



## **17 Tips for Planning a Powerful Back to Church Event**

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# National Back To Church Sunday Is September 19, 2021!

What a year this has been! Our country has closed and reopened, gotten vaccines and changed tiers, and everything in between. So, whether you're celebrating Back to Church Sunday in-person, online, or some sort of hybrid this year, here's what you need to know to start planning a powerful event.

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

Jason Daye, executive director of National Back to Church Sunday, provides 17 helpful tips on how to have a successful Back to Church Sunday this fall.

Explore the practical steps on the next page 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.**

- Seek God's leading as you plan a powerful Back to Church Sunday
- Ask God to use the experiences people have had this past year during COVID-19 to soften their hearts and draw them to church
- Pray specifically for your city to rally together and embrace God's mission

## **02. Evaluate your options.**

- Evaluate what types of services and events your church is able to offer this year – in-person, online, or both
- Get creative with ways to increase capacity safely at your building/campus
- Identify what guests may need during BTCS, so you can provide amazing hospitality

## **03. Start connecting with volunteers.**

- Personally invite people to be a part of BTCS and assign them roles based on their gifts and interests
- Gather digitally or in-person as needed for planning

## **04. Cast the bigger vision.**

- Inspire your people to see how God has been working this past year
- Discuss the opportunity your church has to invite people out of fear and isolation
- 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.**

- For in-person: model a conversation in which you invite someone to church
- For online guests: show them how to host a Watch Party, share your church's video stream online
- Set up a Facebook event, and encourage people to share it/invite their contacts

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

- Use the planning guide and assign volunteers to specific roles
- 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 online people to host home gatherings (if able).**

- Encourage them to consider having a brunch before or lunch after with their friends, as they watch the streamed BTCS service together
- Focus on building relationships and answering any questions your guests might have

## **12. Form in-person and online engagement teams.**

- Have people welcome online 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)
- Have in-person greeters wear masks and hold handheld signs, looking for new people to connect with

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

- Text your team to follow up, as needed
- Set a specific time each day when you will have a live conversation online
- Call and/or text people in your congregation and encourage them to invite their friends and family

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

## **15. 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.

## **16. 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?

## **17. Contact everyone who participated, thank them for joining and ask how you can help.**

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

**Pastor Jason as created a 4-video training series to help you plan and execute a great Back to Church Sunday event - check out Training Videos under the Resources tab on [BacktoChurch.com](http://BacktoChurch.com)**





**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 Instagram @jasondaye**