stop yourself and remind yourself, “NO, everybody doesn’t know.” Even if most people in the congregation do know the details (and they probably don’t), put them in for the one person whose life might be changed if they attend your event. You never know how important it might be.

Another result of assuming everyone knows is what happens if a church communication, either in print or on the web doesn’t give complete information and few people show up. Sadly, many churches then assume that since everybody knew all about it (which they didn’t) and they decided not to come (no decision really, they didn’t know where to show up) the final assumption is often that people today just don’t care about spiritual growth opportunities. What a sad conclusion.

We cannot wrongly ascribe a lack of desire for spiritual growth to our failure to include connecting details.

Expecting people to “call the church office for more information”

People’s lives are crazy busy today. They don’t have time to call—the information has to be in the first listing of an event for people to know if it is even possible to attend. In addition, even if they do make time to call, many churches don’t have a human answering the phone and if the staff is practicing time management by not picking up their extensions when they ring, it can be an exercise in frustration. After a try or two with only voice mail as a response even the rare person who takes time to call will often give up. In addition to people probably not calling, the staff shouldn’t have to repeat what could have been printed or on the web.

We forget newcomer or uninvolved member embarrassment

If you are new at the church, or been around for some time, but not involved you may feel like everybody but you knows who is in charge or where it is and you may be too shy or embarrassed to ask. We need to assume there are always people in this situation as we create our materials. What may be very old information to church regulars is news to people who are either new or who haven’t paid attention to previous information. Maybe they should already know the details, but it is best to assume that there are many who don’t.

Study after study shows that newcomers don’t want to stand out. They may want to quietly attend something and if they have to go to extra trouble to find out basic details they may decide it is too much trouble.

What might be the tenth time you put out a church communication might be the first time someone sees it

This is related to the reason above, but it involves a little trick our minds play on us. We’ve seen the message ten times as we prepare the third postcard or sixth announcement or email and our minds tell us, “Oh, they already know that.” We unconsciously assume that because we’ve seen the progression of church communications created and published about this event, that our entire audience has seen the same progression of communications.

That is seldom true. For the majority of your audience each church communication piece you publish, print or put out electronically will be the first one seen (or paid attention to) by the majority of recipients. That is why the details, the little things listed below must be included each time. Again, what is repetitious to you is news to them.

The false idea that we need to make it “interesting,” or “eye-catching” or pull of some other visual trick and that will make people want to attend

We hear those sorts of things all the time (often from people who want to sell you the interesting design or website or something else you can do much more cost-effectively yourself), about how important the visual, graphic wow factor is. We hear we live in a visual age and how important visuals are in communication.

That’s true if you are producing the latest animated feature movie or if you are creating an advertisement for the current sale at the mall. Though we don’t want our church communications to be intentionally ugly, the place of design and looks

is somewhat different in the church. People do not go to church looking for great graphic design. They don't sit in the pew and evaluate the typography to determine if they will come to an event. People respond to church communications that clearly show how an event will meet a need in their life. They will respond and show up if the church communication includes the details that will connect them with the event, not because they feel that the artwork was a contemporary masterpiece that spoke to the human condition.

There isn't room on the calendar

There are sometimes practical limitations, but we can use our creativity to conquer them. Experiment with smaller type. Strive to get one that prints clearly at small sizes—test options on your printer. Use variety in bold, italic, etc. to make the various parts of the announcement stand out.

Or make a bigger calendar. What is the use of a tidy little calendar if it doesn't serve people? Often times events presented in list form are more useful than those printed on in calendar form. Try different methods; record your responses. Go with whatever method resulted in the best turnout.

One last reason—details are not fun to include

Communication creators often have to track down the details from people “who never turn anything in on time.” That in itself is a challenge and our sinful nature is apt to grumble, “If they don't care enough to let me know, I'm not calling one more time to find out.” This is not fun to do and we don't want to do it. The Lord then often gently reminds us of how often He has to come after us and we make the phone call or send the email to find out what we know is essential information.

Once we have the details, it's not fun to include them when they take up valuable space we'd much rather use for a nice image or leave blank for pleasing white space. It's much more fun searching for great graphics and crafting a stunning design.

It's sometimes hard to remember the oft-repeated phrase, “If it isn't fun, don't do it,” **is never** a reason to justify the actions or inactions of a Christian communicator. Many of the tasks that make our work a ministry and not a hobby or even a secular vocation are not fun. Some of the most life-changing communications from your office may be deadly boring and detailed to create.

I'm sure we could think of many more reasons why we often don't include essential details in our church communications, but though the reasons given are many and real, we must include the details if we want people to connect with church events. Following is a list of the most basic. Specific events may have additional details that are important, but these are core ones to include.

Below are some basic items to include on calendars, bulletins, PR, and event announcements, both in print and on the web:

Name of event

It is always best if the name of the event has the age or interest group as part of the event name. The more specific you can be, the better. Some examples:

Confusing

Youth Group

Ladies Lunch

Workday Men's

Better

Senior High Movie Night

Mom's of Preschoolers Salad Potluck

Ministry Morning of Church Repairs

Beyond making a generic name more specific, if the title isn't clear, clarify it. For example, my church had an event known as "Hospitality Night." From the title alone you'd have no idea that it is a free meal and games for singles hosted by married couples in the church. Explain somewhere what an event is unless it is totally self-explanatory. We now call it "Singles' Games & Goodies Night" and lots more people come because they know what is going on.

Acronyms are especially dangerous

In the past we sponsored a group called OASIS, which stood for "Our Adult Singles in Service." I have since discovered that the name OASIS is a rather popular name for Sunday School classes across America. Recently I saw a bulletin where OASIS stood for "Our Adult Seniors in Service." Imagine you were a twenty-something person who had just moved into town and who was quite excited to see an OASIS group—just like the single's group he had left behind, he assumed. Imagine that visitor's feelings walking into a senior Sunday school class. Same name, totally different class make up. I'm certain the folks were quite nice, but that visitor may not feel like attempting a similar adventure again.

The acronym SAM is similar: some churches use it to mean "Single Adult Ministry." Others use it to mean "Senior Adult Ministry." Great ministries all, I'm sure, but you need to let folks know which one your church is doing.

Many people, especially pre-Christians, are much more fragile and uncertain about navigating their way around a church than many of us realize. Remember also that we have an enemy who loves to whisper in their ear, "Wasn't that embarrassing? You don't ever want to have to back out of a room of strangers like that again....this obviously isn't a place for you....." Please don't let a communication misstep keep someone from connecting with your church.

You can do a lot in print and on the web, with clear descriptions and directions to make the way easier for people to find their way to classes and groups that will encourage and nurture them in their spiritual growth.

Location

Give the address and if necessary, directions. An excellent solution that one church adopted was to give directions to each event starting from the church. They reasoned that everybody knew where the church was since that is where they heard about the event. Especially in a large metropolitan area, a common starting point such as this is helpful.

If you are using something like MapQuest, be sure to check out the directions first. They aren't always correct. In addition, I have found it helpful to give both a map and printed directions—some people find one or the other makes more sense to them.

One thing we have found very helpful at during campaigns to get people to sign up

for small groups is when they sign up to give them a card that has a map and all the contact information for the group (name, phone, email, etc.) information on it. Without something like this, many times people will sign up for something, but half an hour before it starts, they may realize they don't know where it is being held or how to get there. Often at that time the church is closed and they don't have anyone to call. Often the website hasn't been updated or is lacking complete information. Sadly the end result is that a person who may have desperately needed small group interaction may stay home.

Contact person

No matter how well you at the church know them, all the newcomers and many regular attendees may have no idea that it's Cathy or Jane or Ann that always hosts a certain event. This is especially important for any event that involves children or teens; parents need a contact person. Tell who they are. Give the person's job title at the church if that is important, for example, "youth director" or "children's choir director."

People need to know there is someone they can contact for questions and a specific person rather than trying to explain to the receptionist what they want to find out is best.

True story here: I once needed to call a church for a conference that was being held at the church. The web-based marketing on it left out many details and my pastor husband wanted to attend, but needed the information. When I called the church office, I did not have a name or specific department to call, I only knew the event was to be held there. When I asked about it to the person answering the phone this was her reply:

"I don't know anything about that. That's not unusual they don't tell me anything."

Unfortunately, she didn't stop there. She continued with her frustrations about as a volunteer at that particular church until, several minutes later, I was able to gently extricate myself from that conversation.

My husband didn't attend the event and though I chuckled a bit about the conversation, it really wasn't funny. A specific contact person's name, email, or phone number would have made all the difference.

Contact phone number and email address

In addition to a situation like the one above, even if people want to come to an event, they get lost, confused, or have questions and need to be able to call for clarification. If you have permission to provide a work number as well as home phone that's even better. If the church office is the one to call, list the number and extension right there. Not everybody has the number memorized and people might not have the time to look it up. For many people today, it's easier to communicate via email so provide an email address if available.

Also, think about having a system where someone answers the phone at church on the weekends and during church events. I realize this sounds quite radical, but think about what it would be like if your local movie theater or concert hall or college shut its office doors and turned off the phones when they held events. You'd think, "What is wrong with these people? Don't they want anyone to come?"

But churches do that all the time. If outreach really matters, think about ways to have someone answer the phone for the person who is running late, confused, or really doesn't understand how the whole church thing works. You may not get a lot of calls, but be assured; those who do call most likely really need to. You can always have volunteers who will answer the phone at home via call forwarding.

Sadly, most churches are even worse when it comes to answering emails. I can't even count the number of times I've emailed churches in the course of my ministry and either never received an email reply or got one weeks later. There is no reason why a team of volunteers can't be available to answer emails 24/7. You might have to check around a bit and do some training, but many folks are up at all hours and might enjoy doing ministry when they can't sleep.

Website

Websites are where we go for follow-up information in every area of life today. Businesses are judged by the quality of their website and so are churches. Be sure your website has complete information and all the details about the event you are advertising. Be very careful that it is current and that your site overall is easy to navigate. I realize this is much easier to recommend than to do, but websites more and more are acting as the hub and foundation of a church communication program.

The website also answers the objection that there is not enough room on the calendar or in the bulletin or newsletter to put all the necessary information. If people know they can trust that the church communication team always has the complete information on the website, they will know they can go to it for the details.

One more thing to be check out if you provide details on your website. Be sure people can get to them using their cell phone. Test this. Some churches today use lots of images on their home page that make navigation with a cell phone very difficult. You might have a text link that says "CALENDAR" that links directly to an all text page with the details of events. This would be extremely helpful for perhaps a person who is getting ready to leave work, wants to attend a small group, knows one is going on, but doesn't have the address and needs to quickly check the website via cell phone on their commute home.

Time and duration

Time is so important, but again left out often on the assumption that "everybody knows when the newcomer coffee starts..." or "everybody knows the adult study lasts an hour."

Everybody doesn't know. Duration is also important especially for newcomers or folks needing to get child care. Without duration listed, e.g. 7-9pm, are you asking them to commit for an hour or an entire evening? People may not be willing to ask and with today's busy schedules, this can be a major determinate if many come or not. If you are honestly targeting unchurched folks, they have no idea of standard church meeting times so be kind and let them know by always having both start and ending times listed.

