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Your Church on Mission

BY HEATHER SCHNESE WITH THE EDITORS OF OUTREACH MAGAZINE

OUTREACH
Magazine



FRESH OUTREACH IDEAS IN 2012

Your Church on Mission:

By the editors of Outreach magazine with Heather Schnese

As each new year inevitably does, 2012 will usher in its own unique fads, trends and headlines as the months pass by. Technology, the economy, entertainment—elements of our daily lives will no doubt look different in 2012. Although these culture-shaping elements will likely carry attributes from years past, fresh thoughts and perspectives on them will surprise and change us.

What about the daily life of your church? What will outreach look like in 2012 in your church and community? How will it be different—better—than in years past? What will the headlines of your community say about your church's care and compassion for others, both locally and globally?

What follows is a compendium of 12 fresh outreach ideas for you to consider in 2012. Some are multistep processes; others are events or initiatives you may have heard of or even done before, only with a new or unique twist. The idea here is not simply one-off events. You have the potential to elevate a community; to build lasting relationships with local schools; to reach least-reached people groups. As your church adapts and engages with these ideas and suggestions, our hope and prayer is that congregants will start to understand what it means to carry out the mission of Jesus (*missio Dei*)—both inside and outside church walls, wherever they are.

With this overarching goal, these ideas have the potential to take root, augment, gain strength and start to transform your church, local community and our world in 2012 and beyond. We hope they surprise and change not only your people, but more importantly those in your sphere of influence who need to hear and see the love of Jesus in demonstrative, meaningful ways.

We'd love to hear how these ideas impact your church and community. Tell us your stories of how you adapted them for your context. Email us at tellus@outreachmagazine.com. For more ideas and information on becoming and being a church on mission, go to OutreachMagazine.com.

INSIDE YOUR CHURCH

If you're not intentional about the things you do and say inside your church to cultivate a missional DNA, you'll likely fall short when trying to make a difference outside your church. The following five ideas focus on honing what you've already got inside—training and equipping your staff and small groups to think less about themselves and more about reaching others; making your worship experiential; adding a recovery group for your youth; and offering up your facility for use in your community.



START A MISSION TO BE MISSIONAL

“The forces that oppose the kingdom of God in this world are not nearly as afraid of pastors as much as they are the notion of every Christ follower simply embodying and contextualizing the mission of Jesus in their lives.”

—Rob Wegner, pastor of life mission, Granger Community Church in Granger, Ind.

It's been said that you're only as good as your leader. So, if your church is only as missional as its leader, how missional is your church? Changing a mindset—from a church that's OK maintaining status quo to a church that embraces movement—takes considerable time and effort. 2012 may be the time to start the journey. Begin at the top. Commit to training and equipping your leaders on what it means and looks like to be missional, and watch your efforts to reach out become more fluid and effective among the rest of your church.

Examine your vision statement—the guidepost for all your church's decisions. Are your vision statement and core values oriented to the idea that every believer is a missionary? If not, collaborate. Invite your community to offer creative ideas and join in the development and editing process. Your commitment to move toward a missional mindset will inspire your church and give them ownership in this new vision. In turn, your leaders gain a clear understanding of where the people in your church are—or aren't—in their understanding and embrace of missional thinking.

Educate and equip. Walk your leadership team through books like Alan Hirsch's *The Forgotten Ways*, Michael Frost's *The Road to Missional*, Hugh Halter and Matt Smay's *The Tangible Kingdom*, or *Missional Moves* by Rob Wegner (releasing fall 2012).

Then, educate and equip some more. Walk your church through the same missional discussion.

Preach and teach about it. Develop message series and small group studies around being on mission and church as movement. Understanding and communicating what it means to be missional will become more natural among your leaders.

Tell stories at your staff meetings and worship. Each time you meet, encourage staff members to tell stories of missional thinking and serving. Then inspire missional action by sharing the successes of those in your church who are carrying out the mission of Jesus wherever they are.

THE CHURCH ON MISSION

Over the past 10 years, Granger Community Church in Granger, Ind., has explored, wrestled with and ultimately embraced what it means to be missional. The process has included many of the ideas above—including five revisions of its vision statement. But the journey hasn't ended. In fact, the church has made some pretty hefty missional goals to reach by 2016 based on what they've learned so far. Rob Wegner, Granger's pastor of life mission, says the church's leadership now "has a profound sense that people are truly beginning to understand church as movement and seeing its potential for both the church and their personal lives."

