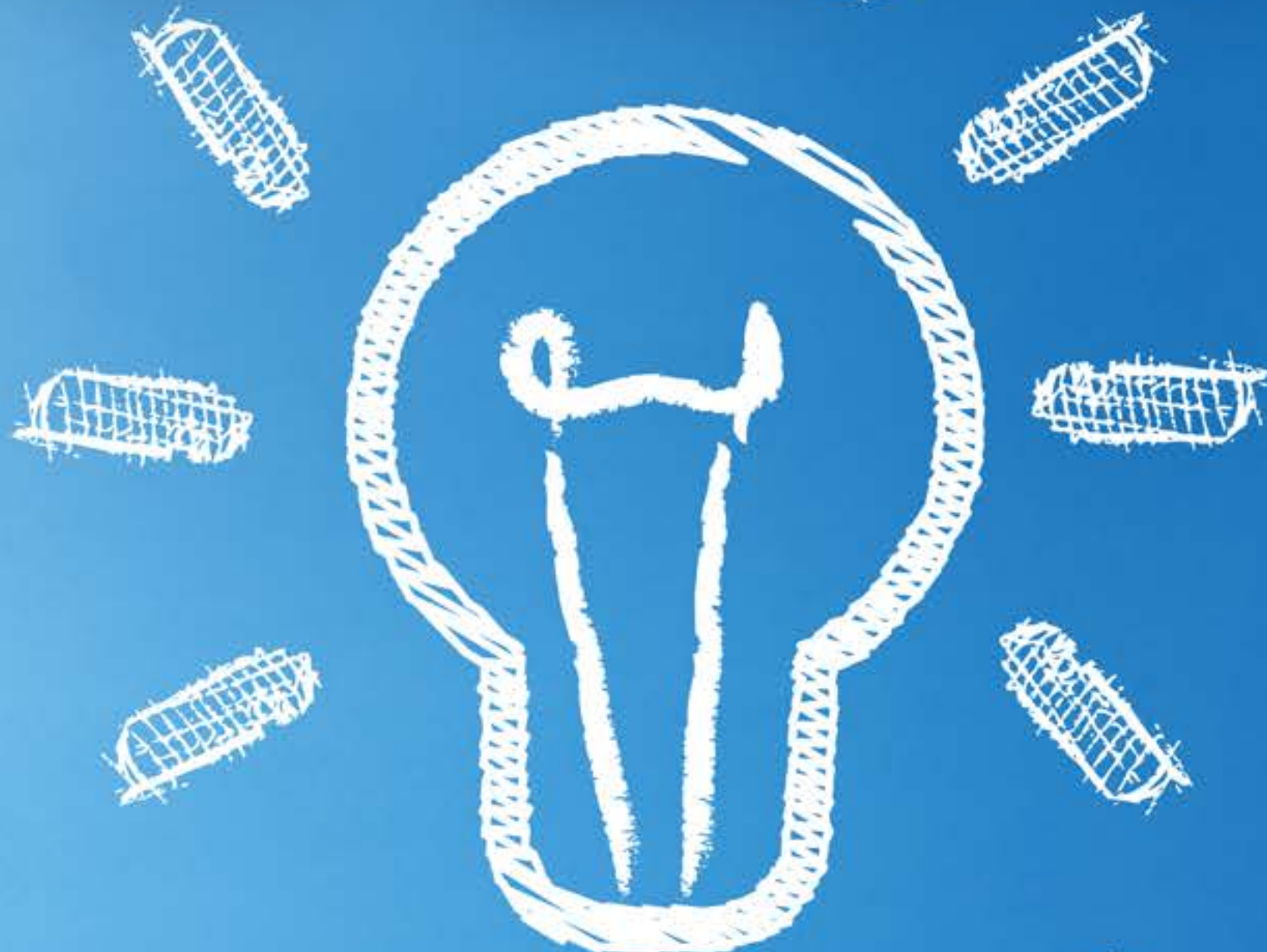


BIG IDEAS



an
OUTREACH
MAGAZINE
ebook

An in-depth
guide for thinking
outside of the
"big" box.



FOR SMALL CHURCHES

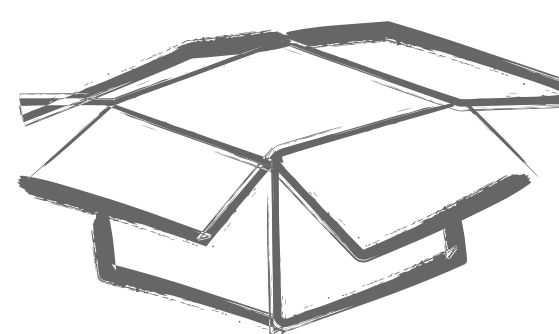
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Introduction

Thank you for downloading this Outreach Magazine resource.