Cost or contribution required

If someone shows up to an event and can't pay for it, they may turn around and walk away. If a food item is desired, but not required, state that. If there is no cost, let people know. If a scholarship is available, let them know and tell them who (give the specific name) to contact. If a person is in need it is embarrassing to simply call the church and not know who to ask for.

In addition to making certain you have advertised this material, BE CERTAIN that the person collecting money or food at any event is a person filled with grace and tact. No one should ever be turned away or made to feel badly if they don't have money for a church event. No one should ever miss out on a church meal or potluck because they forgot (or didn't or couldn't bring) their food item. We serve a Savior who freely gave everything to us—we must be careful to model His generosity.

Other essential information

This category is the most subjective. After you have included these key details, ask yourself, "Is there anything else a person has to know about this event?" Pray for insight to see the event with the eyes of someone totally unfamiliar with the church or this event. Again, what is obvious to the church communicator may not be to the person deciding to come to an event and few things are worse than deciding to attend and to then be told, "Oh, this is only for men" or "I'm sorry you have to be a church member."

Some bits of information that are important include:

- Does the person have to be a church member to participate?
- Is there a previous event, class, or activity that is required before the person can participate in this one?
- Is it only for men or women?
- Are you assuming some spiritual status prior to attending, e.g. does the person have to be a Christian to come or do you need to state that it is open to anyone of any belief system?

Whatever requirements you have are between you and the Lord and the policies of your church, what is important is that you let people know about them in clearly in your church communications.

What a difference we could make if we include essential details in our church communications

I'm personally pleading with you to take the time to include these little things in print and on the web in your church communications. I honestly think it could revolutionize churches if we'd simply focus on clear, complete communication. If we can just get people to show up to events—our churches can grow in numbers and our people in Christian maturity.

Putting in these seemingly little details isn't easy and it does take a lot of time and effort, but please, remember they are essential if you want people to respond to your message. When it seems like a chore to track down and always include these details, remember that what you are doing is servant work—sort of foot

washing with the computer. Lots of the jobs we do to carefully inform people are repetitive and boring, but the importance of these little details cannot be overstated. More than elaborate design, catchy slogans, or cutting edge technology, it is often these seemingly little things that can make all the difference. Remember, when Jesus was spending his last meal with his disciples, he didn't impress them with extravagant miracles they would never forget. He washed their feet.

If you want people to show up at events, it is the foot-washing inclusion of church communication details that will get them there.

One more thing

After you've carefully done the foot-washing work of detailed communication, take time to pray for the Lord's blessing on the event. No matter how hard we've worked, asking that the Holy Spirit help draw hearts to the event, that no conflicts interfere in people's lives and that everyone comes who should come. Pray for the leaders and organization of the event and that all the details work together to accomplish the Lord's goals for the event.

Then take another moment to look forward to the day when Jesus will reward you for the many "little things" you were faithful at as you included the necessary details in your church communications that connected people with an event that introduced them to Him, helped them to know Him better, and perhaps changed their eternity.



section two

Case Study

CASE STUDY: Why a church did not get the expected volunteer support needed for a successful TRUNK or TREAT



Trunk or Treat

A Fall Festival for the Whole Family
6:30-8:30 pm, October 31st

I can help with the following areas:

- ☐ Decorate the trunk of my car
- ☐ Set-up
- ☐ Clean-up
- ☐ Cooking
- ☐ Greeter
- ☐ Crowd control

Names: _____

Phone Numbers: _____

Candy Needed
(Drop off in lobby)



An modified example of a bulletin insert that was used to recruit volunteers for a Halloween Outreach. Though colorful and eye-catching, the lack of information made it less successful than it could have been.

Advertising procedure and results:

1. The insert was placed in the church bulletin for two weeks.
2. Follow up was by phone call.
3. Almost all the volunteers were people who had volunteered in years past.
4. There were not enough volunteers for the event to run smoothly. Volunteers were so busy with basic tasks, there was little hosting or guest interaction, no follow-up information was given out, no information collected for church follow-up.
5. The night itself was a success for the urban neighborhood—lots of free food and safe fun for the kids, but the lack of volunteers prevented the church from significant information gathering, interaction, or relationship building with their guests. Lots of time and money was spent for few lasting results.

The church had a large congregation to draw from and it is a caring, outreach focused church. So why did they not have enough volunteers?

.....and what to do about it

Putting on outreach events is a tremendous amount of work and for a very good reason—the eternal destiny of souls is at stake.

When things go well, we rejoice. When they don't, when we either don't get enough people to help, or we don't get the turnout we prayed for, massive discouragement and sometimes blaming and finger-pointing result. We wonder, what happened?

The reason for a disappointing turnout of either volunteers or attendees is almost always a failure to communicate effectively.

This case study will discuss what was not effective in the communication from this church that resulted in a less-than-hoped-for response of volunteers and what could have been done to get more people involved.

What was done: the bulletin insert used to recruit volunteers

The bulletin insert here (modified and details removed so as not to embarrass the church) was used to recruit volunteers for the alternative Halloween event in a previous year. The church is in an urban area and, by virtue of location alone, always gets a large turnout for a free event hosted on-site. Because of the expected turnout, lots of volunteers are needed for it to be an outreach success.



Trunk or Treat 1

A Fall Festival for the Whole Family
6:30-8:30 pm, October 31st

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- ☐ Set-up
- ☐ Clean-up
- ☐ Cooking
- ☐ Greeter
- ☐ Crowd control

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Candy Needed
(Drop off in lobby)



Three different Trunk or Treat examples: a snow scene in summer, sports fan tailgate theme, flower children with peace signs and tie dyes.

It's a great time to let your imagination go wild and have fun—not to mention allowing the true interests of church members to come out.

By explaining either on a brochure or your website and giving people concrete examples, potential volunteers will then know what to do and what it's about even if it is their first time to be part of the event.

You might even consider offering a prizes (trophies, dinner out, gift certificates) for the most creative, best sport's fan, most unusual Trunk or Treat creation.

The answer is simple: Church Bubble Syndrome

Church Bubble Syndrome is a widespread affliction among churches. It is the fog that enters otherwise spiritual and strategic thinkers when they find themselves saying things like this:

"Oh everybody knows....."

"But we've always done it that way."

These fallacies are serious and if left untreated will mean either the death or the slow wasting away of any kind of effective church outreach. How to deal with them? Let's consider them one-by-one.

The "Oh, everybody knows" fallacy

The first antidote to this fallacy is a smart smack to the side of the head (do it to yourself) and repeat:

NO, everybody doesn't know!

Let's take the flyer apart, bit-by-bit to explore what people don't know. In addition, let's look at some ways we can inform them.

1 For starters, what is "Trunk or Treat?"

"Oh, everybody knows that," may be your response, but do they? What is it specifically? Many people have not had an experience celebrating Halloween this way. Trunk or Treat a fairly recent option for Halloween.

A quick check of Google gave this definition: A *Trunk or Treat* is a Halloween event that is often church or community sponsored. People gather and park their cars in a large parking lot. They open their trunks or the backs of their vehicles and decorate them. Then they pass out candy from their trunks. The event provides a safe family environment for trick or treaters. from: <http://trunkortreat.homestead.com/>

The site then goes on to suggest various ways to decorate vehicles, what not to do, and gives ideas of what other families have done. Below are some screen-shots from the site:





2 A Fall Festival for the Whole Family
6:30-8:30 pm, October 31st

3 I can help with the following areas:

☐ Decorate the trunk of my car

☐ Set-up

☐ Clean-up

☐ Cooking

☐ Greeter

☐ Crowd control

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Candy Needed
(Drop off in lobby)



Any publication that goes out to the entire church as this bulletin insert did, is read by many people for different reasons.

Some may be deciding whether or not to volunteer; some may decide whether or not to attend; some may be visitors trying to decide what kind of a church this is.

Because of the varying needs of readers, try to be as complete as possible in every communication. Don't let the "Oh, everyone knows" fallacy keep your events from being as effective as they could be.

If you don't explain these things, you are communicating that: "all us folks who have been around the church forever know what is going on and we are just reminding the folks who are involved every year that it's time to get involved again." That unspoken message shuts out many people who may want to be involved, but are new and feel foolish not knowing. If someone considering volunteering, we need to answer these questions for them:

- What does "decorate the trunk of my car" mean in practical terms? Inside or outside of trunk? Do I wear a costume? Does someone have to approve it? Some of the previous information on Trunk or Treat helps answer these questions, but you might want to be more specific for volunteers.
- Do I provide goodies or will the church provide them?
- For all the tasks, what is the time involvement? When do I and my car arrive?
- Can I do any of these things and still bring my children?
- What does "cooking" mean? Do I cook something ahead or cook there?
- What does "clean-up" involve? How long will I have to stick around?
- What ages can volunteer for the various tasks? For example, can my teenagers be involved, or is there something going on for them?
- What does "Crowd Control" involve? Who will help if I can't "control" someone?

2 What does "A Fall Festival for the Whole Family" mean? What will we be doing?

Assuming you want people to volunteer who have not attended before, (new members, visitors to the church) you need to let them know what is going on.

Also, people seeing the handout in the bulletin may or may not volunteer, but they will be deciding if they are going to attend or bring friends. But they need to know, **what is the church actually going to do?**

- It mentions cooking, but what food is involved? Dinner or snacks? This is important to know for moms planning meals for their kids, do they make dinner that night or not?
- Are there going to be games? Music?
- What ages is it for? What activities for what ages?
- Does it cost?
- Is it just a candy handout?
- What is expected of parents?
- Are costumes allowed? Or encouraged? Some churches have guidelines on what is acceptable or not, does yours?

3 What does "You can count on me to help with the following areas" mean?



Trunk or Treat

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- ☐ Cooking
- ☐ Greeter
- ☐ Crowd control

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

5 6 **Candy Needed**
(Drop off in lobby)



There is one more significant message left out of this flyer.

It is the reminder for people to be praying for and inviting friends.

This is a fantastic opportunity to get friends to the church who might never come to a service.

The “But we’ve always done it that way.” fallacy

It’s subtle how this one works out in practice. Often this shows up not so much in what we do, but what we don’t do. Though the following items might seem little, they have a definite bearing on response rates.

4 No place for email contact for the potential volunteer.

This really is not such a little thing. You may have never asked for email before, but many people today prefer to be contacted via email. In addition to being the preferred way people like to be contacted, to send an email is often much easier for the church staff than to call. Especially if the person does not have voice mail, repeated phone calls can take a lot of time. With email also, the volunteer has a way to get back to the church office with questions, the church has a way to send reminders, and to give links to website or other resources that might be helpful to the volunteers.

5 There is no contact person listed, no name given to call or email for questions and clarifications.

Again, the unspoken message here is that “everybody knows” who to call or email, because we’ve always done it that way and they know to call whoever we always call. Not only that, there is the assumption that everyone has the church phone number and email memorized. Disagree? What else are we to assume, since these details aren’t given?

Assuming everyone knows who and the number to call may have worked when the church was much smaller, it doesn’t work in most churches today.

6 No website link, no information on the website.

Just because we didn’t need websites in the past to explain things doesn’t mean we don’t need them today.

We go to websites today for more information in every area of life from what’s on sale to a detailed explanation of the positions taken in politics. Websites are a great place to have detailed job descriptions, event descriptions, answers to questions, give directions, and provide all of the necessary information organized in such a way so that those familiar with the event can skip over it, but in enough detail so that those who are not familiar with what is happening can find answers to all their questions.

