

Episcopal Evangelism 101

Participant Guide and Handouts



EVANGELISM
INITIATIVES

THE *Episcopal* CHURCH 

Workshops and Resources

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Learn more about the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement: www.episcopalchurch.org

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Blessing for the Journey

Welcome!

Episcopalians are coming to understand ourselves not only as members of The Episcopal Church but as the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement. Jesus gathered people to serve the dream of God and form Beloved Communities that live not for themselves but for love of the world. Today, we're part of the ongoing movement of people who center their lives on Jesus and form loving, liberating, life-giving relationship with God, with each other, and with creation.

What Is This Training?

We invite you to think of this Evangelism 101 workshop as basic training not just for evangelism but for passionately engaging in the Jesus Movement. How will that happen?

In this gathering, we will reclaim a generous, humble, spiritual practice of evangelism.

We will honor our baptismal promises to continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers; to proclaim with word and deed the good news of Jesus Christ; and to seek and serve Christ in all people, loving our neighbors as ourselves.

We will seek to deepen relationship with the God we know in Jesus Christ, using the spiritual practice of seeking and sharing our stories of life with God.

We will learn to invite, receive and celebrate the stories of others, so they might find their own place in the Jesus Movement.

By the end of our time together, we hope you'll not only understand the idea of Episcopal Evangelism. We hope you will have experienced real joy and energy in practicing it. Welcome!

How to Use This Guide

During the workshop you will use this guide for a variety of activities and reflections. Notice the empty column space to the right, this is where you can make notes, write down questions, and doodle if needed. Later, after you have completed the workshop and returned home, we hope you will refer back to this guide as you take up your own ministry of evangelism and lead others in your church to claim it, as well. You can download any of the handouts at www.episcopalchurch.org/evangelismtoolkit.

Blessings in the ministry we share!

The Episcopal Evangelism Team

Notes

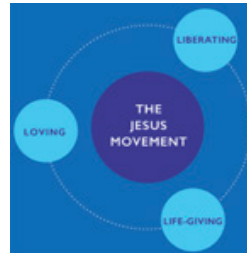
What Is the Jesus Movement?

The Jesus Movement is the ongoing community of people who center their lives on Jesus and following him into loving, liberating and life-giving relationship with God, each other and creation.

Together, we follow Jesus as we love God with our whole heart, soul and mind and love our neighbors as ourselves (*Mt. 22:36-40*), and restore each other and all of creation to unity with God in Christ (*BCP, p. 855*).

Jesus launched this movement when he welcomed the first disciples to follow his loving, liberating, life-giving Way. Today, we participate in his movement with our whole lives: our prayer, worship, teaching, preaching, gathering, healing, action, family, work, play and rest.

In all things, we seek to be loving, liberating and life-giving—just like the God who formed all things in love; liberates us all from prisons of mind, body and spirit; and gives life so we can participate in the resurrection and healing of God's world.



TRY THIS:

Begin your day by asking: How could my words, actions and heart reflect the loving, liberating, life-giving way of Jesus? Ask God to help you, especially at decision points.

At day's end, with genuine curiosity and zero judgment, ask: When did I see myself or others being loving, liberating or life-giving today? Where do I wish I'd seen or practiced Jesus' Way?

God is love, and God's very being is a trinity of loving relationship: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In Christ, God invites us to share that love; wherever there is pain or alienation, God longs to knit all people and creation back into wholeness and relationship.

As the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement, and followers of Jesus' Way, we seek to live like him. We're serious about moving out to grow loving, liberating, life-giving relationships with God (*evangelism*); to grow those relationships with each other (*reconciliation*); and to grow those relationships with all of creation (*creation care*).



TRY THIS:

Look around and notice wherever you see people nurturing relationship

1. with God
2. with each other
3. with creation

What's happening?

What's helping people to heal and live in sync with God, with each other and with the earth?

What are the fruits of these relationships?

Unpacking Episcopal Evangelism

Notes

Q1: Don't Episcopalians evangelize with our actions, not words?

A1: In the Baptismal Covenant, we make this promise:

*Will you proclaim the good news of God in Christ in word and deed?
I will, with God's help.*

Actions may speak louder than words, but we still need words to go with our actions, so people will know Jesus is the loving, liberating, life-giving force behind all that we do.