This ebook was created with a very specific purpose in mind: to help small churches think outside of the big box. While this resource focuses on small church ideas, in no way does it imply that there is anything inherently right or wrong with any church size. Whether your church is micro, mega, or somewhere in between, it's important.



The following ebook intends to deliver fresh ideas to help small churches and address the unique set of problems they face.



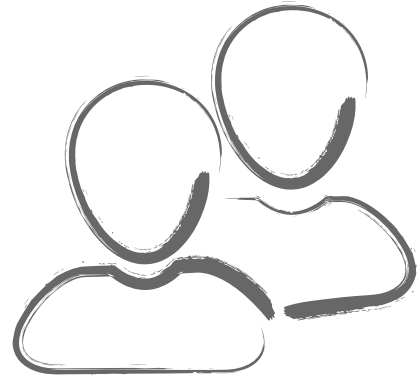
Rudy Kovac
-Outreach Magazine

What is a small church?

Before we can address problems and ideas for small churches, we must be able to clearly identify what makes a church 'small.'

Attendance?

Some feel uncomfortable talking about tracking attendance. The concept of treating people as numbers can feel a bit awkward. Truth be told, there are great insights to be learned and almost everyone does it. So what is the attendance of a small church? Less than 20? Or perhaps less than 200?



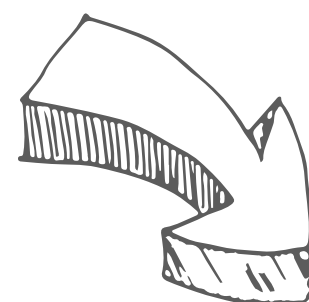
Building?

Similar to attendance, talking about building and facility sizes can be a sensitive subject. It's true, some people categorize a church size by the size and quality of its facilities. Does a church have to meet in living rooms to be considered small? Does having a dedicated mortgage mean your church is no longer small?



Money?

Surely if classifying a church by its attendance or facility doesn't work, then categorizing based on how much money flows through the church will work. In order to be a small church do you need to struggle financially?



A Small Church is...

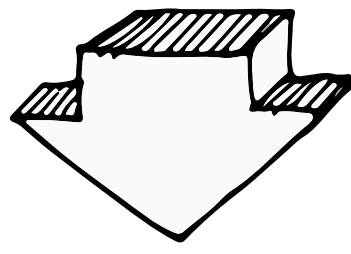
A small church is not limited by its resources; it's set free. A small church is nimble and quick. With less red-tape and fewer processes, small churches can accomplish things that no megachurch is able to try. When we adjust the perspective, we can see that small churches have everything to gain. So let's take a look at some ideas your small church can leverage to make a big impact!

Big Ideas for Small Churches

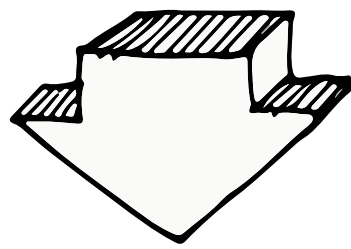
How This eBook Is Arranged

This eBook is split into 5 major categories.

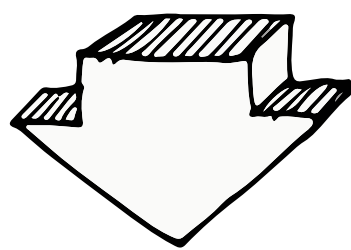
Outreach



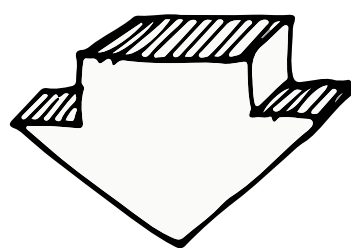
Location



Fellowship



Technology



Fundraising

While there are obviously many small church topics to discuss, these 5 topics were carefully selected to impact the most common issues among small churches. Feel free to jump to areas important to your small church, but be aware they work better together.



Outreach Ideas

It's no surprise that small churches have limited budgets. Many small churches stay small because they think they can't bankroll outreach efforts. When finances are limited, it forces your church to get a little more creative. The true benefit is that inexpensive outreach offers tend to have the most heart.



Get Dirty

Many small churches have been able to get the word out and show love by rolling up their sleeves and doing a little dirty work—literally.