I went to the church website (printed in the bulletin this was in) and what did I find? Nothing related to this event. Not only no details about the event, but the event itself was not even listed on the church calendar on the website. Today, it is best not to publish anything until you have the information in all the communica-

What really didn't matter



Though the design of this brochure, though not overly fancy, is colorful and adequate—the design is not the communication problem requiring this case study.

The communication problem that required this case study is that the flyer does not give the necessary information needed to successfully recruit volunteers.

INFORMATION is always more important than design.

You may have noticed that I haven't said anything about design or how the brochure looked. Though we want to create eye-catching, attractive communications, we can create the most beautiful looking piece and still have it fail miserably if we don't communicate necessary information. Completely outside the information content, the particular design of the piece is usually the result of these three factors:

1. The software in use and the graphics available

Some churches have Adobe CS and use only high-end photos. Others use Word or MS Publisher and clipart, others Corel or Print Shop or some other program. Different software can give a different look to a piece, though a skilled user can make almost any software do whatever they want.

What you use to create the piece does not determine the beauty or value of the finished piece. What is always most important is how completely and clearly you communicate your message and how well people respond.

2. The culture, location, expectations of the church.

Some churches favor a homey, simple design, others have an outreach audience that expects fine art if the piece comes from the church. Again, one is not better than the other. ALWAYS design with your church and surrounding culture in mind, never just because you saw something online someone said was cool or with it or great or whatever. Also always remember that some piece that worked well for a mega-church in one part of the country, will probably look silly if you copy it exactly at your church.

In addition, the church leader often has an opinion of the style the communication pieces should have and his or her wishes should be respected.

3. The reproduction method for your piece.

If all you have is a really old black and white copier—rejoice! Some cities in the world don't have that printing power. At the same time, a black and white copier does limit your graphic choice options a bit. Simple clip art or text only works best with that sort of system. Photos will tend to blur and details will be lost.

If you have high end color reproduction machines, that expands what you can do. Photos, clip art with lots of color, colored boxes and lines all become possible—but at a cost. Don't let cost limit the number of copies you put out.

If you plan ahead, the various online printing companies (Vista Print and others) can reproduce incredible quality materials for reasonable costs and very quickly.

Color, images, and word count are unlimited on your website.

Once again, these are just the tools to carry the message. Your message is the life-change producing part of your communications and no matter what tool you have to get it out there, the Lord can use it. Make the most of what you have.

yvon prehn, www.effectivechurchcom.com

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Summary of key issues

This Case Study has analyzed an ineffective Halloween flyer and shown how the two aspects of the Church Bubble Syndrome:

“Oh, everybody knows.....”

“But we’ve always done it that way.”

kept the church from complete communication and by not communicating completely, by not filling in details or answering questions (which I went into painstaking and most likely somewhat boring detail to explain) prevented people from responding as they might have if they had complete information.

Finally, remember the stress and irreverence of people today

A reminder of the context in which we work is helpful as we close this CASE STUDY.

People today are too busy to “call the church office for more information” or to take any other action that requires additional effort. If they can get all the information they need from one piece of paper or one stop on the website, your response will always be greater.

They also do not respect the people in authority in the church as they did in the past. Sadly, that is simply part of our currently, and ever-increasing irreverent age. When special events are held at the church the result is that people won’t show up or volunteer just because someone tells them to.

In the midst of these and whatever societal changes might take place in the future, church communicators have the opportunity to be servants to their congregations, to give them as much information as possible in as many ways as possible so they might respond, grow in their faith, and by active, excited involvement in outreach events, help others come to know Jesus as Savior.

It is a tremendous amount of work, but one of extraordinary and eternal value.

Video CASE STUDY on the Trunk or Treat flyer

One of the core principles I teach in Effective Church Communications is the importance of presenting your message in as many forms of media as possible because different people learn best in different ways.

I try to follow my own advice as much as time and resources permit and that is why I've created a video version of the CASE Study you just read through on the Halloween Outreach CD.

Though it covers all the material in the written version, it also it provides useful church communication training in:

- ✓ Overall Brochure creation
- ✓ The importance of complete communication to assure congregational involvement
- ✓ A panel by panel demonstration of what to put on each brochure panel. This is often an area that is executed incorrectly. The video shows you reading order and what you need to put where.

The video lasts about 18 minutes.



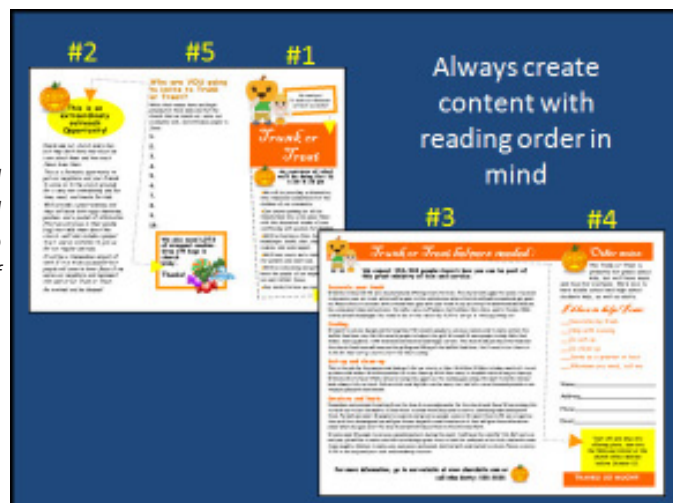
The companion CD for this book. The CD contains PDFs, templates, instruction, and several videos including this one:



This video goes through the Case Study on how to make a Halloween Trunk or Treat flyer Effective.

One of the most useful parts of it is illustrated in the flyer to the right. This image is followed by a panel-by-panel demonstration of what to put in each panel and how to make the most of it by following reading order.

The CD is available from:
www.lulu.com/yvonprehn





section three

the Gospel

THE most important message for all the steps of communication for the holidays and for everyday: the GOSPEL



The reason Effective Church Communications exists is to help you and your church, “fully fulfill the Great Commission,” to “go into all the world and make disciples of Jesus.” I’ve put together this group of holiday resources for you as church communicators because I believe that is what you want your church to be able to do.

I’m doing this, not because I just happen to think it’s a good idea or a nice philosophy or a way for your people to use God as their partner to help them get rich and happy here on earth. I do it because I believe the Bible when it says that a day is coming when every person will stand before God.

At that time, nothing you have accumulated or accomplished on earth will matter. No experience you’ve had, good or bad, will count for anything. All that will matter on that day is whether or not you have a personal relationship with Jesus and if you have one, what did you do with the tremendous message Jesus gave you to share.

That may not be a currently politically correct statement, but it is what the Great Commission is all about. People laugh when someone makes the statement, “It’s not the Great Suggestion,” but it really isn’t a matter to laugh about. Most of things with which we occupy our days will one day pale in comparison with what we did to obey Jesus and fully fulfill the Great Commission.

The following resources are a tiny attempt to help you explain what the Gospel means and to encourage you to make the Gospel message part of every publication you create. Included are:

- Apologetic Resources about the Resurrection of Jesus, the core belief of Christianity and the reason we have a gospel message
- Web resources for exploring the Christian faith
- Some examples from churches on how they explain what it means to become a Christian. If you have others, please send them to me at yvonprehn@gmail.com—I’d love to create a longer PDF with lots more.
- Two essays from I wrote to explain the gospel, one from my website entitled, “the Gospel” and the other one, “Have you closed with Jesus” that comes from my book, *The Heart of Church Communication*.

Feel free to take any of these pieces, excerpt and modify them as ways to share the gospel in any of your outreach communications.

It is wonderful to get people into your church and to attend special outreach events, but that attendance counts for little if you do not use these events as stepping stones on the way to heaven.



WEEK 17

HAVE YOU CLOSED WITH JESUS? SOMETHING TO CONSIDER IF CHURCH COMMUNICATIONS SEEMS IMPOSSIBLY DIFFICULT

And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. So whoever has God's Son has life; whoever does not have his Son does not have life.

(1 John 5:11, 12 NLT)

Not all people who sound religious are really godly. They may refer to me as 'Lord,' but they still won't enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The decisive issue is whether they obey my Father in heaven. On judgment day many will tell me, "Lord, Lord, we prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name." But I will reply, "I never knew you. Go away."

(Matthew 7:21-23 NLT)

My sheep recognize my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them away from me. (John 10:27-28 NLT)

IF YOU'VE READ THE SELECTIONS OF THIS BOOK IN ORDER and if you have been doing church communications work for any time at all, you may have one of two responses. Either the words here have been an encouragement and a challenge to your in your work as a church communicator or perhaps they seem empty and your job remains a frustration.

If your job seems a constant frustration, beyond any solutions in technology or work setting, I would be remiss if I didn't ask you to take a few minutes to examine your personal relationship with Jesus. Church communications is ultimately and at its core communication about Jesus. Unlike other kinds of communication work, you will have a hard time doing church communications work if you don't know Jesus. Knowing him, listening to our shepherd's voice, is essential if our work is to pass the test of eternal value and to be bearable as we do it day-by-day. But how can we be sure if we have this kind of a relationship with Jesus?

Please now, take a few minutes by yourself, without distractions, to read this section and think about it.

One way to evaluate your relationship with Jesus

Evangelists in the past used a term that we don't often hear today when they would ask, "Have you closed with Christ?" Their use of the term "closed" was taken from real estate back then and they used it just as we do today. You can look at a house, walk through it, admire it, want it, even invest time in getting a loan on it, but until you "close" on it, the house is not yours.

What happens when you close? On closing, only then does the house then become truly, legally yours. For that closing to take place, you have to give up something, usually a considerable amount of money, and you have to make a commitment to keep investing in the house for it to one day be yours completely.

No analogy is ever perfect, but this is a pretty good one to explain what it means to know Jesus personally. You can look at Jesus from far away, you can even get up close, perhaps visiting or regularly attending a church to examine his teachings. You might even work at a church and do communications work in his name. But unless a personal transaction takes place, unless you know Jesus personally and he knows you, you haven't "closed" with him.

That act of closing with Jesus is a serious commitment. That closing takes place between you and God, in prayer where you admit your

sins have kept you from God and you recognize that Jesus death on the cross paid a penalty for those sins that you could not, and you ask that Jesus become the forgiver and leader of your life.

The cost of the transaction

If you do that you have closed with Jesus and you move into a eternal relationship with him. Though there is no monetary cost to this transaction meaning there is nothing you can do to earn or deserve a relationship with Jesus, at the same time before making that closing transaction, the Bible does encourage you to count to the life cost. The Bible is clear that the cost involved in closing with Jesus is that you now turn over the control of your life to Him: your priorities, your time, your focus, your decisions are now all to be under the leadership of Jesus. You aren't asked to make monthly payments (though giving regularly to your church and those in need is an expectation of all Christians), but you are required to give up your time regularly in the study of God's Word, in prayer, and in service to your world in the name of Jesus. In return the Christian receives much more than an earthly house that will deteriorate —the Christian is promised an eternal home in heaven and on earth peace, strength, and joy for whatever life God gives.