TOOLS: Reinforce the core values of a vision statement with multiple impressions, via banners, handouts or bulletins and direct mail.



GET EXPERIENTIAL WITH WORSHIP

“It is one thing to talk about God. It is quite another thing to experience God.”

—Author and theologian Leonard Sweet

Use an image or a prop during a message and chances are your audience will remember more about what you said. Take it a step further and engage your audience. Let them experience worship—get out of their seats, touch something, reply, respond or give. The meaning and application of the message will be better remembered (hopefully by your guests!), as people begin to experience God’s Word for themselves and become active participants in His mission.

Consider the season or message series. No need to revamp your planned messages. Any message can be experiential, but be cognizant of the season or series you’re in and know exactly what you want people to remember or take away from it.

Map out your venue. Does your worship setting allow for easy traffic flow to and from the altar or front of the church? If so, consider an illustration in which people bring something to the front—perhaps a rock symbolizing something that continues to weigh them down. If your setting doesn’t allow for traffic, consider passing something throughout the audience—for example, a sponge filled with vinegar to help people imagine Jesus’ inhumane experience on the cross.

Consider technology. Let attendees use their cell phones to respond to questions you pose and then immediately see the results on the screen. Or use an online media platform like MediaSocial, which allows users to log onto Facebook and Twitter to engage in live and prerecorded webcasts.

Create an incentive to return. Use QR codes on banners and follow-up mailers, directing people to videos, movie clips, etc., to promote an upcoming message series or initiative. For example, several weeks before a weekend of service, use QR codes directing people to videos showing community needs and opportunities to help.

THE CHURCH ON MISSION

At Community Christian Church, a multisite congregation in Chicago, Lead Pastor Dave Ferguson taught a message from 1 Peter 2:9, reinforcing the truth that everyone shares in the priesthood of Christ. Ferguson then offered to anoint and pray for anyone who would accept that call into ministry. “I had no idea what would happen,” Ferguson says. “I was overwhelmed when we had more than 2,000 people come forward to be anointed and declare the people or place they felt called to reach. I will never forget that celebration service!”

TOOLS: Place QR codes on church banners and direct mail to promote an upcoming message series and raise a worship experience to a new level of engagement. Go to Outreach.com to learn more and find other ideas for using QR codes in your church.



CELEBRATE RECOVERY FOR YOUTH

75%

The percentage of high school students who have used tobacco, alcohol, marijuana or cocaine—that’s 10 million students. One in five meets the criteria to become an addict.

—National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse

20%

The percentage of American teens who will have experienced depression by the end of their teenage years.

—Families for Depression Awareness

In today’s world, the teen years are far from carefree. Youth are stressed, struggling through peer pressure. Some are facing their parents’ divorce or separation. Others are dealing with bullying and broken relationships. Too many turn to alcohol and drugs, often leading to addictions, depression and

sometimes suicide. Teens need devoted, consistent support that recognizes and helps them cope with these stressors. Create a teen version of Celebrate Recovery that your youth can access personally and invite other struggling students to check out.

Choose a time and place. Select a time to host a two-hour meeting each week. Make sure it doesn't conflict with popular school events many teens may attend—such as football games.

Ask for help. Chances are a number of individuals in your church have struggled through addictions, divorce, peer pressure or other issues. Ask them to help you facilitate the weekly meetings. Firsthand, personal experience goes far with teens.

Get the word out. Hang fliers in local businesses or teen hangouts. Ask youth to let others know about it.

Facebook it. Encourage your youth group to “like” the new ministry's Facebook page and share it with their friends.

Meet! The meetings can include icebreaker games, a speaker, discussion on topics like denial, introspection, helplessness, hope and giving God control. Give teens a chance to share and pray in gender-specific small groups.

Build relationships and encourage more involvement. Let teens know your primary interest and motivation is their well-being—not that they attend church. Make sure teens understand and grasp that you and the church are there to walk with them through their struggles.

THE CHURCH ON MISSION

Abundant Life Church in Freehold, N.J., began a teen ministry, using the student resource *The Landing* geared to youth ages 12 through 19 struggling with addiction, divorce, peer pressure, depression, abuse and other issues. Within eight months, some 20 teens were attending the weekly meetings—many non-Christians. And their youth group stepped out on mission to reach their peers.

TOOLS: Find resources for your teen ministry, including banners, youth ministry brochures you can customize and small group study guides. Host a film night featuring *To Save a Life*.