Chores may change during the seasons of the year, but they never go away. Many small churches have been able to show their city love by planting flowers, cleaning up trash, washing cars, or mowing grass in nearby neighborhoods. In the chilly months, shoveling driveways of snow or scraping ice from windshields are just as effective. Of course, always ask beforehand and make sure to have information cards on hand.

Stay current on events and timing throughout your community. For example, offer to help new students move into the dorms, or find their way around town. Keeping your ear to the ground for events like this will open many opportunities for your church to reach out.

Caring for your community in these simple but effective ways will open dia-

logue and allow your church to share your message. Your actions speak louder than your words, and only once people see your actions are they willing to hear your words. Helping others also helps you and your volunteers strengthen your faith. Many great churches were planted firmly through these meaningful gestures.



Leverage Your Congregation's Strengths

Small churches have the unique gift of being able to know the congregation on a very personal level. Your congregation is a powerful workforce with a variety of unique skills. Let the congregation know that they can reach the community with their skill—not just their wallets.

Look inward at your church and you will likely find mechanics, teachers, designers, accountants, and more. Offer tutoring for students, design work for local businesses, or help during tax season. Look inward and find your church's unique set of skills and let your community see what your church is all about.



Brainstorm List: Outreach

- 1 Family movie nights
- 2 Super bowl parties
- 3 Music concerts
- 4 Block parties
- 5 Start a sports team
- 6 Pass out Bibles
- 7 Seasonal festivals
- 8 Halloween alternatives
- 9 Christmas nativity
- 10 Public Easter egg hunt
- 11 Community garden
- 12 Hay maze/pumpkin painting
- 13 Raise money for local causes
- 14 Day camps
- 15 Senior events/day trips
- 16 Community talent show
- 17 Church yard sale
- 18 Carwash
- 19 Booth at fairs or carnivals
- 20 Plant trees in community
- 21 Grief workshops
- 22 Celebrate mothers & fathers
- 23 Election day activities
- 24 Offer gift wrapping in mall
- 25 Booth at local market
- 26 Homebound ministries
- 27 Visit nursing homes
- 28 Host public cookout
- 29 Christmas parties
- 30 Financial courses
- 31 Driving education
- 32 Publicly recognize volunteers
- 33 Honor partnerships
- 34 Acknowledge local businesses
- 35 Literacy or math programs
- 36 Substance abuse programs
- 37 Dating programs
- 38 Single parent aid
- 39 Special needs programs
- 40 Organize vigils
- 41 Health screenings
- 42 Dietary courses
- 43 Cooking classes
- 44 Book clubs
- 45 Open prayer groups
- 46 Graduate/honors recognitions
- 47 Home blessings/dedications
- 48 Personalized invitations
- 49 Clothing drives
- 50 Gather and provide food



Location Ideas

One of the largest challenges that small churches face is finding the right facilities. Finding the best place for services and events largely depends on the size of your small church.

Treat Every Space Like a Living Room

Your current space might very well be a living room—then that’s good, because you are one step closer!

Living rooms are comfortable, safe places where people spend time working through problems, growing closer, laughing, crying, talking and most importantly, finding community. No matter the size of your congregation or meeting place, always try to cultivate the earnest, loving environment of a living room.

Look Beyond the Square Footage

It’s easy to get caught up in the search for a larger, more stable church facility, but there is more to consider than just the price per square foot. Many small churches look for deals in libraries, vacant buildings, or unused conference rooms to save money. While being responsible spenders is vital, some locations may actually deliver you additional opportunities.

For example, let’s examine the secondary benefits of renting space from a local school. Of course your congregation will be pleased to find there is sufficient parking, restrooms, and elbow room. But looking past that, your church is meeting in a place that is populated by hungry children, single parents, and tired staff that all want to be loved.



Look Beyond the Square Footage Continued

Of course, you were only able to rent the space because school isn't in session, right? So let's use that small church creativity and leverage your location.



Prove your church's intentions by being the best tenant they've ever seen. Cleaning up after yourself and being courteous will be noticed and remembered.



Are you looking at the secondary benefits of your location?



Work closely with the school officials and try to get signage up. Placing a simple banner or yard sign to inform parents and staff that your church meets there will get impressions during school when you're not around.



