

# Movie Event

PLANNING GUIDE

MORE THAN JUST ENTERTAINMENT

OUTREACH | FILMS

# THE POWER OF STORY

There's a reason Jesus told parables during His ministry on earth. Stories capture our imaginations, engage our emotions and stick in our hearts and minds. Film harnesses the power of story, sight and sound to reach people—especially young people—that other ministry tools may not. Because sometimes talking just isn't enough. Sometimes we need to see and hear and walk in someone else's shoes to find our eyes opened and our hearts shifted to new understanding. Movies can take us on that journey. When harnessed for good, they can guide us through their stories to God's ultimate story.

Welcome to the power of story. The following pages of your Movie Event Planning Guide will walk you step-by-step through the process of Planning, Promoting, Hosting and Following Up on your Movie Event. You have chosen to take your church and community on a journey toward the healing power of God's love. For some it will be an impactful reminder or an opportunity to serve in an exciting new way—for others, it will be a first-time, life-changing encounter.

If you have any questions or need assistance as you plan and promote your movie event, feel free to contact an Outreach Specialist at 800-991-6011. We pray that God will bless your outreach efforts in powerful ways!

## YOUR PUBLIC SITE LICENSE

### LICENSE

Your Site License gives you permission to show the film as often as you like during the next 12 months. You may renew the Site License at the end of the year and continue to show the film in your church. If you choose not to renew the License, you may keep the DVD for your personal or church-lending library (for home use only). Keep in mind that the Site License does not allow churches to charge admission; however, you may charge for refreshments or childcare to help recover costs. Refer to your Site License for specific provisions regarding showings.

### DIGITAL DOWNLOADS

Depending on the film you have chosen, digital resources may have been included via a link in the confirmation email. These files may include:

- Discussion Questions
- Social media and website graphics
- Templates for Bulletin Inserts and Tickets

### PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS (With select products

only) If you purchased a Movie Event Kit, your package may have included some promotional or invitational tools. You can use these tools to build excitement, increase awareness and make your event a hit.

**Additional tools are available for purchase on Outreach.com:**



**Custom Direct Mail Invitations**—Send a postcard to every home in your community inviting them to come to your movie night! Outreach makes it easy!



**Outdoor Banners**—Like a mini-billboard promoting your movie event, these eye-catching banners will attract traffic and let visitors know they are in the right place. Available in 5 sizes.

Your Movie Event begins with this Planning Guide, designed to help you maximize the impact of your movie in your church and community. It will guide you through four phases involved in preparing for a **Movie Event: PLAN, PROMOTE, HOST and FOLLOW UP.**

*NOTE: The phases are interconnected, so reading through all of them before you begin will help generate ideas and develop a vision for your event. Feel free to make copies of this guide for your leadership team to encourage excitement and idea-sharing!*

# PLAN | PROMOTE | HOST | FOLLOW UP

## PLAN

Think ahead. Recruit help. Accomplish significant goals. And make an eternal impact.

**Establish a vision.** Think BIG! What would you like to see God accomplish through this Movie Event in your church and community? How will you customize it to incorporate your church's mission, objectives and values? Visual story has the power to open hearts and minds—and prepare them for powerful life change.

1. **Set an appropriate budget.** Remember to include refreshments, visitor gifts, decorations and the License. A Site License does not allow churches to charge admission; however, you may charge for refreshments or childcare to help recover costs.
2. **Get your leaders involved.** Provide an advance showing for leaders and volunteers to build their excitement and commitment. Brainstorm together to plan and promote your outreach. Equip and empower them to use the Movie Event as a way to reach their friends and neighbors. And don't forget your youth group—many movies have perfect teen and tween appeal!
3. **Target your audience.** Who in your community is most likely to relate to the film's themes? Who is most likely to attend? Consider your movie's themes and your various ministries. Keep in mind groups such as teens, tweens, young adults, couples, seniors, families, women's groups, sports fans, military families, those facing adversity or in need of renewed hope or inspiration.
4. **Engage parents and families.** Schedules are hectic and parents are challenged to find good entertainment options for the whole family. Enlist your church's families as a way to serve and minister together and reach other families in your community. Teens especially love movies—give your youth group a church-wide outreach to rally around.
5. **Partner with others.** Team up with other churches, ministries and local organizations to maximize outreach and build community. Which ones around you are connected to the issues from the movie? Are there any specific organizations featured in the movie? Build partnerships to plan and host, share costs, sponsor the event, loan equipment and spread the word. Offer to distribute the groups' materials at the event.

