

IDEAS FOR REACHING YOUR COMMUNITY

10 WAYS TO MAKE A BIG IMPACT ON A SMALL BUDGET



OUTREACH[®]
SHARE GOD'S LOVE

DO BIG EVENTS HAVE TO MEAN BIG BUDGETS?

We talked to almost 30 church leaders who answered with an emphatic “no.” The same leaders affirmed that their events didn’t break the bank and served as entry points to let unchurched men, women and children in their communities know about their weekly worship services and, in some cases, initiate a **personal relationship with Jesus**.

How have these churches managed the monetary, yet brought in the masses? The solutions are numerous. And while some require little effort and others take a little more logistical maneuvering, they all need a strong commitment and most importantly an intentional passion for reaching your community.

The next time an outreach opportunity comes your church’s way, instead of automatically passing it up because “it’s not in the budget,” check out these proven ideas churches are using to juggle their resources.

1. Partner with other area churches.

There's strength in numbers, as five churches in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, have discovered. Each year, they unite for "Convoy of Hope" to bring the Gospel and groceries to needy families in their community. Some 700 volunteers gather on the grounds of a local middle school on a Saturday to distribute 25,000 pounds of groceries. The event also features medical and dental screenings, balloons and clowns, haircuts, hot dogs and drinks, a job fair, live music and drama.

2. Make the most of a city event.

Pay attention to city events happening in your area and use them to inexpensively draw a crowd. Each year during Christiansburg, Virginia's arts and crafts festival, instead of locking its doors and posting "no parking" signs, Main Street Baptist Church uses its downtown location to make its presence known. The church offers its courtyard for carnival activities and opens its doors for people to come in for refreshments, use the restroom or just look around.

3. Keep it Homegrown.

Who says you have to bring in a big act and put on a pyrotechnic show to host an inevitable event that draws families? For \$500 each Fourth of July, Eastern Hills Baptist Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico, hosts an Independence Day picnic on the church's grounds that includes a



barbecue, a moon bounce for kids, balloons, various old-fashioned races and music from the church's praise band. Each family brings their own fireworks, and the church assigns them a certain section of it's parking lot.

4. Solicit and attract local business' participation.

If your church is hosting a communitywide event, don't underestimate the power of petition. Some local businesses are willing to provide services and resources to churches they see supporting the community.

Each year, local businesses donate food, printing for fliers and door prizes, such as guns and fishing rods, for Bayshore Community Church in Granite Bay, Delaware's annual Sportsman Banquet. The event is one of Bayshore's highest attended, drawing 800 men over two nights. Tip: Include names of participating businesses in your promotional or event materials.

5. Focus on one segment of your community.

When you don't have the resources for an event that reaches everyone, zero in on one segment that makes the most sense for your church. Because Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Apple Valley, Minnesota, has its own sound system, it turned its focus to youth. Each year, the church hosts a large-scale Band and DJ Dance outreach that draws hundreds of students from various high schools.



The church invites local bands to play, eliminating the need to spend thousands on booking a big act. The only thing kids are asked to pay for is pizza by the slice.

6. Promote creatively and strategically.

One of the most expensive parts of an outreach event is the process of getting people there. Through the years, Donelson Fellowship in Nashville, Tennessee, has learned that the best—and cheapest—form of promotion is word-of-mouth. That's why the church first aggressively promotes outreach events to its members months ahead of the date. Then a few weeks before, the church prints and distributes invite cards to its members, recognizing the importance of recommendations and relationships.

7. Select a strategic location.

In some cases, event venue selection can offer the most visible and economical promotion. Intent on reaching the college students surrounding Christiansburg, Virginia, Main Street Baptist Church set up an event in the middle of campus on Virginia Tech's drill field. More than 500 students showed up for open-air singing, moon bouncing, food and games. The church used the money it would've spent on advertising for the event itself.



“Even with a ton of promotion (fliers, advertising, etc.), we would never have drawn the students who stopped out of curiosity,” says Pastor Craig Hughes, adding that he saw students make decisions for Jesus that night. As a result, more than a dozen new students and their friends come to Main Street’s college group.

“We’ve also seen about eight to 10 families join our church because they heard about the service at Virginia Tech and were curious.”

8. Enlist church members’ hands-on participation.

Instead of hiring companies to provide simple services, ask worshippers for help, like stuffing 20,000 plastic Easter eggs each year with candy for Donelson Fellowship’s annual Easter egg hunt.

Along with other area churches, St. Paul’s—an urban church in Newport News, Virginia— offers a “Good Friday Dinner & A Movie” ministry. Each week, the church opens its doors to the neighborhood to enjoy a meal and a movie in a safe, drug- and alcohol-free environment. Volunteers from participating churches perform all the labor involved, and a local charity donates food for the meal.

9. Let the congregation know the needs.

One of the best internal benefits to outreach events is the unity that’s created when the whole church works together to reach the community.



In addition to manpower, members may also help with the bottom line. But they first have to know about the need.

Temple Baptist Church in Titusville, Florida, solicited the help of its congregation members, and as a result spent just \$900 on its First Annual Sportsman Banquet—a \$3,500 event not in the church’s budget. The men in the church passed out 400 free tickets to friends and colleagues.

“We made the needs known to the church, and one of our members donated \$2,000 of the cost,” says Pastor Leroy Eldridge. “Late in the afternoon at the event when most of the guests had gone home, we took up an offering and received \$600.” Another businessman in the church donated a \$900 shotgun.

During the banquet, 15 men accepted Christ. “The whole day was a success,” Eldridge recalls. “We saw men come to Christ, introduced others to our church and watched what happens when a church works together to reach out.”

10. Know your community’s interests and needs.

Drawing the unchurched doesn’t always require a meal or a carnival. Instead, ask yourself, “What issues are the people in our church’s community dealing with right now?” First Baptist Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, hosts personal finance workshops with very little cost to the church, says Associate Pastor Mike Jeffries. And national organizations like Crown Financial Ministries assist in event promotion.

“Certain needs are actually names: ‘financial counseling,’ ‘friendships,’ ‘single parents.’ If we’re meeting needs and getting the word out about the availability of those programs, we don’t need a celebrity name to attract our community.”

This article originally appeared in December 2014 on

OutreachMagazine.com

**Subscribe to Outreach Magazine and get Ideas, Innovations,
Resources—Now for Less than \$2 a Month!**

Subscribe today and save 59% off the cover price—Get 1 year for only \$20.

Save even more: Get 2 years for \$30. Or our best offer:

Get 3 years for only \$40. (You save 74% off the cover price.)

*Your subscription includes six regular issues a year of both the print
and iPad editions, plus the Outreach 100 annual bonus issue free.*

www.outreachmagazine.com/20-dollar-offer.html