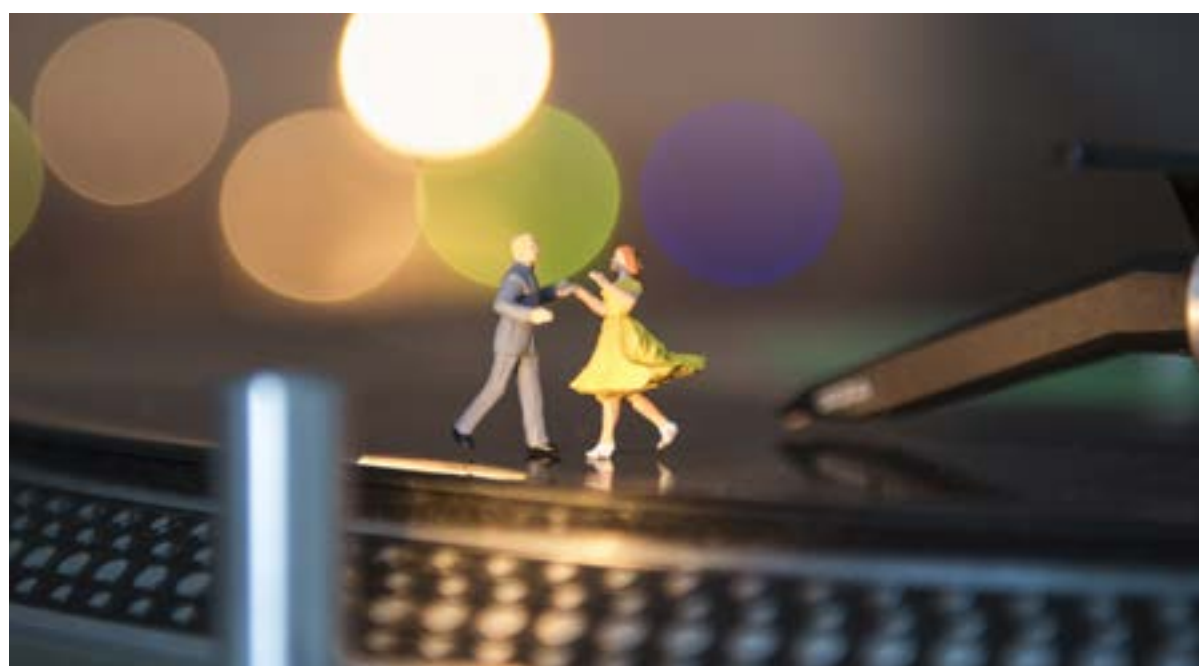
Stay connected with the activities and offer to help when possible. Volunteering to cook at school gatherings or assist with other events is a great way to build relationships with the school's staff and families.

Analyze your current and future meeting spaces to see if your location offers more than breathing room. Keep in mind that your church size isn't defined by the building you meet in—it's how you are able to utilize the tools you're given.



Fellowship Ideas

Looking outward and improving your community is vital for every small church, but you also need to invest heavily inward to strengthen your current congregation. Fellowship in your church not only improves relationships, it improves the likeliness that people will volunteer.



Date Night

Take a look inward and see what your congregation may be in need of. One common need in most small churches is a simple date night for busy parents. Finding and paying for quality childcare is not easy for many families, so why not volunteer? Not only does it show that you encourage healthy marriages, it builds trust and stronger relationships among your congregation.

Every small church is unique, and your congregation may be in need of more than a date night. Carefully reflect on people in your church and find events that will cause a positive impact.

**What is your church's
"Date Night?"**



Icing on the Cake

Building fellowship in your small church is important. Bringing everyone together makes your church worth more than the sum of its parts.

It doesn't take much imagination to view your small church as a tasty cake. You might have some eggs, flour, oil, or sugar attending your church right now. Your local community is very unlikely to enjoy any of these ingredients alone. A spoonful of flour doesn't exactly get people excited. But get your people together and mix their strengths to create something truly unique that your community can be proud of.

Fellowship makes everyone stronger, provides encouragement, and helps the growth of the church and individuals. Take some time to carefully consider what your church has done to cultivate fellowship, and what steps you can take in the future.