## PLAN CHECKLIST

### DECIDE

- ☐ Vision and event objectives
- ☐ Location—confirm at least 1 month in advance
- ☐ Target audience
- ☐ Date
- ☐ Refreshments
- ☐ Follow-up (i.e., post-movie Q&A, discussion groups, follow-up sermon series or small group)

### CONSIDER

- ☐ Partners: ministries, non-profit organizations and other churches
- ☐ Door prizes
- ☐ Overflow room
- ☐ Place for antsy children (or childcare)

### LINE UP

- ☐ Recruit volunteers (event planner, networker, technician, prayer team, host/emcee, greeters, discussion leaders, facilities, set-up/tear-down, etc). Ask as early as possible.
- ☐ Create an agenda/timeline for your event. Think through each element (welcome comments, announcements, special guests, pre-show entertainment, closing comments, Q&A, etc).
- ☐ Write script or bulleted talking points for host/emcee.



- 6. Schedule the date.** Consider the daily routines and typical behavior of your target audience and choose a date with the least amount of conflicts, perhaps the day and time of your normal meetings. Consider two showings on consecutive nights or an early matinee. It requires more effort but could increase attendance significantly.
- 7. Location, location, location!** Where will you host your event? Holding the event at your church encourages visitors to casually explore your campus and meet your members with no expectations—they might even feel comfortable enough to attend a Sunday morning service later! If your church facilities cannot provide the environment you'll need, consider renting a community center, other public gathering site or a local theater (as long as the theater can project the movie from a DVD). And make sure to provide a clear connection to your church (i.e., have volunteers wear badges or shirts with your church's logo, or offer flyers that include your service times and directions to your campus).  
*Important Reminder:* Confirm the location of your Movie Event at least a month in advance so you can promote it.
- 8. Ask for help.** Don't do all the work yourself! Share your vision with others and ask them to volunteer to help you make the event happen. Consider recruiting gifted people for the following positions:
- **Event Planner:** A person who enjoys details and timelines, perhaps with a gift for administration, who will oversee the particulars of the event.
  - **Networker:** An outgoing people-person who will recruit volunteers, initiate partnerships with other organizations and spearhead the congregation's effort to invite their friends and family.
  - **Technician:** A patient, technically minded troubleshooter who will test the DVD and operate the audio/visual equipment during the event.
  - **Prayer Team:** Several dedicated believers who will commit to pray that the event would touch lives and change hearts. Ask them to keep the planning team in their prayers as well.
  - **Event Host/Emcee:** An outgoing person who will open the event, welcome visitors, introduce the film, give follow-up announcements and answer questions as needed.
  - **Greeters:** Warm, welcoming folks who enjoy meeting new people and have a good knowledge of your church.
  - **Discussion Leaders:** People who enjoy facilitating spiritual conversations and will be available after the event for attendees with questions about the movie's themes. Depending on how you decide to follow up, these volunteers may also lead discussion groups after the movie or host a follow-up small group on themes from the movie.
  - **Other Volunteers:** Flexible individuals to help with facilities, setup/teardown, refreshment service, parking, childcare, etc. Ask volunteers well in advance of the event to show respect for their time and to aid in planning.  
*Idea: Consider showing the movie to your volunteers before your event to help them catch the vision and allow them to focus on serving during the event itself.*
- 9. Create an agenda.** Give volunteers a timeline so they know what to expect. Include welcoming comments, announcements, pre-show entertainment and games, movie showing, closing comments, Q&A or discussion time, post-show activities, etc. Include technical requirements, and clarify all transitions between elements.