I'm bringing this up because at this point in this book, because as I've said earlier, doing Christian communication work is one of the hardest jobs imaginable and to last in it, you need every resource available in Jesus. You have to have a personal relationship with Jesus for his strength to flow through you to do this work; you must be on good terms with him to do it happily. Our relationship with our God is personal—more than a theology or belief system or set of rules—one with much more, but no less than the personal qualities of a relationship with an earthly friend.

If you have not closed with Jesus, count the cost of following him and if you are prepared to commit your life to him, close with Jesus by praying the prayer that follows.

A prayer of “closing” with Jesus

Dear Jesus,

I admit that though I’ve known about you for a long time, I’ve kept you at arm’s distance. I don’t want to do that anymore. I admit that I need forgiveness for things I have done. I realize that in coming to you I acknowledging that you died on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins and I want you to come into my life and be my forgiver and leader. I realize that in doing this I turn over the control of my life and eternity to you and I pray you’d help me to live a life that is worthy of you. Thank you for your salvation and for being willing to have a personal relationship with me for all eternity. Amen.

If you sincerely prayed that prayer, welcome to the family of God! More than ever before you will have Jesus beside you as you do your work for him. Be sure to read your Bible every day and go to a church that preaches the Bible and you will grow and experience the reality of a friendship that will never end.

Evaluate your ongoing relationship with Jesus

If you are in a relationship with him, how is it? We take time to evaluate our human relationships and it is very important to give time and attention to our relationship with Jesus. Is it the happy, peaceful time you want it to be? Is a bit of resentment festering? Talk about it to Jesus. Is there sadness inside you that you don’t feel will ever end? Share it. Have you forgotten to be thankful for the blessings of food and shelter that so many of our brothers and sisters around the world are without? Catch up on your thanks. Do you forget he wants to help you in every detail of your life? Invite him to share this moment.

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” the apostle Paul said (Phil 4:13, KJV). Now that your relationship is right with Jesus, charge into your day in his strength.

Outreach and Faith Resources Page

Following is a great website for Gospel Tracts (how to become a Christian) to include in any Outreach Event PR, holiday event or take home materials after the event:

The American Tract Society, www.ATStracts.org

PLEASE Go to this website! Wonderful materials: tracts related to all the holidays, current movies, all sorts of tracts appropriate for all ages.

Websites for those exploring the Christian faith

[Ten Reasons to Believe](http://www.rbc.org/rtb/), <http://www.rbc.org/rtb/>

An excellent site to explore the Christian faith in detail. Contains a number of lists including: Ten reasons to believe in life after death, Ten reasons to believe in Christ rather than religion, Ten reasons to believe in the Bible

[Christian Research Institute](http://www.equip.org/), <http://www.equip.org/>

This is a rather intense site. For someone seeking questions about the Christian faith, it goes into great detail and depth. For someone wanting to explore other religions and with questions about the Christian faith, truth and error, this is an invaluable site.

[Who is Jesus?](http://www.equip.org/) <http://www.equip.org/>

Part of the Campus Crusade for Christ site, it tells in video form the life of Jesus.

[Need Him](http://www.needhim.org/) <http://www.needhim.org/>

This site approaches questions about the Christian life from the perspective of various life stages.

[Campus Crusade for Christ](http://www.ccci.org/) <http://www.ccci.org/>

Lots of information for those exploring the Christian life and for those who want to live it.

Websites for those wanting to grow in the Christian faith

[Ten Action Steps for a New Christian](http://www.rbc.org/rtb/), <http://www.rbc.org/rtb/>

A simple, yet vitally important list of the actions important for a new Christian, with clear explanations.

[Our Daily Bread](http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb.shtml), <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb.shtml>

A wonderful daily devotional for both new and more mature Christians.

[Radio Bible Class Ministries](http://www.rbc.org/), <http://www.rbc.org/>

There are a wealth of resources on this site for growing in your Christian life. There are Bible reading plans, articles on finding a church, answers to many questions people have about the Christian faith.

[OnePlace.com](http://www.oneplace.com/), <http://www.oneplace.com/>

A very fun site and educational site. This site contains the links to many Christian radio stations. You can listen to your favorite radio preachers live here and can download messages.

[The Bible Gateway](http://bible.gospelcom.net/), <http://bible.gospelcom.net/>

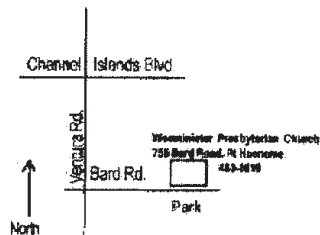
Look up any version of the Bible, in many languages and copy and paste it into your studies or to read later. One of my favorite Bible study tools.

[The Blue Letter Bible](http://www.blueletterbible.org/index.html), <http://www.blueletterbible.org/index.html>

A classic site of free Bible study tools: commentaries, maps, all sorts of study guides.

Sample Gospel Presentations to use in bulletins, postcards, any publications.

We invite you to join us for Christmas Season Sunday Services and Children's programs 10 am every Sunday in December. Stay for goodies afterwards—we look forward to meeting you!



At Westminster Presbyterian, we are here to help you find out about God and to grow as a Christian. Please join us on Sunday mornings at 10 am to learn more!

Even if you can't come to church, please remember that the message of Christmas is that God came to earth in the form of a person—Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus grew up not only to become the greatest teacher and miracle worker the world had ever seen, but to die a unique death.

In His death, Jesus was not a victim of evil men. Jesus willingly gave up His life and died on the cross so that He could pay the penalty for our sins.

The story doesn't end with His death. Jesus rose from the dead and demonstrated that He was God.

When we believe that Jesus died for our sins and we accept the forgiveness He offers us, and decide to follow Him, Jesus promises to give us eternal life.

If you'd like your sins forgiven; if you'd like to be at peace with your God; if you'd like to live forever, tell Jesus you are a sinner and you need His salvation. Ask Him to come into your life to be your Savior and Lord.

After you do that, please read the Bible to learn how to live as a Christian. Talk to God daily in prayer. Go to a church and get to know other followers of Jesus and grow in your faith.

The example to the left here was used on a postcard inviting people to a Christmas series of sermons and a candlelight service.

The example below came out of a church bulletin.

It doesn't take much space to share our most important message.

Create your own! Below are some summary Bible verses that outline God's plan of salvation.

Humanity's situation:

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Hebrews 9: 27 Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.

God's solution

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,[1] that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in[1] Christ Jesus our Lord.

How to respond:

John 1:12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God

Romans 10: 9 If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

God's promise:

1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

Revelation 3:20 [Jesus is speaking] Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

Are you sure of your relationship with God?

You can be if you follow God's instructions on how to have a right relationship with Him. Here is what to do:

1. Admit that you have rebelled by not following God's perfect law (Romans 3:23; I John 1:9).
2. Believe that Jesus is God's only son, and that his death and resurrection is the only possible payment for your rebellion (John 3:16; Romans 3: 23-26).
3. Ask Jesus to take the penalty for your rebellious actions (sins) so that you can be declared right with God (Romans 10:9; John 1:12).
4. Commit to place God first in your life by studying and obeying God's truth in the Holy Bible (I Timothy 3:16,17).

In order to have a right relationship with God, pray through the steps above and then commit yourself to grow in your new Christian life by daily talking to God in prayer and reading the Bible.

The meaning of “the Gospel”

a personal message from Yvon Prehn, www.ministrycom.com

In my seminars, I frequently talk about “the gospel.” I encourage participants to put a gospel presentation on the back of all outreach materials, postcards, and door-hangers. I suggest always including a gospel message in your church bulletins; I’ve got a page in my seminar handouts that contains sample, short, gospel presentations.

What am I talking about?

As a dear lady reminded me after my seminar recently, not every church denomination uses the term “the gospel”, or uses it in the way I do and to many it is somewhat confusing. For some “the gospel” is a specific part of their church service or a reading at a specified time. Others understand the term as a short hand way of saying “this is how you can become a Christian.”

Realizing there are many meanings attached to the term, in the interest of clear communication, let me explain what I mean by “the gospel.” I’ll give you my explanation of it and then I’ll refer you to some additional resources that may be helpful.

The gospel is GOOD NEWS

Good news. That is the dictionary definition of the term “gospel.” The question that then needs to be answered is, of course, “what is the good news?”

The best answer to that question is in the Bible, where John 3:16 tells us that: “God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

The good news is that God didn’t sit up in heaven watching humanity make a mess of their lives and their world. He did something about it with extraordinarily important implications for people both now and for eternity. Let’s look at our situation and what God did in more detail.

Without God, making a mess of our lives is pretty much what we do. We might look OK on the outside, but inside, in our quiet moments we are aware of a big empty place. When we’re all alone we suspect we’re missing out on a wonderful destiny that we were created for.

Inside, we know we were created to live forever. I think in every heart we know there is a place where all dreams can come true, where we will find forever perfect love, but somehow we also know we can’t ever get their on our own. So we try to build a heaven on this earth with money and stuff and toys—but the toys grow old and the dreams turn to nightmares.

We also know at the end of this life, if we face death without God, eternity is frightening.

What do we do then?

We might try to reach up to God, but just being a good person and trying to do all the right things never feels like enough. Just doing good and feeling good always feels like it falls short because it does.

The problem is that we can’t ever do enough good because the problem is inside us—it’s our inner core that wants our own way and not God’s. That is what sin is all about and from that wanting our own way, we turn away from all that is good. Every sin, from a selfish lie to save our reputation, to a theft or murder to get what we want—it all results from going away from God.

The problem is we were born sinners and we can’t make the sin inside go away on our own. Most of us can barely avoid chocolate for 24 hours; or exercise regularly or any other resolution we make, let alone stop sinning.

It gets even worse because God takes sin very personally. God can’t allow sin into His presence. Sin separates people from God, not only in this life, but for all eternity.

The hard part

There is one other part of the gospel story that is very hard to understand, and I can’t pretend to explain why, but God tells us that sin isn’t something He can just ignore. He can’t say, “Oh, it’s all right. . . I know you had a hard time on earth, or a dysfunctional family, or whatever other excuse we might use, but let’s just forget it all and welcome to heaven anyway.”

I wish He was like that, but He’s not. Somehow in the whole plan of things (which again, I cannot explain) sin, big or little, that turning away from God, has to be punished. When people say, “my will be done,” God says OK, for all eternity you don’t have to have anything to do with me. But once you decide that, (and the Bible tells us that

humanity as a whole decided that is the direction they wanted to take a long time ago) there is no going back, there is no way on our own we can get back to God. The consequences are pretty grim: a life never truly fulfilling though it may be filled with lots of stuff here on earth. And then you die. The Bible describes life after death without God as a place of never ending regret and suffering. It's not a party with the other guys who raised hell together in life. In the real hell you are completely alone with regrets that can never be resolved.

That's what makes the gospel GOOD NEWS

Here is where the good news starts. In this situation, where we can't do anything to save ourselves, where the future looks really grim without God, it says that God loves us and didn't abandon humanity when we turned our backs on Him.

Immediately after Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden and went their own way from God, God first stated their punishment, and then immediately said that he would one day provide a savior to bear that punishment.

It sometimes seems (from a human perspective) that God takes an awfully long time to work things out and the good news of the gospel is one of those things. The story of that outworking is the story of the Christian Bible—the Old Testament looking forward to the day that Jesus would come, the New Testament telling the story of his life, death, resurrection and the start of the Christian church.