Q2: Shouldn't I leave it to the professionals and clergy?

A2: We were all baptized into this ministry, and God will give us what we need. See Luke 12: "Do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you what you ought to say." Priests and evangelism catalysts are there to equip and facilitate with the rest of us.

Q3: How will I learn to do it?

A3: The only way to get more comfortable with a new practice is to keep doing it. Read scripture and pray. Check out the resources at www.episcopalchurch.org/evangelism. Find your own words and models. Ask for grace, humility and love. Try, fail and try some more.

Q4: What if people reject me when I talk about faith?

A4: Jesus is especially present in those moments of vulnerability and rejection. Pray and ask for his abiding support. And maybe it's worth the risk of rejection, if even one person needs to hear from you that they are beloved and forgiven by God.

Q5: Isn't evangelism disrespectful to non-Christians?

A5: It is disrespectful to shove religion down someone's throat or to denounce other pathways to God. But generosity, openness, curiosity, and genuine gratitude will always be welcome. If you say, "I see God in what you just described" or "Thank you for blessing me," most people experience that as a gift. If you ask, "Have you ever had an experience of the divine in your own life?" many are eager to share their stories.

Q6: What if people think I'm like "those" Christians?

A6: Some practices make evangelism and Jesus look dominating, obnoxious, know-it-all and manipulative. Counter the bad press by sharing the story of the God you love and follow.

Defining Episcopal Evangelism

Scripture:

From *evangélion* (Greek): gospel, glad tidings or good news.

Jesus asked all his followers:

“Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.” - Mark 16:15

Tradition:

Baptismal Covenant (*Book of Common Prayer*, p. 305)

Celebrant: “Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?”

People: “I will, with God’s help.”

Prayer after Communion (*Book of Common Prayer*, p. 387)

“... Now send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ our Lord.”

An Outline of the Faith (*Book of Common Prayer*, p. 855)

Q: What is the mission of the church?

A: The church’s mission is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry:

“Evangelism – as part of the Jesus Movement – is about sharing the journey into a deeper relationship with God and with each other, and not about us controlling the end result. It’s not increasing our market share, and it’s not just propping up the institution. If we believe the relationship with a living God does matter, and that loving relationship with each other matters, then evangelism and anything that helps us to come closer as human children of God matters.”

Practical Description of Episcopal Evangelism

(from Evangelism Initiatives Team & Task Force on Leveraging Social Media for Evangelism)

We seek, name and celebrate Jesus’ loving presence in the stories of all people – then invite everyone to **MORE**.

#EpiscopalEvangelism

Which words or practices resonate for you? What makes you want to know more?

What – if anything – feels especially “Episcopal” about this description?

Notes

We **SEEK, NAME** and **CELEBRATE** Jesus' loving presence in the stories of all people – then invite everyone to **MORE**

PRAY:

Pray to be filled with the love of God and to overflow with love

Individual Prayer:

Ask God to grow your love for Jesus

Ask God for the will to seek, name and celebrate the good news of Jesus' love

Ask God to use you to open doors for authentic relationship

Pray for specific people and communities in your life

Group Prayer:

Link to others dedicated to prayer for the church's efforts to share good news, like Harvest Prayer Group, Daughters of the King, Brotherhood of St. Andrew

Ask God to increase your love and to show how you're needed

LOOK:

The presence of God is within and around us, waiting to be seen.

Look at your own life and story – Frederick Buechner, "Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery it is."

Look at your community – What gladdens your heart? What breaks it?

Look at the web – What sites, groups, individuals reflect the loving, liberating presence of God?

LISTEN:

Be quiet and hear the still, small voice of God

Listen to yourself – hear your own wisdom and hear God speaking in you

Listen to others – hear another person's pain or joy or insight

Listen for the "it" – hear what rests in the space between/among us

THEN:

Prepare to fearlessly share your faith and the love of God:

One-to-One StorySharing

Beloved Community StorySharing Campaign

Sharing Faith Dinners

Gratitudes Practice during Church Meetings and Gatherings

Bible Studies (*read the Gospels or the Book of Acts together*)

“

Seek the Lord while God may be found; call upon the Holy One who is near.” – Isaiah 55:6

Notes

“

How then can they call on the One they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the One of whom they have not heard? ... And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.'” – Romans 10:14 10:14

We seek, name & celebrate **JESUS' LOVING PRESENCE**
in the stories of all people – then invite everyone to **MORE**

When have you experienced being deeply loved, adored and/or celebrated? In what way does this resemble God's love for you?