*Ideas:*

- Project a looping PowerPoint presentation as attendees arrive to promote your group meetings, activities or small groups.
- Will you host other movie events in the future? Show trailers. Check out other Movie Licenses at [OutreachFilms.com](http://OutreachFilms.com).
- Start with a short film for an old-fashioned movie theater experience.
- Will your emcee need a script? Develop at least talking points and give it to him/her ahead of time.
- Include plenty of time for all post-movie discussions and activities.



## IMPORTANT

### AUDIO/VIDEO REMINDER:

It is important to perform a test of the DVD as soon as possible after it arrives. Make sure to test the DVD on the equipment you will be using during the event, including the DVD player, speakers, lights, sound and projector.

### DVD CLEANING TIPS

- Use a microfiber cloth or a soft cloth that produces no lint.
- Always clean in straight strokes from the DVD's center to the edge. Never clean in a circular motion.
- If necessary, use rubbing alcohol, mineral water or a water/detergent solution. Avoid using tap water; it may leave white watermarks on the DVD. Never use petroleum-based solvents like acetone (e.g., nail polish remover) as they will permanently damage the disc.

**10. Plan for children.** Many Outreach films are family-friendly, so prepare to welcome children. However, keep younger, more sensitive audiences in mind. Provide childcare for young kids to draw more people and to allow parents to enjoy the film. Include even the youngest with a simultaneous “Kids’ Movie Event,” showing an age-appropriate film in the childcare room (complete with its own Q&A session).

**11. Serve refreshments.** Create a movie theater environment with typical theater fare, such as popcorn, sodas and candy. Or encourage mingling and fellowship over a simple meal before the event. Decide if you’ll charge for refreshments or give them away. Although your License doesn’t allow admission fees, it does permit food sales as a means to recoup costs.

**12. Have fun with a theme.** Movies can transport us into other places and times. Have fun with it! Does your film have a unique setting or location? Decorate and organize around it. Think Hawaiian luau, beachside bonfire, Western barbecue or high school prom. Food or snacks can tie in. Dress volunteers in costumes or themed accessories. Plan related contests. Decorate appropriately. You might even consider a cardboard or plywood painted backdrop for fun photos. Be creative!

**13. Plan for follow-up.** A Movie Event allows visitors to feel comfortable in your church, and it creates opportunities to dialogue about important topics like redemption, hope, healing, forgiveness, faith and purpose, depending on the movie. You can help attendees process their thoughts and observations in these ways and more:

- Hold a post-movie Q&A session hosted by your emcee.
- Offer optional discussion groups at the end of the showing to discuss themes from the movie. You’ll need a few group leaders to lead the groups. Discussion Questions are provided for each film at OutreachFilms.com.

- Some titles have a church campaign kit available - use this to schedule a comprehensive follow-up small group and sermon series based on the biblical themes presented in the movie. Each Campaign Kit includes resources such as sermon guides, video clips, DVD- and book-based study guides and more for adults and teens. Use a campaign to draw your members and visitors into the deeper spiritual themes raised at your Movie Event and to invite them to embrace God’s plans for their lives.

### More ideas to get you going.

- Door prizes are a great way to encourage people to come to the event. They also help you collect contact information for visitor follow-up.
- Feed the movie into an overflow room as it’s often difficult to estimate attendance.
- Invite a local Christian ministry to display and promote their ministry during the event in exchange for their participation.
- Have resources available related to your movie’s themes or issues it might raise, for example grief, marital counseling, missions or addiction recovery. Better yet, include a local representative from any applicable ministries. For example, World Vision is featured in *Soul Surfer*. A ministry to civil servants such as police, firefighters or military personnel would be a relevant tie for *The Grace Card*.

# PROMOTE

Creativity is the key to spreading the word and making a visible presence. Use the valuable resources at your fingertips.