Brainstorm List: Fellowship

- 1 Host a church picnic
- 2 Attend sporting events
- 3 Play softball
- 4 Host a date night
- 5 Hold service at a nursing home
- 6 Attend a conference or seminar
- 7 Arrange a group bike ride
- 8 Group camping trips
- 9 Volunteer yard work
- 10 Serve at a soup kitchen
- 11 Serve as greeters or parking lot attendants
- 12 Have a whole church cookout
- 13 Start a bowling league
- 14 Play volleyball
- 15 Walk nearby neighborhoods/parks
- 16 Take a short-term missions trip
- 17 Restaurant gatherings
- 18 Help repair a home in need
- 19 Hand deliver Christmas gifts
- 20 Support/attend fellow performances
- 21 Go for a group hike
- 22 Help group members move
- 23 Rotate who hosts holiday parties
- 24 Gather for special shows/movies
- 25 Host a board game night
- 26 Have a themed party with costumes
- 27 Visit a museum as a group
- 28 Go Christmas caroling
- 29 Play soccer
- 30 Go shopping together
- 31 Celebrate birthdays
- 32 Visit members in the hospital
- 33 Host a scavenger hunt
- 34 Host an overnight prayer meeting
- 35 Attend funerals and weddings
- 36 Play basketball
- 37 Sponsor a youth activity.
- 38 Host a frisbee golf tournament
- 39 Have a church bake sale
- 40 Go canoeing or rafting
- 41 Celebrate house warming parties
- 42 Go to a concert or play
- 43 Set up an obstacle course
- 44 Play paintball
- 45 Have a pool party
- 46 Go on a prayer walk
- 47 Host a cake walk
- 48 Host a bingo night
- 49 Decorate together
- 50 Host a potluck





Technology Ideas

Technology is a big problem for small churches. Many small churches spend a significant amount of time and money on presentation software, projectors, lighting, and audio equipment. Unfortunately, many small churches overlook an integral part of their ministry—online presence.

Even Small Websites Make a Big Impression

Every church should have a website. Excuses about being too small, or not having the money are easily outweighed by the benefits a website will bring your small ministry.

10 Reasons to Have a Website

People Discover Your Church

More and more phone books are being used—as fire starters. When people are searching for a church, they look online. If your church is not where people search, you won't be discovered.

Cultivates Fellowship

Your current congregation can connect to each other through your church's website. Many ChMS (Church Management Software) solutions easily incorporate into your website, which allows your members to find and message other members within your church.

Keeps Your Congregation Current

Your church can use a website to keep everyone up to date. Websites are great for informing your congregation of special events, time changes, cancellations, prayer requests, and more. Informing your members via the website saves money and is more efficient than any paper bulletin.



10 Reasons to Have a Website Continued

4

Clearly Establish Church Values

A website allows your church to clearly state your church's values. Put your mission and beliefs in plain text for your new and current members. It is important for your church to clearly establish your church's stance.



6

Extends Lifespan of Sermons

Posting your messages and sermons on your church's website extends the life and reach of your efforts. Posting your sermons online will not only allow your congregation to study it again, it allows them to share it with others that need to hear it.

5

Reaches New Audiences

Just because your church is small, doesn't mean that your reach has to be small. You've got a great message, and your website can get that message in front of a vast audience.

7

Increases Giving

Having a website has been proven to increase a church's income. Giving your congregation an option to give from anywhere at anytime will improve giving. Your members will still be able to give even if they miss a service. Your website will also be able to accommodate people that prefer to give at different intervals than once a week.

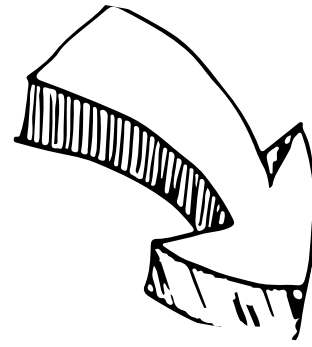


10 Reasons to Have a Website Continued

8

Always Within Reach

Your website can communicate to your church when you can't. It is difficult to accommodate everyone's schedules. Websites give you the ability to reach people outside of days of service.



9

Interact With Members

Leading a church can be time consuming. Finding time in the schedule can be a challenge. Many meetings and tasks can be quickly handled through your church's website. With a ChMS attached, you can quickly assign tasks and schedule volunteers to help with church activities. Combining a ChMS to your website allows you to send church-wide emails and notices with ease. Save time by having one central place to communicate with your congregation.

10

Gain Insights

Your website will provide invaluable insights about your church. You can learn what sermons your congregation is most interested in, where they engage, and even what time of the day they watch your sermons. Your website can help you learn more about your congregation, and how to better communicate with them.

No Excuses

Your small church will benefit greatly from having a website, or upgrading your current site. Many small churches fear they can't afford one. Luckily, there are a large number of solutions tailored specifically for small churches. Many Church Management Software and website solutions offer free editions or heavily discounted options for small churches. Having a website is far too important to ignore.



Fundraising Ideas

An obvious challenge that small churches face is a lack of finances. Let's take a look at some specific ideas to lessen money woes for small churches.