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A COMMUNITY RESOURCE

In a growing community, space can be tight for local events—especially in a down economy. Offer space in your building and/or land to organized clubs, school groups or local organizations needing room for everything from proms and sporting events to meetings and luncheons. Hospitality in any situation speaks to people. Draw new people (probably some who have resolved to never darken a church door) inside and create multiple opportunities to meet and build relationships with those outside your church.

Consider your assets. What do you have? Classrooms? If so, how many? A gym? If so, what size? A large gathering space? An outdoor field? A parking lot that sits empty throughout the week?

Let it be known. Once you've identified the space, types of activities you can host and how many people you can accommodate, contact your chamber of commerce, schools and civic organizations to help get the word out that your church is opening its doors.

Appoint a coordinator to manage the calendar and know who's meeting when and where.

Enlist greeters. Ask volunteers to sign up for various shifts to welcome the groups using your space, and be available to answer any questions. Have information about your worship services or ministries available.

THE CHURCH ON MISSION

Five years ago, the city of Salisbury, N.C., wanted to build a convention center big enough to host large events for the community, but all initiatives were voted down. At the time, the local Cornerstone Church was prepping for a new building. But knowing the city's needs, the church instead built an event center which has now hosted every major event that's taken place in Rowan County in the past three years—proms, Martin Luther King Jr. prayer breakfasts, civic theater shows, county chamber benefits and more.

So successful with their one event center, the church purchased 45 acres of prime commercial property located between four busy interstates and intends to develop 20 acres with another event center. Future plans are to partner with a hotel and fast-food chain to develop the rest of the land with a grant. County commissioners praised Cornerstone in a local newspaper article for "accomplishing more than they've been able to do in five years."



BECOME ABOLITIONISTS

“I believe the kingdom now advances through grace and freedom.”

—Author Philip Yancey

Between 14,500 and 17,500 The estimated number of women and children in the United States who are trafficked each year.

—U.S. Department of State

On Jan. 31, 1865, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery in America: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude ... shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.” Sadly, today the number of slaves both here in the United States and abroad is at an all-time high. In fact, sex trafficking—the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation—is now one of the largest global crimes, second only to drug trafficking. To help the victims of sexual trafficking and promote policy change that will make it harder for traffickers to traffic, churches are becoming modern-day abolitionists. In doing so, they’re demonstrating the freedom of Christ’s love and what it looks like when a church on mission shows compassion.

Learn. Find out what sex trafficking is, how it works, how prevalent it is, especially in your community, and its root causes.

Raise awareness. Share what’s happening with those in your community and inspire action.

Host a speaker like a local news reporter who has covered the issue in your area. Or Christine Caine, founder of The A21 Campaign (Abolishing Injustice in the 21st Century), working to rescue, shelter and restore sex trafficking victims.

Invite people to participate in Freedom Sunday. Join more than 2,500 other churches and faith communities in celebrating Freedom Sunday in February. Not For Sale, an international movement to re-abolish slavery, sponsors Freedom Sunday and offers resources including sermon

notes, suggested music, Bible studies, videos, and fact sheets and articles.

Host a film night, followed by discussion (for adult audiences). Consider *Nefarious*, *Human Trafficking* or *The Jammed*.

Commit long term to raising funds, creating prayer teams, lobbying politicians or starting an ongoing awareness group, among other creative initiatives.

THE CHURCH ON MISSION

In March, Allen Temple Baptist Church in Oakland, Calif., partnered with Not For Sale to celebrate Freedom Weekend—two days devoted to addressing sex trafficking in various ways. The weekend included sermons on the topic, a documentary, a skit demonstrating the pain and suffering involved in trafficking, and a testimony of a victim of sexual exploitation. Allen Temple has created its own ministry called The Streets Disciples to talk with and minister to the girls on their neighborhood streets and is working on creating a space victims can come to and receive help and protection.

TOOLS: Customize bulletins, banners and direct mail for Freedom Sunday or another Sunday your church commits to focus on the injustice of human trafficking. Leading up to the day/weekend, use QR codes on direct mail to inform your community about the local impact (direct users to a TV report, a local website, etc.). The day of, use QR codes on banners and bulletins directing attendees to reports and websites that inform users about the global impact.

OUTSIDE YOUR CHURCH

Getting outside church walls is integral to inspiring your church to actually see and begin to grasp what it means to be the church on mission. What follows are seven ideas that will likely take you and your church to new territories—Laundromats, other churches, local businesses, maybe even Africa. They also challenge you to recognize and understand your community's deepest hurts and then help heal the pain—like that of women and children enslaved in human trafficking or those who have lost homes and loved ones in natural disasters. As you start to implement these ideas outside your walls, our prayer is that your church begins to catch the vision of themselves as missionaries called to take the Gospel wherever they are and may go.