Because of the death of Jesus on the cross, because the Bible tells us that at that time all of the sin of humanity past, present and future was poured out on Jesus and he took the penalty of all that sin on himself, in a way also very hard to understand, we can be forgiven. That is the heart of the good news of the Gospel.

This good news is a gift

It's rather amazing to consider all God did in history to prepare the world for his Son, all Jesus did in his life on earth and all he suffered dying on the cross, for us. The Bible says that Jesus, who personally never sinned, was willing to take on the horror of all the sins of humanity, past, present and future and to endure them for us. Think for just a moment about a horrible sin, something that makes you sick to even consider. Imagine what it would be like if you forced to bear the guilt and penalty of that sin.

How unfair! You'd respond and that's true. No one deserves to pay for the sins of someone else. But multiply the horror of that countless times over. That is what Jesus did. He took our place on the cross and bore the penalty for our sin. It wasn't fair, but He did it because He loves us.

The next move is up to us

It's even more amazing that God doesn't force anything on us, he always gives us free will, freedom to choose or reject this good news. It is our choice. There several options for your response.

One, you can choose to reject it all. If so, that is your choice, but I would encourage you to keep an open mind, to keep checking out the Christian faith. On the Faith Resources page, explore some of the links, ask questions. God is never insulted by an honest seeker, so keep seeking.

Two, you feel you need more information. That is a great position to be in. To become a Christian is a very serious commitment. You need to understand what it means and what your obligations and responsibilities will be. Please go to the Faith Resources page for links that will help you in your exploration.

Third, if you feel that you understand this message and that you would like Jesus to become the Forgiver and Leader of your life, you can ask Him to do that. I'll explain that in more detail in a minute, but before you do that, you need to carefully consider what you are doing. This is not simply a fire-insurance policy to escape the possibility of hell and then for you to go on living your life any way you want. When you ask Jesus to forgive your sins you are doing business with the Creator of the universe. It is not a step to be taken lightly. The Bible says that He gave His life for you and if you want His salvation, you must give your life back to Him.

That means, you are no longer in charge. You need to talk to your Savior daily in prayer. You need to read the Bible every day to find out how He wants you to live (below I've got some useful links to help you get started in doing this). You need to find a good church where you can become involved with other members of the family of God and where you can grow in your faith. You will want to get baptized in a church as a sign that you are now a follower of Jesus. You will make mistakes, you'll stumble and fall, but when that happens, you can ask forgiveness, get up and go on.

If you become a follower of Jesus, your life will not suddenly become easy and wealthy and trouble free. The TV preachers who promise this are not telling the truth. The Bible (which is the only source of truth) tells us that Jesus promised, "In this world you will have troubles" but he also said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world!" Life is seldom easy as a Christian, but as a Christian, you are now assured that your troubles have a purpose and that some day they will be over and you are assured of heaven where there will be "no more pain, tears or death."

If you are ready to commit your life to Jesus, either out-loud or in your heart, you can pray something like this:

**Dear Jesus,
I confess that I am a sinner and that I have chosen to live my life apart from you. I believe that Jesus was God, that He came to earth, died on a cross and rose from the dead to pay the penalty for my sin. I am now committing my life to You and asking You to be my Forgiver and Leader. Help me to learn to pray, to read your Bible, to find a good church and to follow through on my commitment to you by publicly acknowledging my decision in baptism. Thank you for loving me and coming into my life. Amen.**

If you have made that decision, ***Welcome to the family of God!***

The Bible tells us that when someone becomes a Christian they have passed from death to life and that the angels in heaven are rejoicing. Just think—right now angels are singing because of you!

To help you get started in your Christian life, please check out these websites below. They will be very helpful to you. I would love to hear from you if you have made the decision to trust Jesus as your Forgiver and Leader. Email me: yvonprehn@aol.com and I'll have some additional encouragements to send you.

Websites for those wanting to grow in the Christian faith

Ten Action Steps for a New Christian, <http://www.rbc.org/rtb/>

A simple, yet vitally important list of the actions important for a new Christian, with clear explanations.

Our Daily Bread, <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb.shtml>

A wonderful daily devotional for both new and more mature Christians.

Radio Bible Class Ministries, <http://www.rbc.org/>

There are a wealth of resources on this site for growing in your Christian life. There are Bible reading plans, articles on finding a church, answers to many questions people have about the Christian faith.

OnePlace.com, <http://www.oneplace.com/>

A very fun site and educational site. This site contains the links to many Christian radio stations. You can listen to your favorite radio preachers live here and can download messages.

The Bible Gateway, <http://bible.gospelcom.net/>

Look up any version of the Bible, in many languages and copy and paste it into your studies or to read later. One of my favorite Bible study tools.

The Blue Letter Bible, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/index.html>

A classic site of free Bible study tools: commentaries, maps, all sorts of study guides.

FAITH

A Matter of FAITH

What do you think it takes for someone to get to heaven? Is it luck? Good deeds? Nothing at all? Or is there something more? The Bible has the real answer to this question. It's a matter of FAITH.

F stands for FORGIVENESS. We cannot have eternal life without God's forgiveness. Ephesians 1:7a says, "In Him (Jesus Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins."

A is for AVAILABLE. Forgiveness is available for all. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." But forgiveness is not automatic. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven," says Matthew 7:21a.

I is for IMPOSSIBLE. It is impossible for God to allow sin into heaven because of who He is and because of who we are. God is loving and just, but His judgment is against sin. James 2:13a says, "Because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful." We are sinful people. Romans 3:23 tells us, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

T is for TURN. To turn means to repent. We can repent—or turn—from our sin and from ourselves. "But unless you repent, you too will all perish," Luke 13:3b says. We can also turn to Someone. Trust Christ alone. Romans 10:9 tells us how: "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

H is for HEAVEN. Heaven is eternal life. Here, that means life "to the full:" "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full (John 10:10b)." In the hereafter, it means the promise of heaven: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am (John 14:3)."

So how can a person have God's forgiveness, heaven and eternal life, and Jesus as personal Savior and Lord? By trusting in Christ and asking Him for forgiveness. Take the step of faith described by another meaning of FAITH: Forsaking All I Trust Him.

You do this through a simple prayer reflecting your desire for Christ to change your life. You don't need fancy words—only an honest heart. You can pray something like this:

Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner and have displeased You in many ways. I believe You died for my sin, and only through faith in Your death and resurrection can I be forgiven. I want to turn from my sin and ask You to come into my life as my Savior and Lord. From this day on, I will follow You by living a life that pleases You. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for saving me. Amen.

Accepting Christ is just the beginning of a wonderful adventure with God! Get to know Him better in a number of ways:

- **Follow Christ's example in baptism.**
- **Join a church where you can worship God and grow in your faith.**
- **In your church, get involved in Sunday School and Bible study.**
- **Begin a daily personal worship experience with God where you study the Bible and pray.**

A SINNER'S PRAYER TO ACCEPT JESUS AS SAVIOR

Dear Heavenly Father:

I come to You in the Name of Jesus. Your word say, "...him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out" (**in John 6:37**). So, I know You won't cast me out, but that You will take me in, and I thank You for it.

You said in Your Word, "for whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved" (**in Romans 10:13**). I am calling on Your Name, so I know You have saved me now.

You Word also said, "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart, man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (**in Romans 10:9, 10**).

I believe in my heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I believe that He was raised from the dead for my justification, and I confess Him now as my Lord, because Your Word says, "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; I do believe with my heart. I have now become the righteousness of God in Christ (as it says in **2 Corinthians 5:21**), and I am saved!

Thank you Lord!

Signed by: _____

Date: _____

We must receive Jesus as Saviour and Lord, then we can know peace!

*"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."
John 1:12*

*"That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."
Romans 10:9*

We receive Christ by a personal invitation...

Will you receive Jesus?

Here's how to do that...

1. Admit that you are a sinner
2. Be willing to turn from those sins
3. Believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose again for you.
4. Pray to invite Jesus to come into your life

You can pray something like this...

Dear Jesus,

I know that I'm a sinner and I need you to forgive me. I believe that you died on the cross for my sins. Please come into my heart. I want to follow You as Lord of my life.

In Jesus' Name,
Amen

If you sincerely prayed this prayer, you have His assurance that He is now in your heart and life.

*"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."
Romans 10:13*

*"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast."
Ephesians 2:8-9*

"He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

1 John 5:12-13

What Now??

To grow in your new relationship with Jesus,

- Read your Bible daily to get to know Him
- Talk to God in prayer daily
- Go to church to fellowship and learn more about God

**Do
You
Want
to
Know
Jesus?**

New Life Church

It seems that today people are looking for peace and fulfillment in their busy lives. Did you know that you can have that? Jesus says:

*"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."
(John 10:10)*

You can know for sure that you have eternal life.

*"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."
(1 John 5:13)*

No amount of good works or personal effort can earn a place in heaven for you. It is not earned or even deserved.

*"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast."
(Ephesians. 2:8-9)*

We have all sinned....

We must first acknowledge that we have sinned. We are all sinners. Sin is disobeying God. It includes things like lying, cheating, evil thoughts, immoral behaviour and more. Our sin separates us from God.

*"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
Romans 3:23*

The penalty for sin is death (separation from God). We cannot save ourselves from this.

*"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
Romans 6:23*



Jesus is the only way to God...

People try in their own efforts such as living a good life or religion.

*"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
John 14:6*

God has bridged that gap that separates us from Him. God's Son, Jesus, died on the cross and rose again from the grave. Jesus paid the penalty for our sins Himself.

First, he died in our place...

*"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
Romans 5:8*

Second, He rose from the dead...

*"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep."
1 Corinthians 15:3-6*

And, third, He is the only way to God...

*"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'
John 14:6*

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

Below is a brief summary of how a person becomes a Christian. Study each of the Scriptures in your Bible.

1. **You are a sinner.** Romans 3:10, 23
2. **Your sins separate you from God.** Romans 6:23a; Isaiah 59:2
3. **God loves you & Jesus died for you.** Isaiah 53:4-6; John 3:16; Luke 19:10; Rom. 5:8-10
4. **You must receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior.** John 1:11-13

HOW TO RECEIVE JESUS AS YOUR LORD AND SAVIOR

1. **Believe in Jesus** John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8-10. *(Belief is faith, trust, dependence, reliance upon Jesus alone for your salvation.)*
2. **Repent of your sins.** Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31; II Peter 3:9 *(Repentance is a change of the mind caused by a sorrow for sin & leading to a reformation of life.)*
3. **Confess Jesus before men.** Matthew 10:32-33; 16:15-16; Romans 10:9-10 *(Confession is a public acknowledgment of your faith in Jesus.)*
4. **Be baptized into Christ.** Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-5; I Peter 3:21 *(Baptism is immersion in water of a repentant believer in Jesus.)*
5. **Live a Christian life.** Acts 2:42; Matthew 6:33; Revelation 2:10b *(Christian living is allowing Jesus to control your everyday life.)*

HOW TO GROW AS A CHRISTIAN

Once a person becomes a Christian, he begins a process of spiritual growth that will continue the rest of his life. One verse of Scripture gives a good summary of how the early Christians grew in their faith. Read Acts 2:42.