When have you felt close to Jesus Christ or felt him close to you?

Worship

Prayer

Small groups

Fellowship

Congregational retreats

Cursillo

Bible studies

Revivals and Jesus Encounter weekends

Service and action

Other moments?

We seek, name & celebrate Jesus' loving presence **IN THE**
STORIES OF ALL PEOPLE – then invite everyone to **MORE**

See Handouts:

"Neighborhood Prayer Walks"

"All Means All"

"Sharing Your Story"

With whom is God calling you into deeper relationship?

With whom will you see and celebrate the presence of God?

We seek, name & celebrate Jesus' loving presence the stories of all
people – then **INVITE EVERYONE TO MORE**

See Handouts:

"Digital Evangelism: Social Media Tips & Practices"

"Hospitality 101"

"Turning Your Church into a Center for Blessing"

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God and whoever loves has been born of God.” – 1 John 4:7

Notes

“So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” – 2 Corinthians 5:20

Episcopal Revivals

What Is a Revival?

A revival is a dedicated series of gatherings that combine inspiring worship, compelling preaching and teaching, authentic faith-sharing, intensified prayer, and engagement with the loving, liberating, life-giving mission of God – all for the sake of the spiritual renewal and transformation of people and of society.

We like the way Dr. Mark Labberton put it: “Revival can be a loaded word. But it almost always shows itself in two interconnected ways: personal experience of spiritual renewal marked by lament and hope, and social transformation marked by justice and righteousness.”

What Makes Episcopal Revivals “Episcopal”?

Episcopal Revivals publicly proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed, and invite people to renew or initiate relationship with Jesus and his Movement. An Episcopal Revival is the result of a partnership between the hosting diocese or church, the Presiding Bishop’s Office, the Episcopal Church’s Evangelism Initiatives Team and many more. The shape and content is determined by this question: “What does the good news of Jesus Christ look like today, for you and your neighbors?”

What Do Revivals Do?

Revive: The Holy Spirit revives the hearts of Episcopalians in the host community and the wider church, stirring love for God, each other and creation.

Proclaim: Preachers, leaders and digital evangelists proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in the language of the people.

Pray: Prayer leaders near and far cloak the revival effort in prayer before, during and after the event, in concert with a local network of prayer leaders.

Equip: Local members attend evangelism trainings and learn to seek and share stories of God in daily life and to invite people to join the Jesus Movement.

Heal: Local leaders organize action and justice to embody the good news.

Gather: Revivals gather people across lines of age, race, class and/or culture.

Invite: Local Episcopalians personally invite and welcome people who are not active in church 1) to attend a revival and 2) to join the Jesus Movement.

Is an Episcopal Revival a one-time event?

An Episcopal Revival is more than a worship service; it’s part of an evangelism and reconciliation campaign. A revival should be preceded by months of planning, training and intense prayer by local and church-wide teams. Local leaders learn about evangelism, listen for the Spirit among neighbors and build new relationships.

As part of the revival, each community should make a follow-up plan to water seeds planted by the Spirit: hosting workshops and trainings; engaging in mission experiments; planting new churches, Mission Enterprise Zones or Jubilee Ministries; launching youth outreach; forming new global mission relationships; engaging in justice and advocacy. There’s no limit to what the Spirit of God can do.

Learn more and share your stories at www.episcopalchurch.org/revivals.

“For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress.”
- Isaiah 65:17-19

Notes

Sharing Your Story

What's So Great About a Story?

It is natural. When you're in love or excited, you want to talk about it.

It is simple. Share about a moment, not your whole life story.

It is a blessing. God blesses and teaches in the stories and bonds we share.

It is irrefutable. We rarely get into arguments about an experience.

Components of the Story:

- 1 Keep it real. Tell your story in your words. Don't use someone else's.
- 2 Pause and listen to your own life. What's happening? What is God doing in your life? How is your life enriched by your relationship with Jesus?
- 3 Focus on God and your experience of God in Christ. If it's an experience at church, talk about where and how you encountered God, not just what's good about your church. If it's an experience in nature or some other holy place, share how you knew God was there.
- 4 Do you recognize Jesus in the story? Scripture tells us the signs of his presence: unconditional love, resurrection, perseverance, healing, teaching, community, sacrifice, redemption, etc. Where is Jesus in your story?