1. **Start early!** Begin promoting two to three weeks before the event.  
**Get the church on board.** Spread the vision for outreach church-wide. Personally recruit outgoing members, leaders and key influencers who will understand your vision and actively support the Movie Event. Ask the teaching pastor to announce the event from pulpit and show the movie trailer during church services and other ministry events. Make sure the announcements explain the significant outreach potential and encourage church-wide participation.
2. **Build interest.** Hang a banner or other sign on the church building in the public to attend the Movie Event (many churches report that this is an effective way to get people from the local community to their event).
3. **Provide incentives.** Announce any refreshments, door prizes or follow-up studies in your promotional materials—it will help create interest!
4. **Encourage personal invitations.** Word-of-mouth is the most effective way to get people to your event. Encourage and empower your members to invite friends, family and co-workers. Equip them with InviteTickets and Bulletin Inserts. Churches report that InviteTickets are one of the most effective tools they've used.
5. **Get online.** Place a banner on your church's home page and create a Web page about the Movie Event. Be sure to include the movie trailer to build interest.
6. **Send email announcements to your church list.** Link to the movie trailer and event details on your website.
7. **Maximize social networks.** Announce it on your Facebook page, create a Facebook event, and ask each member to invite five of their friends to come. Use other networks such as Twitter and Instagram as applicable.
8. **Tweet and text.** Send announcements through your church's or volunteers' personal Twitter feeds. Schedule a Text-a-Thon for everyone to text announcements to their contact lists on the same day. Here's a sample message: *Want to see a great movie? I'm going to I CAN ONLY IMAGINE Fri night. Txt me back.*
9. **Put up promotional posters**—in local businesses, bookstores, grocery stores, coffee shops, apartment buildings, community bulletin boards and other public places where your target audience shops, works and plays. (Posters are available for select titles at Outreach.com)
10. **Post on community calendars.** Contact newspapers, TV and radio stations, local magazines, mail-out coupon providers, recreation centers or clubs—anyone who posts a calendar of local events.
11. **Get on the air and in print.** Ask local radio stations and newspapers to sponsor and promote your event. Develop a press release for local news outlets.
12. **Be creative.** Try these ideas to guide your group's vision or public promotions.
  - Unleash your teens. Students love movies, and inviting their friends to a Movie Event is a nonthreatening way to reach out. Encourage youth group involvement and challenge teens to spread the word through their social networks and digital devices.

## PROMOTE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Customize InviteTickets and Bulletin Inserts with event info.
- ☐ Customize posters with event information. Put them up in high traffic areas in your community.
- ☐ Announce event and show trailer during Sunday service.
- ☐ Hang banner or sign outside the church.
- ☐ Encourage word-of-mouth.
- ☐ Put banners and trailers on church website.
- ☐ Send email to church list.
- ☐ Announce on social networks.
- ☐ Promote on local radio stations or newspapers.

- Each one bring one. Challenge every church member to bring at least one friend. Offer prizes for those who bring the most visitors.
- Spread the trailer. A picture is worth a thousand words. Post it. Email it to friends and neighbors. Show it often.

## PROMO TOOLS

Spread the word about your Movie Event!



Banners



Posters

Postcards



**Check out these resources at Outreach.com**

## HOST

Set a fun and welcoming atmosphere to help visitors feel comfortable and eager to come back and engage in follow-up activities.

1. **Pray with your team.**
2. **Get ready!** Position greeters inside and outside the facility to help direct visitors and answer questions. Communicate that connecting with visitors and creating a warm environment is a top priority. Put directional signage outside to help people find the location quickly. Make sure restrooms are open, clean and clearly marked.
3. **Get set!** Check that all microphones and technical equipment are operational and ready. Confirm that all volunteers and other participants are in place and equipped.

**ACTION!** Stick to your agenda but be flexible. Begin on time. Welcome everyone warmly and quickly explain what the audience can expect (e.g., film length, refreshment access, giveaways, any special speakers, a Q&A session afterward, etc). Position greeters with flashlights to assist those who must leave the dark room during the showing. Watch during the event for those who become sensitive to God's movement in their hearts. Some may even come to know Christ during your Movie Event, so be prepared to introduce Him if the opportunity arises!