1. **Bible Study.** They listened to, studied and obeyed what the apostles taught. For us, that means we should read, study and obey the Bible, especially the New Testament.
2. **Fellowship.** The Bible word for fellowship means “sharing”. They shared together with other Christians in times of public worship and study. They shared their material possessions in support of the church and the poor. They shared their lives with one another.
3. **Communion.** They partook of the Lord’s Supper on a regular basis (at least weekly). This reminded them that Jesus died for them.
4. **Prayer.** They communicated with God concerning every area of their lives.

HOW DO I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

Receiving Jesus Christ as your personal Savior is the most important decision you or anyone else will ever make. If you have never made this commitment, please allow us to share Jesus Christ with you and show you how you can receive eternal life and have a personal relationship with our Heavenly Father.

The Bible is very clear, we all must:

REALIZE that heaven is a free gift and that it cannot be earned nor is it deserved. Ephesians 2:8 & 9 states "For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is a GIFT of God NOT OF WORKS lest any man should boast."

ADMIT you are a sinner, that you cannot save yourself, and that God, although merciful, is also just, and must, therefore, punish sin. Romans 3:23 states "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." and John 14:6 "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes, to the Father, but by me (JESUS)."

UNDERSTAND who Jesus Christ really is; the God-man who died on Calvary's cross as your personal substitute. He paid the penalty for your sin. John 3:16 states: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

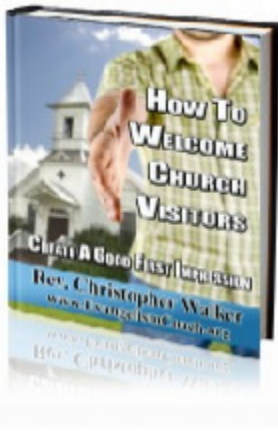
TRUST in Jesus Christ ALONE. Acts 16:31 states "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved..." Romans 10:9 states "That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shall be saved."

REMEMBER that Satan may cause you to doubt this decision but rest in God's promise. John 6:47 states "Verily, Verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me has everlasting life."

Additional resources for sharing the gospel

For additional information on sharing the gospel this time of year as well as year round, here are two additional resources. Please check out both websites, each one of them contains a goldmine of resources that will make your outreach at Halloween, and any time of the year, more effective.

The Evangelism Coach, Chris Walker www.evangelismcoach.org



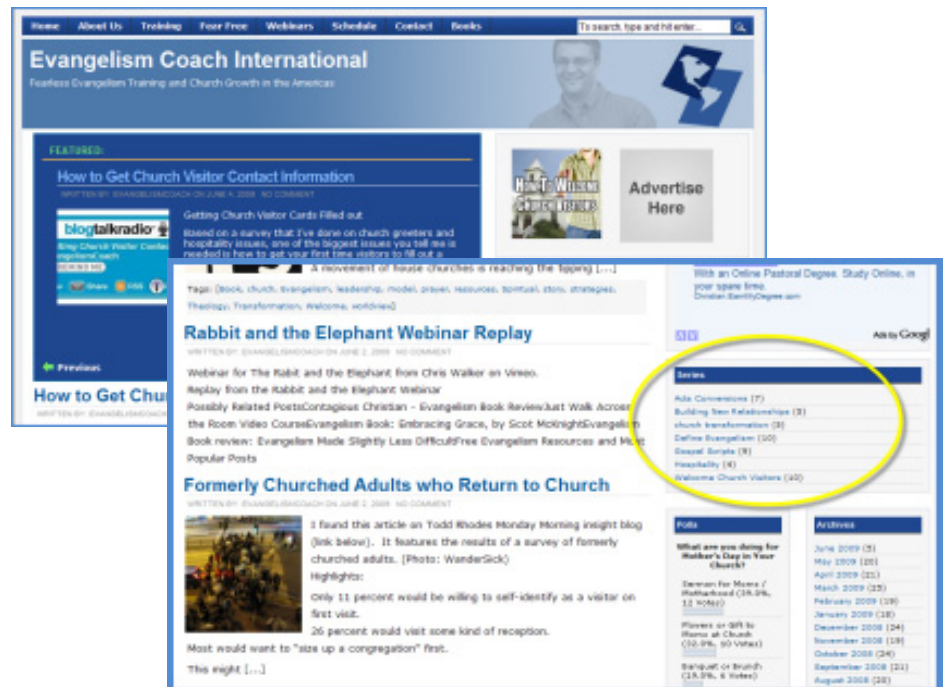
Chris Walker's site and his book on church hospitality will help you make lasting connections with the people who come to your church following your Halloween Outreach events.

Be prepared and have your people trained so that your hard work in outreach is not destroyed by hospitality missteps.

Chris Walker is a missionary, pastor, teacher, writer, blogger who pours out interviews, tips, ideas, links, lessons—all to enable people to be more effective witnesses to their world.

There is a wealth of practical ideas on this site. Please note his material on greeters and church hospitality. It's important to have your hospitality procedures in place before you begin outreach because the best advertising, church marketing, publications, and outreach are instantly destroyed if people come to your church and are met by grouchy, unfriendly church members.

Chris has lots of helpful articles on church hospitality on his site and his book, *How to Welcome Church Visitors*, should be a must-read as you prepare your team for fall.



<http://www.evangelismcoach.org/series/evangelismscripts/>

Though there is so much that is useful on this site, this section on gospel scripts is invaluable for personal review and for training your people. In addition there are many other resources on this site, so check out the bars and lists on the right-hand margin of the website to find them.

Internet Evangelism Day

www.internetevangelismday.org

Don't let the title limit your thinking about this site. Though it does make one day of the year a time for special focus on internet evangelism, this site is a goldmine of tools to enable you to effectively use the internet for evangelism.

Prior to your specific content for Halloween and fall outreach, take some time to go through his checklist for your church website to see how evangelistically effective you are now. Most church websites could greatly improve this area and the site has 70+ tips that will help.

The internet is constantly growing in importance in people's lives. PLEASE don't put your internet ministry into the category of "oh we'll work on the website when we have time to do it," and then never update the home page or have anything on it that appeals to unchurched people. If you are sincere about fall outreach, your website must match your intention. People will check out your website before they come to your church—make sure it represents a welcoming face to them. Jump into this site anywhere for tips on how to be more effective as an internet evangelist.

Internet Evangelism Day
seizing the potential

the web evangelism resource guide
an & annual worldwide focus day for Christians

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Internet Evangelism Day
A resource for churches, Bible Colleges, groups and individuals because ...

... over 1 billion people ... the Internet ... God is using ... "We'd like to see you ..."

Internet Evangelism Day
what God is doing ... outreach strategies ... how you, your church ...

Church websites that reach non-Christians
Help for church webmasters

Church websites are an essential part of local churches' public profiles to their communities. Indeed, in some parts of the world, church websites draw more people into face-to-face church activities than any other method. Church sites outnumber all other types of Christian sites by a ratio of 5 to 1. Church sites could therefore be powerful outreach tools. However, research reveals a discouraging picture:

- most church sites are written purely for their members, using 'religious insider' content style and religious language.

70+ tips for effective church sites
Design and build a website to reach the community

"A church is the only organization that exists primarily for the benefit of non-members"
- William Temple

"Week in, week out, more visitors turn up at our church on a Sunday because of the website, than anything else"
- King's Church, Kingston UK: a church site design using these principles

Making church sites into evangelistic tools

Though the title of this sites refers to one day as a focus for internet evangelism, the site itself is a goldmine of resources that will enable your church to be effective internet evangelists all year round.

You must take the time to be sure your website is welcoming to non-Christians if you want to use it effectively in your Halloween outreach.

You can have great resources, but if your home page is full of insider churchy jargon and your navigation doesn't make sense, people might not find the words that can change their eternity.



section four

PDF Gallery

Halloween outreach materials and how to use them

On the Halloween Outreach CD, all of these pieces are available both in PDF format and in editable MS Publisher format.

You need MS Publisher to edit the materials, but for the PDFs you can print them up as is and then on the back you can add your own personalized church information. Feel free to take any idea, text, whatever you want, and modify it any way you'd like to use it to reach people this Halloween.

I have also included the text of various items on the CD in MS Word files.

For most of the pieces there are at least 2 versions, one using clipart, one using photos. I either got permission to use the photos, got them off of completely free to use www.morguefile.com or used clipart that came with MS Publisher and is available to anyone. Feel free to use whatever images you'd like.

Motivational Church Bulletin insert:

This piece can be given out to people prior to Halloween as a way of encouraging them to invite their friends to the various events sponsored by your church. It encourages people to use this holiday when people are thinking about life and death issues (even in a funny way) as a bridge to get them involved in your church and looking for real answers to the challenges of life and death.

It acknowledges that sharing your faith can be scary, but encourages people to simply bring their friends to the Halloween outreach event. It reminds them that bringing friends to Jesus is what the disciples did.

We can't all be fearless evangelists, but we can all be courteous inviters.

You could also make up a little flyer with this and pass it out or you could put a PDF on your website or take the text, modify it and put it on your website.



A reason to be part of our Halloween Event—it's a way to share your faith that isn't scary

Halloween is all about getting scared—for real or make-believe—with ghosts, spiders, witches, and scary faces all around. But as scary as Halloween is, there is something even scarier for many church people and that is sharing their faith.

Deep down inside, most believers feel they ought to be doing more to let people know about the joy of salvation in Jesus, but at the same time, many would rather meet a real ghost or walk through a pit of live slimy creatures than share their faith with a neighbor.

Why is this so scary?

Every individual has his or her own reasons, but I find much of the fear comes from mistaken ideas about "witnessing" that are no more true than the masks worn on Halloween.

The false boogeyman version of faith sharing for many involves going up to a total stranger and asking "Are you saved?" or some similar question and then painfully going through a short tract or little memorized presentation.

Please don't misunderstand me here. There is nothing wrong with that approach if you are comfortable doing it, but many of us are of somewhat more timid temperament and would welcome an alternative method.

A non-scary way to share your faith

One alternative to the above described confrontational method is to simply invite people to come to an event where they can meet Jesus.

That's what the disciples did. With the exception of Peter, we don't have a record of any of them preaching—maybe it was scary for them also. What they did was bring people to Jesus: Andrew brought Peter; Phillip brought Nathaniel; Matthew invited his friends to a party to meet Jesus.


Simply bringing people to Jesus at a church event—that's not scary. Pray that once they meet him and his people that they will continue the journey to know him personally and to trust him as forgiver and leader.

Bringing people to Jesus—that's what our fall celebration is all about. Details for the upcoming event are on the back of this sheet.

Invite your friends to join us. We promise—no scary stuff, but an incredible opportunity to bring friends to an event where they can begin to know Jesus, the savior, who can remove all our fears forever.



Version #1 of a motivational Church Bulletin insert.



A reason to be part of our Halloween Event—

It's a way to share your faith that isn't scary.

Halloween is all about getting scared—for real or make-believe—with ghosts, spiders, witches, and scary faces all around. But as scary as Halloween is, there is something even scarier for many church people, and that is sharing their faith.

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Every individual has his or her own reasons, but I find much of the fear comes from mistaken ideas about "witnessing" that are no more true than the masks worn on Halloween.


The false boogeyman version of faith sharing for many involves going up to a total stranger and asking "Are you saved?" or some similar question and the painful going through a short tract or little memorize/drop presentation.