Traditional Fundraising

Small churches are often some of the most creative fundraisers. Encouraging your congregation to bring in "stuff" they would like to donate and hosting a church yard sale is a common approach. Here are some tips to improve your next fundraiser:

Tip #1

Define the Purpose

Clearly you are trying to raise funds. But your fundraiser can also serve a dual purpose. Hosting a bake sale that reaches out to honor local service men and women, or help a children's hospital can provide more than just money. Think of ways that your event can do more than just raise funds.

Track the Numbers

Tip #2

It may not be as fun as baking cakes, but you need to know the specifics of each event you host. Tracking things like attendance and money are more obvious, but don't forget to track things like setup/cleanup time that are often overlooked. Making \$500 for one sale may sound good, but that changes if it took you a month to make the items.

Tip #3

Know the Audience

Before jumping into a fundraiser, ensure that you have a specific audience in mind. Fundraisers are more effective when you intentionally invite the right people instead of leaving open invitations.

Practice First

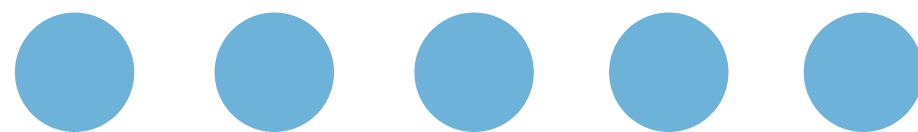
Tip #4

Fundraisers can be hectic. Reduce stress and confusion by running through a practice with your volunteers before your audience arrives. It will draw attention to areas that need to be worked on and ensure people know their roles during the real event.

Tip #5

Follow-Up

Keep in contact with people who attended your fundraiser. Encouraging people to fill out information cards will allow you to follow-up later and improve future fundraisers. Send sincere thank-you cards to show your appreciation. If people don't feel appreciated, they are unlikely to contribute next time.



Non-Traditional Fundraising



In addition to traditional fundraising, your church might want to explore some non-traditional methods. For example, set up an ink cartridge recycle kiosk. That might sound strange, and that's because it is! Offering to recycle printer cartridges does more than help the environment. Not only does a recycle kiosk promote your church, it is a low impact and steady source of income. You can sell cartridges you collect and get some green for being green!

While a recycling kiosk won't make a fortune, it's a great example of a fundraiser that requires little hands-on effort. Start brainstorming the unique solution for your church with the list below.



Brainstorm List: Fundraising

- 1 Guessing jar game
- 2 Church wide yard sale
- 3 Installing Christmas lights
- 4 Golf tournament
- 5 Host a bingo night
- 6 Sell pretzels
- 7 Summer grill-out
- 8 T-Shirt fundraiser
- 9 Rent out parking lot/building
- 10 Community cleanup
- 11 Car wash
- 12 Christmas ornaments
- 13 Host gardening event
- 14 Sell church wristbands
- 15 Build snowmen
- 16 Wreath/poinsettia sale
- 17 Recycle phones/cartridges
- 18 Host a raffle
- 19 Make/sell calendar
- 20 Silent auction
- 21 Advertise for affiliates
- 22 Food tasting
- 23 Basketball tournament
- 24 Casino night
- 25 Pancake breakfast
- 26 Dog walk
- 27 Dance-a-thon
- 28 Sell popcorn tins
- 29 Bricks for new construction
- 30 Babysitting
- 31 Rent volunteers for work
- 32 Recycle old cell phones
- 33 Magazine subscriptions
- 34 Gift wrapping
- 35 Face painting
- 36 Donation website
- 37 Walkathon pledge
- 38 Host a concert
- 39 Offer advertisement on vehicles
- 40 Flower sales
- 41 Discount card sales
- 42 Crowdfunding
- 43 Holiday caroling
- 44 Carnival
- 45 Movie night
- 46 Christmas tree removal
- 47 Collect cans/bottles
- 48 Host a talent show
- 49 Rubber duck race
- 50 Art sale



Conclusion

Small Churches Yield Big Results

Small churches are an integral part of growing the Kingdom. Thank you for working tirelessly to reach the people within your community.

There is always work to be done, and hopefully the tips and brainstorming lists in this free resource can help your small church grow stronger. If you appreciate the content you've read here, stay tuned, because Outreach Magazine works hard to keep you up-to-date with relevant articles both online and in print. We thank you again for all of your hard work, and pray that your small church is better equipped to reach your community.

Sincerely,

OUTREACH
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