## HOST CHECKLIST

- ☐ Give final agenda/timeline to your volunteers.
- ☐ Deliver the pre-movie PowerPoint slides to your technician.
- ☐ Review script or talking points with your host/emcee.
- ☐ Check DVD player, speakers, microphone, lighting and any other equipment you'll be using. Make sure bathrooms are unlocked.
- ☐ Put up directional signs if the room is hard to find.
- ☐ Collect feedback/visitor information.

4. **Keep things fun and friendly.** Place an emphasis on maintaining a welcoming, family-friendly atmosphere for first-time visitors. Try these ideas:
  - Roll out a red carpet at the front door to give the feel of a Hollywood premier. Have a photographer on hand to take “paparazzi” family photos.
  - Play a game before the show. Movie trivia can be easily engaging for all. You may even project questions onto the screen like a movie theater does. Just include them in your looping PowerPoint show.
  - Make a mini concert. Give your youth group band or worship team the stage to play background music for those arriving early.
5. **Roll the credits.** During the end credits, have the emcee or another volunteer lead Q&A discussion or direct participants to smaller groups to share their questions and insights. Offer a quick invitation to come to a Sunday service or join a follow-up study related to the film. Keep it short, or people will get restless.
6. **Collect feedback.** Ask for feedback from attendees. Door prizes are a fun, nonthreatening way to encourage people to come to the event and to collect contact information to facilitate your visitor follow-up!

## FOLLOW UP

This is what a Movie Event is all about: reaching out, building relationships and setting the stage for individuals and families to encounter Christ’s true hope and healing.

1. **Discuss the movie.** Some films available from Outreach clearly present the Gospel. Others do not. But all will likely bring up spiritual questions and issues in the minds of those who attend. To make the most of this growth and connection opportunity, host a short discussion group immediately following the event, using the Discussion Questions provided with select titles. If you cannot host a discussion group right after the showing, give out copies of the discussion questions to help people process the film’s themes.
2. **Plan a follow-up study.** Select titles have a church campaign kit available - use it to launch a sermon series and small-group studies for adults, teens, kids, families, single parents, men, women, military or civil servants— whoever is likely to be touched by your movie and Movie Event. Check out the resources at [OutreachFilms.com](http://OutreachFilms.com).
3. **Continue the ministry.** Consider using your Movie Event to kick off a new ministry for reaching out and supporting those in your community. Who will your movie particularly resonate with? Those struggling with disability or grief? Couples, singles, parents, teens, seniors? Look for a need your church body can meet in a new way.
4. **Thank your team!** Send personal notes to all those who served and participated in the event. Remember your outside partners and church’s leadership team.
5. **Thank your visitors!** Call visitors who provided contact information. Thank them warmly for attending and ask them about their experience. Remind them of the ministry resources available at your church relating to the themes in the film. Tell them about upcoming events and offer to answer any questions about your church. Leave your contact number if they think of other questions or comments.



# PLANNING MEETING NOTES

IDEAS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

ACTION STEPS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

LESSONS LEARNED: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_


\_\_\_\_\_



## ABOUT OUTREACH FILMS

**Outreach Films** is your source for church film tools. Share God's love and reach your community through movies! Film is the language of our day, setting the cultural tone and the thinking patterns of this generation. Attractive and enriching, Outreach Films allow you to "speak the language" of your community and creates opportunities to share the gospel. The Outreach Films division provides movie licenses that give you the rights to show the movie to a group, as well as to promote your event using artwork, actors' names and the title of the film you are showing. We are here to serve and equip you for powerful ministry in your church and community!

Outreach Films is a division of Outreach, Inc., the largest provider of church outreach products and services in the world. With a mission to share God's love and empower the Church to share the message of Jesus Christ, Outreach provides cost-effective, proven methods and resources in a variety of forms, including books, media and film, postcard invitations, banners, bulletin shells, curriculum, church campaign materials and more.



**OUTREACH<sup>®</sup> | FILMS**

---

**MORE THAN JUST ENTERTAINMENT**

Visit [OutreachFilms.com](http://OutreachFilms.com) or call 800-991-6011 today!