



# **18 Tips for Planning an Online Back to Church Event**

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# National Back To Church Sunday Is Next Month!

Wow, how the time has flown! With all of the uncertainty about how the next month will play out, it is wise to prepare your church for celebrating Back to Church Sunday online this year.

## Don't know where to start? No worries!

Jason Daye, executive director of National Back to Church Sunday, provides 18 helpful tips on how to have a successful Back to Church Sunday this fall in the midst of a COVID world. Explore the practical steps below and discuss with your ministry leadership team to develop a solid plan for making an impact for Jesus in the weeks ahead.

## 01. Pray with your ministry leaders.

- Be open and clear with your team about the disconnect between people and the Church
- View ministry online as an opportunity to make a Kingdom impact during these challenging times
- Pray specifically for your people to rally together and embrace God's mission

## 02. Focus on the opportunities, not the obstacles.

- The enemy wants us to focus on the obstacles to distract us from where God is leading
- Do not get sidetracked by the uncertainty of being able to meet in-person or online... instead, commit to making a plan and take action
- Remember that you can reach people online who have never stepped into your church or have never encountered your church in any way

## 03. Prioritize getting your people connected now.

- Create a simple online event several weeks before BTCS and invite all of your people to join in
- Personally reach out to the families and individuals in your church, acknowledge the disconnect, and invite them to join you online for the event
- The event could be something like reading through together over 5 days

## 04. Cast the bigger vision.

- Inspire your people to see how God is at work during this challenging time
- Discuss the opportunity your church has to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the midst of the difficulties many are experiencing
- Challenge everyone to pray and ask God to lay someone on their heart whom they can invite
- Encourage everyone to take action: INVITE, INVITE, INVITE... whether to gather in person or to watch online

## **05. Create a weekly rhythm of praying with your people about their friends and neighbors.**

- Schedule a brief, weekly video call with your church on FB Live, Zoom, or other platform
- Pray for open doors and the boldness to have conversations and invite people to church
- If restrictions in your area allow, meet up at the church, a local coffee shop, or someone's house weekly to pray for those whom your people are inviting

## **06. Share Back to Church Sunday graphics and videos on your social channels.**

- This is a great way to build excitement and inform people how you are celebrating– online, in person, or both
- Use them to encourage your people and to reach people online

## **07. Update your church website to highlight your Back to Church celebration.**

- Use the web graphics in the church kit to make this event a key focus
- Be sure to provide clear direction on when and how people can join your BTCS celebration

## **08. Promote, Promote, Promote your Back to Church Sunday Celebration.**

- Consider running Facebook ads in your area to reach new people
- Use outdoor banners and signage to inform your community about your BTCS celebration
- Mail postcards to homes in your community and provide invite cards to your people to share with their friends, neighbors, coworkers, etc

## **09. Teach your people how to invite their guests to join them online.**

- Show them how to host a Watch Party on Facebook and invite others to join them
- Teach them how to share your stream in other ways online
- Encourage them to text your stream link to their friends

## **10. Prepare your Back to Church Sunday celebration service plan.**

- Use the planning guide and recruit people in your church to help
- Work with your ministry leaders to layout your service plan for BTCS and decide what elements (live music, videos, etc) you will include

## **11. Encourage your people to host home gatherings (if and where possible).**

- 2 or 3 individuals/families from your church meeting together in someone's home along with the guests that each invited
- Consider having a brunch as you watch the streamed BTCS service together or perhaps lunch together afterward
- Focus on building relationships and answering any questions your guests might have

## **12. Form an engagement team to connect with the online attendees.**

- Have people welcoming guests in the live chat, monitoring comments, and helping resolve technical issues
- Use simple greetings in chat, such as "welcome, [NAME]... how are you today?"
- Use emoji tools throughout the streaming service as appropriate (thumbs up, hearts, etc)

## **13. Run through your entire Back to Church Sunday celebration to ensure that your team is ready.**

- Set up cameras for live streaming, if needed
- Practice transitions
- Test the audio and video

## **14. In the final week, connect with your people every day.**

- Set a specific time each day when you will have a live conversation online
- Call and/or text your congregation and encourage them to invite their friends and family

**15. Celebrate Back to Church Sunday online and clearly present the Gospel!**

**16. Invite everyone joining your Back to Church Sunday celebration to take their next step.**

- Answer the question: What's next?
- Be prepared in advance to show your new guests how to get connected to your church and ministries
- Invite them to an upcoming event, to join a small group or a Bible study, etc.

**17. Support your people as they directly follow up with their guests.**

- Encourage your people to follow up with those they have invited
- Simple questions they can ask over coffee:
- What stood out to you from our pastor's message?
- Do you have any questions about what you experienced?
- What did you think overall?
- Is there anything you would like to learn more about?

**18. Contact everyone who participated and, thanking them for joining and ask how you can help.**

- Email everyone who attended
- Send out a follow up text or call
- Send a notecard

**Watch Pastor Jason walk through these ideas - click here to watch his last webinar session to see the full content.**





As Vice President of Ministry Mobilization for Outreach, Inc., Jason dedicates his time to encouraging and equipping churches, denominations and ministry organizations to develop their Kingdom effectiveness by creating a culture that is both incarnational and invitational. He also serves as the Executive Director of the National Back to Church Sunday movement and hosts the weekly ChurchLeaders podcast. Jason lives on Anastasia Island, Florida, with his beautiful wife and children. Connect with him on Twitter and Instagram @jasondaye