Exercise #1: Welcome to the Feast

Step 1:

Recall a truly memorable meal. Recall the flavors, the textures, the aromas. Recall the setting. Who is with you – can you see faces and reactions? What was happening in your life just before, during or after the meal?

Step 2:

Pair off to share stories. Take turns as the Speaker or the Listener.

Exercise #2: Cardboard Testimonials

Step 1:

Take some quiet time to reflect on ...

- a. Something you've struggled with
- b. Where God has brought you, or where you see God in the struggle now

Step 2:

Take a large piece of paper or cardboard.

Writing in LARGE LETTERS (*so others can read easily*) on one side of the cardboard, summarize A (*where you were in your struggle*) in just a few words.

Other side of the card, summarize B (*where God has taken you*) in just a few words.

Examples: Paralyzed by fear and anxiety ... Living Free!; 2010 Marriage on the rocks ... 2015 Solid as a rock; Loved money ... Love to Give!

Step 3:

Walk around and witness each other's Cardboard Testimonials. Take turns flipping from Side A to B. Celebrate and move to the next testimony.

Go deeper at www.episcopalchurch.org/storysharing.

“But God has helped me to this very day; so I stand here and testify to small and great alike.” –Acts 26:22

Notes

One-to-One StorySharing

One-to-One StorySharing is an intentional conversation between two people who share and receive each other's stories of what matters most. It is a potent tool for forming community, deepening relationships, identifying gifts, healing brokenness and overcoming resistance; and building a relational culture.

How Can We Begin?

Host One-to-One StorySharing at Church:

During sermons, invite people to pair off and discuss a topical question

During Coffee Hour, in 1- or 2-minute blocks

At the start of meetings and classes, to get grounded and connected

During Christian Formation, in 5-minute blocks, to explore issues

Guidelines for the Speaker:

Keep it real, sharing real stories from real life.

Aim for vivid, sensory-rich storytelling: what you saw, smelled, tasted, who was there, where you were, what you felt – recreate the experience.

Avoid interpreting or reflecting on the experience

Notice the beginning, middle, and end of your story, plus points where you made a significant turn or choice.

Guidelines for the Listener:

Engage in active, engaged listening. Imagine the speaker is revealing something holy.

Offer generous hospitality. Think about what helps you to feel valued.

If there is a pause, ask open questions to help your partner to speak freely and fully and to go deeper with their story. "How did that make you feel?" "I'd like to picture this. What did you see?" or "Please, tell me more."

Ask for follow-up opportunities: "Is there anyone you think would share this passion or concern?" "Would you like to join me for ... (or to read this together, or to check out this podcast, or to meet this group)?"

How Can We Go Deeper?

Within the Church: Organize a one-month StorySharing campaign in your church. Create a board on the wall or online with every member's name, and invite people to sign up with each other to do two 30-minute StorySharing sessions ideally with two members they don't know well.

Beyond the Church: You're already connected with family, friends, regular acquaintances, neighbors, people who help you and people you help, partner organizations, etc. Many of them are eager for respectful, mutual conversation. Issue a genuine invitation rooted in your own desire to build relationship and hear the other person's story. For example: "Our ministry is listening to our neighbors, and I'd love to hear your story and questions and share my own. Could we talk soon?"

“The purposes in the human mind are like deep water, but the wise and faithful will draw them out.” - Proverbs 20:5

Notes

Prompts for StorySharing about Faith in a Church-Related Setting

Notes

Share a story of a compelling experience of the Holy or of God.

Recall the story of when you knew this church was yours.

When have you felt God really alive in your church (perhaps in the last month)? Describe that moment.

Does some practice link you closely to God or make you feel connected, loving and grounded? Share a story about engaging in that practice.

Have you ever been part of a truly loving community? Share a story.

Some people find it hard to believe in God. Share a story about an experience that taught you something about the power of faith in Jesus.

Bell Hooks once wrote: "Love allows us to enter paradise." Share a story about a time someone made you feel loved.

Reinhold Niebuhr said, "Nothing that is worth doing can be done alone, but has to be done with others." Share a story about a time you worked with other people of faith to achieve a goal that was important to you. What did you learn about God and yourself in the process?