FRIEND A FAMILY

43 million The estimated number of foreign-born people living in the United States.

—Grantmakers Concerned for Immigrants and Refugees

Traditionally, immigrants to the United States have headed to one of six states—California, New York, Texas, Florida or New Jersey. In recent years, however, nearly every state has seen an influx in immigrants. And no longer are immigrant communities confined to central cities. Some 12.8 million immigrants live in the suburbs. Although estimates vary, it is believed immigrants now account for nearly 12 percent of the total U.S. population.

What does this mean for your church? Chances are there's an immigrant community near you—and they could probably use your help. Seemingly simple tasks like grocery shopping, applying for a job and registering kids for school can be frightening for anyone unfamiliar with American culture and society. Help connect American families in your church with local immigrant families and watch new relationships form and grow.

Know your community. If you don't already know who your immigrant population is, make a few phone calls; do a little research. Discover where people are from, what their traditional beliefs

are, and where they live in proximity to your church.

Contact an immigrant leader. Learn who the leaders in an immigrant community are and let them know that your church would like to help families acclimate to the United States. Ask, “What are your greatest needs?”

Enlist American families in your church who want to befriend an immigrant family. Look for opportunities to match families with kids of similar ages or interests.

Organize the meetings. Create a schedule for a determined amount of time—once a week for six weeks, for example. Each meeting should cover a topic relevant to immigrant families looking for assistance—finances, education, applying for documentation and social security, driving, etc. Consider opening the meetings in prayer or short worship.

Have fun. Host or plan fun events families can attend together—a children’s carnival in your parking lot, a picnic at a local park, block parties.

THE CHURCH ON MISSION

From the western side of Burma (near India), the Chin flee their country because of racial, political and religious persecution. Many have settled in north Texas. They lack education and come from a land of jungles and mountains where they know agriculture—not computers, cell phones and TV. So The Village Church in Flower Mound, Texas, established a ministry whereby American families meet with Chin families for six months, each week covering a critical component of American life—budget and finances, health, refrigeration, cleanliness, to name a few examples. In addition to these meetings are scheduled fellowship events affording the families opportunities to pray and worship together, have fun with each other, and just do everyday life together.

TOOLS: Use door hangers to let residents know about your church and its specific ministries. Plan an open house and equip the church with invite tickets they can use to tell immigrant communities and others about the upcoming event.



CREATE INVITABLE EVENTS

82% The percentage of unchurched people who say they are at least somewhat likely to attend church if invited.

—LifeWay Research

By using ready-made, customizable initiatives and programs, you can make the holidays unique and memorable. You also give people more dynamic and tangible reasons to invite (and invite again) friends and family to church. Here are a few options:

Easter: The Thorn

Since its debut, thousands of people have watched *The Thorn*—a live touring drama that tells the story of the cross through music, acting, dance, martial arts, gymnastics, pyrotechnics and video. What if your church came together on mission to present *The Thorn* on a smaller scale with the specific goal of inviting friends and family to witness the Passion and resurrection firsthand? Here's what you'll need:

The Thorn Easter Experience

- Order *The Thorn Easter Experience* church kit including: a short video; two worship songs with audio track, lyrics, and matching videos; a customizable sermon with available video illustration; two dramas with scripts; and planning and promotional materials.
- Garner excitement within your church and community.
- Encourage people to take *The Thorn* materials and give to family and friends as an invitation to Easter at your church.
- Plan a follow-up message series and/or events to invite visitors back.

Mother's Day: Pin-a-Sister Sunday (May 13, 2012)

Through Pin-A-Sister Sunday, Mother's Day at your church can recognize breast cancer survivors, promote health, raise awareness about the disease, and honor those who have lost their lives to it. By pinning pink ribbons on each other, members and visitors have a chance to encourage each other

and demonstrate their commitment to fighting breast cancer. The Pin-A-Sister campaign started in 2007 to educate African-American and Hispanic women—those with the highest death rate among breast cancer patients—about breast health. Now some 600 churches are involved and will participate in Pin-A-Sister Sunday and subsequently honor many brave mothers.

- Download a free tool kit.
- Promote the idea in your church. Encourage people to invite their mothers, and their family and friends who have been affected by breast cancer.
- On Mother's Day, provide extra ribbons for people to take and give to those who were unable to attend.
- Start a support group or ministry for those suffering from breast cancer and kick it off on Mother's Day.
- Invite people to attend on Mother's Day.