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A non-scary way to share your faith

One alternative to the above described confrontational method is to simply invite people to come to an event where they can meet Jesus.

That's what the disciples did. With the exception of Peter, we don't have a record of any of them preaching—maybe it was scary for them also. What they did was bring people to Jesus: Andrew brought Peter; Philip brought Nathanael; Matthew invited his friends to a party to meet Jesus.



Simply bringing people to Jesus at a church event—that's not scary. Pray to those they meet in and let people that they will continue the journey to know him personally and to trust him as forgiver and leader.

Bringing people to Jesus—that's what our fall celebration is all about. Details for the upcoming event are on the back of this sheet, for a wonderful, fun, non-scary time for everyone.

Version #2 of a motivational Church Bulletin insert.

The only difference with the previous one is in the images used and spot color. I gave you two versions so you can use the one that works best with your print reproduction system. Photos work well for high end, full color reproduction; clip art works better for spot color or lower quality black and white printing systems.

My OIKOS prayer list

The people I am praying for and asking that the Lord will give me opportunities to share gospel resources with them and that they will attend our Halloween Outreach events:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.
2 Peter 3:9

A prayer list for the back side of the inserts

This prayer list reminds people to pray for their OIKOS. OIKOS is a Greek term that means household and the application for congregations is that you are not responsible to win the whole world to Jesus, but you can share with the 8-15 people you are closest to. Call attention to this list, have people fill it out and remind them to be praying and inviting.

Heartfelt involvement of your people in inviting their friends is the most effective form of outreach you can do.

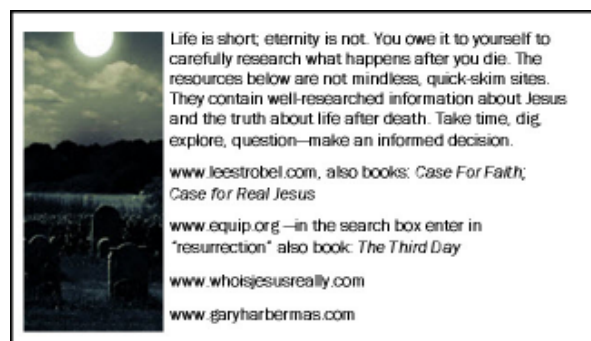
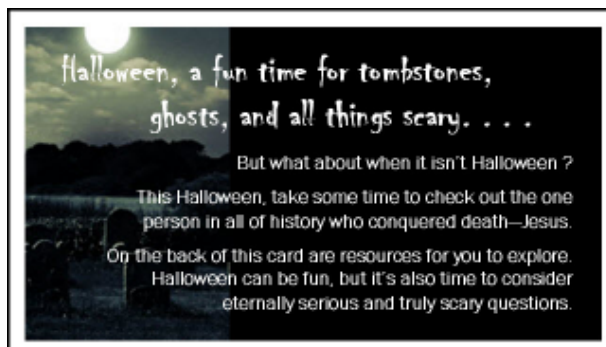
Church Halloween Invitation cards

These are business card size invitation cards—make up LOTS of these to give to every member of your congregation.

In the PDF section, you can print out the sheets of the cards and then personalize on the back. There are also MS Publisher templates where you can modify the text.



This one is more of a business card size gospel tract. You could either use what I have on the back or make up your own gospel/apologetics resources or links.



A sample brochure from the CASE STUDY

I'm not really sure if you will want to edit this or use any of it for your own event. I designed it as a teaching tool primarily. Please watch the CASE STUDY that goes through step-by-step why the material in it is in it and why it is placed where it is placed.

It gives you a good idea of the extend of information you need to include to make certain that you get enough volunteers for a Halloween outreach event.

I am including the MS Publisher file as well as the PDF in case you want to play around with it or use some of the text.

One little production note: if you go into the MS Publisher file, notice how I modified the width of the columns and changed the margins from the MS Publisher file. Though Publisher has some wonderful templates, their brochure ones have margins that are far too narrow and look silly. Wider ones not only allow you to place more content, but look much better when printed.



We need you!
To make our Halloween outreach successful!

Trunk or Treat

An overview of what we'll be doing Oct. 31 6:30-8:30 pm:

- We will be providing a free, alternative Halloween Celebration for the children of our community.
- Our church parking lot will be transformed into a fun place filled with the decorated trunks of cars filled with goodies for children.
- We'll also be doing a super hot-dog, hamburger, chips and soda supper.
- We'll have music and a relaxing area for parents and older kids.
- We'll be welcoming, hosting, getting to know the people of our neighborhood; we want reflect Jesus.
- See inside for how you can help.



This is an extraordinary outreach Opportunity!

People see our church every day, but they don't know how much we care about them and how much Jesus loves them.

This is a fantastic opportunity to get our neighbors and your friends to come on to the church grounds for a very fun, interesting and fun time, meal, and treats for kids.

We'll provide a great evening and they will leave with happy memories, goodies, and a packet of information about us and place in their minds (big) their love for Jesus about the church, we'll also include a prayer book, and an invitation to join us for our regular services.

It will be a tremendous amount of work if it is to be successful-but people will come to know Jesus if we serve our neighbors and represent Him well at our Trunk or Treat.

Be involved and be blessed!

Who are YOU going to invite to Trunk or Treat?

Write their names here and begin praying for these kids and for the church that we reach out, serve our community well, and introduce people to Jesus.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

We also need LOTS of wrapped candies. Drop off bags in church lobby.

Thanks!

We need you!
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We will be providing a free, alternative, free, Halloween Celebration for the children of our community.

Our church parking lot will be transformed into a fun place filled with the decorated trunks of cars overflowing with goodies for children.

We'll be having a free, hot-dog, hamburger, chips, soda, chips, cookies, and soda supper.

We'll have music and a relaxing area for parents and older kids.

We'll be welcoming and getting to know the people of our neighborhood; we want reflect Jesus.

See inside for how you can help.



Trunk or Treat helpers needed:

We expect 350-500 people-here's how you can be part of the great ministry of love and service:

Decorate your trunk

We'll be having 30-40 cars decorated with things for kids. The church will supply the spray. You need to decorate your car trunk, which will be open to the community where there will be a lot of good things. Please decorate in a way that is safe and fun for kids. If you have a lot of things to put in your trunk, please put them in a bag and bring them to the church. We'll have a lot of things to put in your trunk. We'll have a lot of things to put in your trunk. We'll have a lot of things to put in your trunk.

Cooking

We want to have a super hot-dog fest! We need 10 people to serve hot dogs and to make a lot of the hot dogs. We'll have a lot of things to put in your trunk. We'll have a lot of things to put in your trunk. We'll have a lot of things to put in your trunk.

Set-up and clean-up

This is the job for the church and church set-up. We'll have a lot of things to put in your trunk. We'll have a lot of things to put in your trunk. We'll have a lot of things to put in your trunk.

Decorate and help

We need a lot of things to put in your trunk. We'll have a lot of things to put in your trunk. We'll have a lot of things to put in your trunk.

Other notes:

The Trunk or Treat is a free, fun, and safe event for everyone. We'll have a lot of things to put in your trunk. We'll have a lot of things to put in your trunk. We'll have a lot of things to put in your trunk.

I'd love to help! I can:

- Decorate my trunk
- Help with cooking
- Do set-up
- Do clean-up
- Serve as a greeter or host
- Whatever you need, call me

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Drop off and drop into offering plate, into the Mission Center or the church office before October 15.

THANKS SO MUCH!

For more information, go to our website at www.churchsite.com or call Miss Betty: 555-5555

Church outreach postcard

You could personalize this for your church on the back and use it as an outreach piece to get people thinking and then to invite them back to your church or to your church community for outreach events after Halloween that would explore the issues of life, death and the resurrection of Jesus.

You could also put links on the back to sections on your website that answer questions about life, death, the Christian faith, and any other Halloween-related issues.



Text on the bottom of this card:

We can laugh at death when it's part of a Halloween spook house, but we don't laugh when it touches someone we love or when we must face it.

This Halloween, take some time to check out the one person in all of history who conquered death—Jesus. His resurrection is the key belief of the Christian faith and what makes Jesus unique among religious leaders.

On the back of this card are events, websites, and other resources for you to find out more. We invite you to be part of activities at our church or you can check facts online and in private. Take time, ask questions, research the answers.

Halloween might be a fun time, but seeking serious answers to life-changing subjects is always important.



Event Sign-In card

Use this to collect information about your guests at your Halloween event and then you'll have a way to follow up with them via email, postcards and other ways in the future.

For these and the cards on the next page, the CD has both the PDFs and MS Publisher editable files.

Event Sign-in Card and Door-Prize registration

 We are so glad you're here! Please take a minute to fill out this card so that you can be entered into our door-prize drawing and so that we have a record of your attendance and a way to contact you about future events for your children. Be assured this information will not be shared or used outside the church office and you can have your names removed from the list at any time by calling the church office.

Parent's name _____

Names of children and ages _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____



 **Event Sign-in Card and Door-Prize registration**

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Parent's name: _____

Names of children and ages: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email _____



Card to give to folks as they leave

Always give people something as they leave an outreach event that tells them what you want them to do next.

On the back of this card, put details about your church and more about the wonderful ministries you offer.

Create a special section on your website that answers questions and directs them to it.

***YOU can also put this into their packets as they come in, into bags they will use to collect goodies, so that they are sure to get it.



Thanks so much for joining us!

We hope you had a great time!

If you did, we want you to know that this event is just a little sample of how much we care for and value children at our church.

We invite you back this Sunday and every Sunday for a program more valuable than a bag of goodies!

On the back of this card you'll find the details of what we do on a regular basis at our church, plus information about our church, our children's ministry, and who to contact for more information.

**See you again
SOON!**





Full size copies

The following section contains full size reproductions of the editable templates on the CD. If you get the downloadable version of this book, you can just run off and reproduce this from the PDF pages.

You have my permission to do that from the printed book also, but they will be second generation in black and white and probably won't reproduce that well.

I strongly recommend you get the CD to be able to edit the publications and get the best quality of printing.



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Deep down inside, most believers feel they ought to be doing more to let people know about the joy of salvation in Jesus, but at the same time, many would rather meet a real ghost or walk through a pit of live slimy creatures than share their faith with a neighbor.

Why is this so scary?

Every individual has his or her own reasons, but I find much of the fear comes from mistaken ideas about “witnessing” that are no more true than the masks worn on Halloween.

The false boogeyman version of faith sharing for many involves going up to a total stranger and asking “Are you saved?” or some similar question and then painfully going through a short tract or little memorized presentation.

Please don't misunderstand me here. There is nothing wrong with that approach if you are comfortable doing it, but many of us are of somewhat more timid temperament and would welcome an alternative method.

A non-scary way to share your faith

One alternative to the above described confrontational method is to simply invite people to come to an event where they can meet Jesus.

That's what the disciples did. With the exception of Peter, we don't have a record of any of them preaching—maybe it was scary for them also. What they did was bring people to Jesus: Andrew brought Peter; Phillip brought Nathaniel; Matthew invited his friends to a party to meet Jesus.

Simply bringing people to Jesus at a church event—that's not scary. Pray that once they meet him and his people that they will continue the journey to know him personally and to trust him as forgiver and leader.

Bringing people to Jesus—that's what our fall celebration is all about. Details for the upcoming event are on the back of this sheet.