Do you consider yourself a worker with God? Share a story about a time you felt you were working with God to do something.

We praise God with the "communion of Saints" and with "all the company of Heaven." Share a story about someone who has died with whom you still feel connected through prayer or another act of faith.

Peace of heart and mind come from a power greater than ourselves. Share about a time when you have felt the peace of Christ.

No person ever amounts to much, until they learn to appreciate their origins. Share a story about the first person that took you to Church or significantly informed your faith.

Prompts for StorySharing about Faith in a Secular Setting

Share a story about when you felt really connected to a community, the world, the universe, or something greater than yourself.

Share a story about the people or groups that help to lift your spirits.

When you are really part of a group, how do you feel? Share a story about an experience in a group.

How have you used spiritual or meditative practices – prayer, meditation, deep breathing, etc. – in your life? Have they ever been useful to you for dealing with a challenging experience? Share a story of using these practices.

Share a story about the first time you visited a place of worship that was different than the faith tradition you grew up in or that was new to you.

Learn more about StorySharing at www.episcopalchurch.org/storysharing.

Learn more about relational organizing at <http://www.piconetwork.org> or <http://www.industrialareasfoundation.org>.

All Means All: Getting to Know Neighbors Near and Far

Draw three concentric circles on a piece of paper.

1. Get to know **JERUSALEM** (*your closest neighbors, family, friends*).

Who has God placed around you? List the people in your "Sphere of Influence":

Family:

Friends:

Acquaintances:

Work/School Colleagues:

Volunteer Groups:

Social Groups:

Civic Affiliations:

Hobbies/Special Interests:

2. Get to know **JUDEA** (*the neighborhood/physical community around your church*).

Where and among what people has God placed you and your church? What is God up to in the neighborhood? Who lives near or within the immediate areas surrounding the church?

See Neighborhood Demographic Profile (available for every Episcopal parish) at www.episcopalchurch.org/posts/evangelisminitiatives/church-demographics.

Do a Neighborhood Prayer Walk.

3. Get to know **SAMARIA** (*the margins of your community; groups, cultures and generations with whom you do not have relationship, or from whom you or your church have been alienated*). Through whom might God speak, teach or bless you? Who is forgotten, broken-hearted or longing for healing?

Witness Near and Far

As you notice who and what is in each of these concentric circles, ask ...

What is God up to in their midst?

How can I build relationship with the people and communities I'm discovering?

What are their needs and longings? How can I bless and love them?

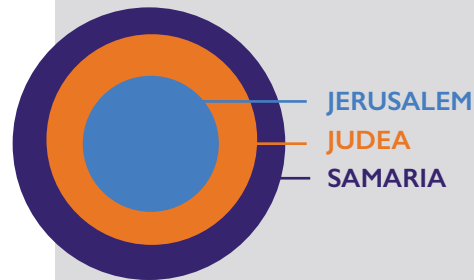
What are my needs and longings? How could they bless me?

If Jesus met this person or group, what would he do?

“

The Holy Spirit will come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to ends of the Earth.” - Acts 1:8

Notes



Neighborhood Prayer Walks

What Is a Neighborhood Prayer Walk?

It's not just walking around. It's not just praying. It's walking through your neighborhood or "parish" praying with your eyes and your heart wide open. Notice signs of hope and need, and how God calls you to both. Re-imagine how your ministry could join God and your neighbors.

Guidelines for Prayer-Walking

Whether you're near your church or in another neighborhood, plan your route ahead of time. Walk on a variety of days and times, not just Sunday morning. What's happening Tuesdays at 5pm?

Meet at church and pray before you leave.

Form groups of 2-6 people, ideally covering different areas. If the group is too large, you may focus on each other instead of the neighborhood.

If your area isn't very walk-friendly, head to common gathering places: shopping centers, groceries, dog parks, town squares, community gardens, the church's 5-block radius, and more.

As you walk, look with care and pray either in silence or aloud softly. Limit chat or focus-ing on each other. Focus on the neighborhood.

Don't call attention to yourselves. Respect the dignity of community members. "Be on the scene without making one."

Though it's not primary, be open to interaction with people on the way.

If anyone asks what you are doing, be prepared to respond: "We're from _____ Church, and we are praying and getting to know our neighborhood better." Offer to pray, if it feels appropriate.

How Should We Pray?

Discernment: Ask God to show how you can pray with greater insight for the people, events, and places in the community.

Blessing: Pray for each person, home, school, business, situation you see.

Empathy: See and feel what your neighbors live with every day. Pray for brokenness and for blessings and gifts in the community.

Scripture: Prayer based directly on scriptures like Jeremiah 29:5-7; Luke 10:1-2; Mark 12:30-31; or Revelation 21:3-5a.

Silence: Allow silence for God's spirit to speak to you, or through you.

Concluding the Neighborhood Prayer Walk

Immediately afterwards – perhaps over a meal – gather to share your prayers and observations:

What did you learn about the neighborhood?

Where was God's presence especially apparent?

What surprised you?

What was hard? What was engaging?

“But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find our welfare.” – Jeremiah 29:7

Notes

Exploring Evangelism through Social Media

1. Start where you're comfortable.

You don't have to open accounts with every social media provider to be an effective digital evangelist. Your best opportunity to build genuine community is by being in your community. If that's Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, or Instagram, then that platform is the right one.

2. Follow your parish and diocesan accounts.

Posts by your parish and your diocese are great places to find positive things to share about your church experience. You'll be able to engage in conversations about things happening in the life of the Church, and often you'll be able to see upcoming events in your area.

3. And speaking of events ... share!

When you "share" your parish or diocesan events on your accounts, you help spread the reach of the church's social media efforts. By simply clicking the share button or even going further and inviting your friends individually, you let those in your social media circles know that something worthwhile is happening, and that they're welcome, too.

4. Check in when you're at a church service or parish event.

Another easy way to let those in your circles know that you're involved with your church is to "check in" on Facebook or other social media when you're attending a service or event at the location. Be sure to add a short note to your post to let others know why you're there, and remember to let folks know that they're invited, too!

4. Let your friends see your perspective.

It's great to share pictures and videos and quotes from others in your parish and diocese, but you can share yours, too! If you captured a really cool picture of an event on your phone, or if a particular line from a sermon really impacted you, post it to your account. This is an easy way to share your experience with your friends, and it helps the parish capture the event. Don't forget to tag them!

“Jesus told him, “Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” – Mark 5:19

Notes

Learn more at www.episcopalchurch.org/digitalevangelism.

Hospitality 101: Inviting, Greeting, Incorporating

Inviting New People

The most important inviting work comes long before Sunday morning.

Define a clear mission, style and purpose:

People need to see a clear statement or set of words or images that help to differentiate between you and the ten other churches within a one-mile radius.

Deploy effective, appropriate means for communicating your vision:

1. clear, attractive signage in front of and near the church;
2. web site and e-mail list, regularly updated;
3. fliers, postcards, business cards, ideally produced by a print house
4. print, radio and TV ads, including public access and college media
5. social media ads – it's more bang for your buck.

Whatever you do, be sure the materials are composed and designed by people who know what works and that they include all the basics to get to your door or find your web site. Not sure what's good? Look around and see what resonates for you; then feel free to borrow and cobble until you come up with your own unique look and feel.

Talk to people.

People don't usually come to church because they saw a great sign or heard a radio ad. More than 85% of newcomers attend because a church member invited them. Even churches that invest in ads say they're seed-planters, so that when people get a personal invitation, they're already curious.

Greeting New People

Inviting congregations know first impressions count. They imagine the pathway someone travels into the church, and make it as smooth and pleasant as possible:

Outside:

Clear signage and a well-kept exterior. No grounds staff? Rally the volunteer troops a few times a year to tend their common home.

At the door:

Station a greeter at the open door and every door that might be used, eyes and energy directed out (and not at a stack of paper or to a buddy on the side), to offer a warm, genuine, non-cloying welcome to all who enter.

Inside the door:

Help people who need some assistance with worship or with seating. Consider nametags for members and newcomers, available when they walk inside. Set up a kiosk or welcome table where people can pick up an attractive and compelling set of materials geared toward newcomers.

Go beyond pew cards or church histories. Make welcome brochures that tell stories of the church's life and ministry. Offer videos and online materials people can use to get familiar with worship before they arrive. Set out a visitors' card, clipboard, book, pew sheet or even a tablet to capture visitor info and interests.