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Halloween Celebration
for your entire family!

details on the back...



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A decorative background featuring a large, glowing orange pumpkin on the left side, surrounded by several smaller, stylized autumn leaves in shades of orange, yellow, and brown. The overall tone is warm and festive.

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Halloween..

Fun time for
tombstones, ghosts, and
all things scary...

But what about when it isn't Halloween ?

We can laugh at death when it's part of a Halloween spook house, but we don't laugh when it touches someone we love or when we must face it.

This Halloween, take some time to check out the one person in all of history who conquered death—Jesus. His resurrection is the key belief of the Christian faith and what makes Jesus unique among religious leaders.

We invite you to be part of activities at our church or you can check facts online and in private. Take time, ask questions, research the answers.

Halloween might be a fun time, but seeking serious answers to life-changing subjects is always important.

On the back of this card are events, websites, and other resources for you to find out more.



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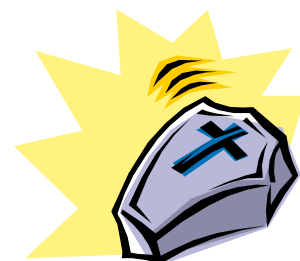
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Halloween might be a fun time, but seeking serious answers to life-changing subjects is always important.

Event Sign-in Card and Door-Prize registration



We are so glad you're here! Please take a minute to fill out this card so that you can be entered into our door-prize drawing and so that we have a record of your attendance and a way to contact you about future events for your children. Be assured this information will not be shared or used outside the church office and you can have your names removed from the list at any time by calling the church office.

Parent's name

Names of children and ages

Street Address

City, State, Zip

Phone

Email



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Thanks so much for
joining us!

► We hope you
had a great time!

If you did, we want you to know
that this event is just a little
sample of how much we care for and
value children at our church.

We invite you back this Sunday and
every Sunday for a program more
valuable than a bag of goodies!

On the back of this card you'll
find the details of what we do
on a regular basis at our
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our church, our children's min-
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See you again
SOON!



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This is an extraordinary outreach Opportunity!

People see our church every day, but they don't know how much we care about them and how much Jesus loves them.

This is a fantastic opportunity to get our neighbors and your friends to come on to the church grounds for a very non-intimidating and fun time, meal, and treats for kids.

We'll provide a great evening and they will leave with happy memories, goodies, and a packet of information (that we will place in their goodie bag) that tells them about the church, we'll also include a gospel tract, and an invitation to join us for our regular services.

It will be a tremendous amount of work if it is to be successful—but people will come to know Jesus if we serve our neighbors and represent Him well at our Trunk or Treat.

Be involved and be blessed!

Who are YOU going to invite to Trunk or Treat?

Write their names here and begin praying for them daily and for the church that we reach out, serve our community well, and introduce people to Jesus.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

We also need LOTS of wrapped candies. Drop off bags in church lobby.

Thanks!



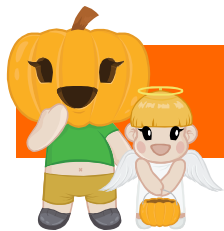
We need you!
To make our Halloween outreach successful!

Trunk or Treat



**An overview of what we'll be doing Oct.31
6:30-8:30 pm**

- We will be providing a alternative, free Halloween Celebration for the children of our community.
- Our church parking lot will be transformed into a fun place filled with the decorated trunks of cars overflowing with goodies for children.
- We'll be hosting a free, hot-dog, hamburger, beans, slaw, chips, cookies, and soda supper.
- We'll have music and a relaxing area for parents and older kids.
- We'll be welcoming and getting to know the people of our neighborhood; we want reflect Jesus.
- See inside for how you can help.



Trunk or Treat helpers needed:

We expect 350-500 people—here's how you can be part of this great ministry of love and service:

Decorate your trunk

We'd like to have 30-40 cars decorated and offering treats for kids. The church will supply the candy. You need to decorate your car trunk, which will be open to the central area where the kids will walk around and get goodies. Please dress in costume, with a theme that goes with your trunk if you can; <http://trunkortreat.homestead.com>, has some great ideas and pictures. No really scary stuff please, but hobbies, fairy tales, sports themes, Bible stories are all encouraged. *You need to be at the church by 5:30 to set up in the big parking lot.*

Cooking

We want to serve a burger and hot dog feast! We need 6 people to serve as runners and to make certain the buffet food lines stay full. We need 6 people to help at the grill. We need 10 more people to help folks find tables, clean up plates, refill lemonade and be all around happy servers. The church will purchase the food and the church food team will oversee the grilling and filling of the buffet food lines. *You'll need to be there at 5:30 for final set-up and to start the final cooking.*

Set-up and clean-up

This is the job for the movers and shakers! *Set-up starts at 5pm.* We'd like 15 folks to help—mostly it's to set up chairs and tables. We'd like another 20 to do clean-up. With that many, it shouldn't take us long to clean up. We'd also like to have 5 folks who are roving tidy uppers as the evening goes along. We want to be like Disneyland—always tidy, no trash. Kids are kids, and big folks can be messy too, but let's serve them and provide a continuously pleasant environment.

Greeters and hosts

Remember everyone participating from the church is an ambassador for the church and Jesus! We are doing this to reach out to our community, to love them, to show them Jesus and to start a continuing relationship with them. Formally we need: 10 people to register and greet as people come in. We want them to fill out a registration card for a drawing and you will give them a bag with some literature in it that will give them information about what else goes on at the church and will introduce them to the Christian faith.

We also need 20 people to serve as wandering hosts during the event. You'll have the colorful "Ask Me" vests on and your job will be to make sure folks are having a great time, to look for confused or lost kids, deal with sometimes naughty children, to make sure everyone is welcomed, chatted with, and invited to return. *Please come by 5:30 to be assigned your task and wandering location.*

For more information, go to our website at www.churchsite.com or call Miss Betty: 555-5555.



Other notes:

The Trunk or Treat is primarily for grade school kids, but we'll have music and food for everyone. We'd love to have middle school and high school students help, as well as adults.

I'd love to help! I can:

- ☐ Decorate my trunk
- ☐ Help with cooking
- ☐ Do set-up
- ☐ Do clean-up
- ☐ Serve as a greeter or host
- ☐ Whatever you need, call me

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Tear off and drop into offering plate, turn into the Welcome Center or the church office anytime before October 15.

THANKS SO MUCH!!!

To get the most from this book, you need—

The companion CD: Halloween Outreach

To save yourself HOURS of work, the
CD contains:

Print-ready PDF files

Editable templates

Videos to watch and share



The following pages show thumbnails of all the
contents of the CD.

Available at www.lulu.com/yvonprehn

price, only **\$19.95**

*******more than worth the time it will save for you not
having to create your own materials!**

The CD comes with permission to pass on and make copies of anything in it for your church, volunteers, folks associated with the church for print, web, however you wish to use it for outreach, with my encouragement and blessings--no need to buy more than one copy.



Contents of the Halloween Outreach CD

PDFs

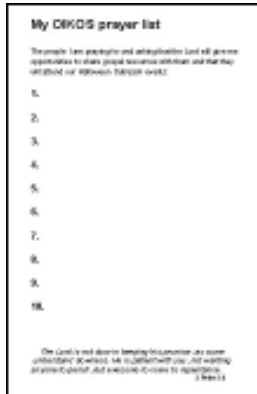
These thumbnails of the PDFs are not to scale. In addition, depending upon the publication, most of the PDFs actually have multiple files on the page: 2, 4 or 10. Each PDF also has an editable MS Publisher file for it, labeled MSPUB and then a number that cooresponds to the PDF number.



PDF 1 BInsertclipart



PDF 2 BInsertphoto



PDF 3 OikosPrayerList



PDF 4 InviteCardFun



PDF 5 InviteCardFun2



PDF 6 InviteSeriousFront



PDF 7 InviteSeriousBack



PDF 8 PostcardClipart



PDF 9 PostcardPhoto



PDF 10 SigninClipart



PDF 11 SigninPhoto



PDF 12 PleaseReturnClipart



PDF 13 PleaseReturnPhoto



PDF 14 TrunkorTreatBrochure

Contents of the Halloween Outreach CD

MSPub-

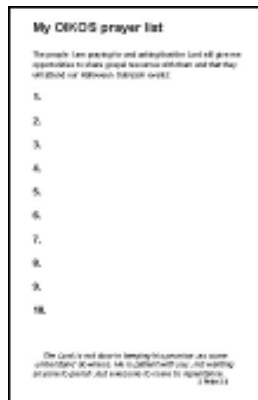
These thumbnails are of MS Publisher Files on the CD. Each one of these has a PDF file on the CD that is the same number. If you don't have these fonts, you'll need to substitute others. "Chilller" is the Halloween font used.



MSPub 1 BInsertclipart



MSPub 2 BInsertphoto



MSPub 3 OikosPrayerList



MSPub InviteCardFun



MSPub InviteCardFun2



MSPub 6 InviteSeriousFront



MSPub 7 InviteSeriousBack



MSPub 8 PostcardClipart



MSPub 9 PostcardPhoto



MSPub 10 I'm sorry, for this one I could not get a release of the clipart for template use, (PDF, OK) so it is not included, modify below with your clipart if you don't want the photo version.



MSPub 11 SigninPhoto



MSPub 12 PleaseReturnClipart



MSPub 13 PleaseReturnPhoto



MSPub 14 TrunkorTreatBrochure

Misc. files

MS Word Files

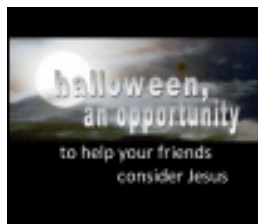
MSWord 1 Text for the serious invitation card and postcard

MSWord 2 Text for Trunk or Treat redone Case Study Brochure

Videos: the ones here are MP4 files. They are all also found on www.YouTube/yvonprehn if you prefer to link to them rather than use from the CD. You have my permission to use these however you want.



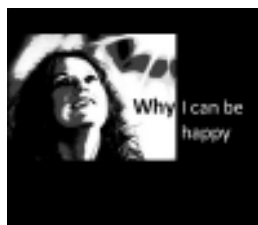
Vid 1 Motivation to invite



Vid 2 Motivation to invite, a little more serious



Vid 3 this one is for seekers, to consider Jesus



Vid 4 Also perhaps for seekers, but not necessarily for Halloween

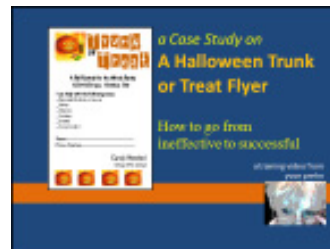


Vid 5 Quick overview of Publications on the CD

Teaching videos: these videos are in the WMV format and the first two are only available on this CD.



Vid 6 VERY Important to watch--gives an overview of Halloween Outreach



Vid 7 Case Study Goes over in detail how to take a brochure that was not very effective and turn it into an informative, successful communication.



Vid 8 An overview of all the communications and how to use them.



CASESTUDY PDF

I included this so if you want to follow along with a written version while watching the video, you can.

This book is not on the CD, but I **STRONGLY** recommend you buy the paperback version for the articles and many other resources that will make your Halloween ministry more effective. Paperback BOOK & CD were created to go together. Available at www.lulu.com/yvonprehn