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.” - Hebrews 13:2

Notes

Inside the sanctuary:

Everyone should be a greeter. Encourage members to slide into the pew to make room for newbies. Everyone can watch for new faces and be ready to help struggling visitors to navigate the building and worship.

During the worship:

Think through your worship and consider whether someone completely new to your tradition would be able to keep pace and participate fully. If not (or even if it seems clear to you), consider full worship booklets, including the entire worship service, music, and even biblical texts.

Alternately, consider seasonal worship booklets with changing weekly inserts. Tending the environment? Projectors and screens aren't just hip; they facilitate full participation by young and old, experienced and new.

Getting around the church:

Greeters and other members should be prepared to escort newcomers to Sunday School, forums, restrooms, etc. Gregory Jacobs of the Diocese of Newark calls this the ministry of "the shepherds" - connecting new people and guiding them around.

After-church fellowship:

Coffee hour, breakfast between services, brunch after church—whatever you serve and whenever you serve it, make sure you have plenty, and that it's good. Have a Hospitality Team serving with a smile.

Encourage clergy to connect with newcomers, not just church leaders eager to do business. Lay leaders should also look for new faces or people who appear alone and awkward before they link with their closer friends. Offer a church tour and introduction, to help people get oriented and establish personal connections.

In a large parish? Not sure if you "should" know someone? There's no harm in approaching and introducing yourself – some oldtimers may still be new to you.

Incorporating New People

When the newcomer leaves, the work isn't over:

Follow-up contacts:

A lay visitor or clergy person should make a follow-up call or send an e-mail or a card, and suggest a One-to-One to share stories and answer questions. It's not a hard-sell on membership; just listen and connect.

Follow-up groups:

New people need a variety of entry points to find their way inside. Seasonal newcomers' gatherings, Alpha courses, regularly scheduled small groups, easy-to-access volunteer opportunities, inquirers' classes to learn about the tradition, the community and membership—all these are great ways to create space for people to explore and test their calling into community.

Want to assess your church's hospitality? See the full Hospitality 101 worksheet and inventory at https://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/documents/hospitality_101_tec.pdf

Turn Your Church into a Center for Blessing

NOTE: None of these ideas helps unless you actively, intentionally invite people God has placed in your life, in your wider community, and on the margins of your church's life.

1. Special Guest Sundays (aka Plus-One Sundays or Plus-One Events)
2. Large meals in the parish hall, like a crawfish boil, BBQ, catfish fry
3. Outdoor concert for your community
4. Concert inside the church, highlighting local musicians
5. Thanksgiving meal open to all
6. Seminars and community forums on issues relevant to neighborhood, with an expert (*who might also be a member*) speaking on topics like how to raise a child, financial health, navigating tax season in peace, etc.
7. Marriage Enrichment seminars
8. Movie night, including a speaker linking film to faith
9. Mardi Gras party
10. "Engaging the Questions" Forum: Have a speaker engage questions people ask about the Christian faith: Is there a God? If God is good why is there so much suffering in the world? Who was Jesus? etc.
11. Valentine's Dance with short talk on God, who is Love
12. Youth rallies or sports parties
13. Business peoples' luncheons, with a speaker and/or music during work week
14. Free or reduced-price spa day, with or without a speaker
15. Art shows, where the church showcases the work of local artists
16. Poetry readings
17. Theatrical presentations
18. Animal blessings
19. Health-screening event at your church, including flu shots, cholesterol checks, mammogram, cardiograms
20. Community fair/carnival: Fall Festival, a Christmas Fun Day, Spring Fling, Safe Halloween party, All Saints celebration
21. Sports clinics
22. Mother's Day or Father's Day banquet
23. Neighborhood block party
24. Evangelistic Carol service and Christmas concert/musical
25. Easter drama
26. Community picnic, inviting neighbors to join and eat
27. Athletic event, as in, take church and friends to baseball game
28. Community marathon or walkathon, to raise money for good causes
29. Arts and crafts fair
30. Cultural celebration of congregation's diversity, featuring music, food, dance
31. Cooking school with a short talk about "Bringing more flavor to your life"
32. Wine tastings, with or without a speaker
33. Book discussion
34. Film night with discussion
35. Coffee house at church, with music and/or poetry reading and testimony
36. Host church book club at local coffee house, and buy coffee

“ I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.” – Genesis 12:2

Notes