Back to Church Sunday (Sept. 16, 2012)

National Back to Church Sunday (third Sunday of each September) gives churches another reason to invite friends and family who don't regularly attend worship services to check out church again or for the first time. For various reasons, people simply get out of the habit of going to church. Some have yet to realize or experience that church isn't a place they go, but rather a community of worship. They're open to checking out a worship service at the invitation of a friend they trust. Your church can help facilitate the process.

- Mark your calendars for Sept. 16, 2012.
- Order a Back to Church kit, including a campaign planning guide, two suggested sermons, a promotional video, digital banners and tips.
- Generate excitement within your church early. Teach a message on the Great Commission and the importance of praying for opportunities to share your God story. Encourage people to set goals for themselves—for example: invite 10 people; bring at least two.
- Promote Back to Church Sunday on your website, blogs, Facebook and Twitter.
- Start a message series about the church—what it is and isn't, and our response as participants in the church.
- Develop a follow-up strategy to offer another reason to invite people back. Start small groups that meet for a short time, and give people a chance to check out small groups and Christianity. Plan an “open house” that affords the opportunity to learn more about the church and leaders.

Christmas: Advent Conspiracy

Behind the Advent Conspiracy are four simple concepts: worship fully, spend less, give more and love all. The movement of churches—conspirators—believes money can go toward better things than material gifts during the holidays. One out of countless options? Clean drinking water for developing countries. Through Advent Conspiracy, your church gets to decide how and where it would like to celebrate Jesus' birth in a meaningful way.

- Watch podcasts that will help you cast the vision at your church.
- Download promotional materials, including posters and press releases.
- Garner excitement within your church and community.
- Prepare with downloadable curriculum, bulletins, logo and pastor resources.
- Plan a follow-up mission event or day focused on the particular area/topic to which you gave during advent.
- Invite people to Christmas services.

CHURCH ON MISSION

Sweet Rest Church of Christ (Holiness) in Pearl, Miss., credits Back to Church Sunday for its 33 percent membership growth over the past two years. With 100 new members after its first Back to Church Sunday, Sweet Rest announced a second Sunday morning worship service at its second Back to Church Sunday and has continued to see growth.



BE DISASTER-READY

4 million acres, 2,800 homes Property destroyed by flames during the unusually devastating 2011 fire season in Texas.

—*Incident Information System*

Across the world, hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding and fires leave millions without homes, jobs and sometimes even family and friends. In the wake of a natural disaster, people need very real, practical needs met—water, shelter, blankets, flashlights, etc. Your church can provide both living essentials and hope to many people who have lost hope. Prepare your church. Be ready to act when disaster and heartache strike by creating and equipping a team that's able to respond quickly with a variety of aid.

Know the potential disasters. Consider your geographic location—and history—to determine the most likely disasters for your area. What will be the most pressing needs?

Find a partner. Consider your denominational or network affiliation. Look for a partner with existing disaster relief programs that you can engage and resource. Neighboring churches may already be partnering with a ministry or organization, and sometimes joining forces makes the most sense.

Know your resources. Ask who in your church has vehicles to transport heavy equipment; tools like chainsaws to chop fallen trees; room and availability to host volunteers or those who've lost their homes, etc. Create and publish a contact list of names, numbers and email addresses to access when needed.

Let it be known. Decide on a partner, create a plan, appoint three to four key people from your church to be first responders and run point, and then let community officials (city council, police and fire departments) know you're ready to help when needed.

THE CHURCH ON MISSION

New Horizons Fellowship in Apex, N.C., created an ongoing disaster-response ministry after work teams from the church helped other churches rebuild communities in the Carolinas damaged by

Hurricane Floyd in 1999. The team has since traveled to West Virginia, Georgia, New York City and, after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, to Gulfport, Miss., to meet needs. The team also has partnered with other groups like North Carolina Baptist Men and the American Red Cross.

TOOLS: Make sure your team is equipped to meet both physical and spiritual needs. Give each team a pack of booklets, such as *Does God Care* and *The God Questions*, that they can offer to hurting victims.



DO LAUNDRY WITH LOVE

46.9 million. The number of people in the United States who live in poverty (up from 37.3 million in 2007).

—World Hunger

For the unemployed or those living below the poverty line, doing laundry is tough—logistically and financially. Without washers and dryers at home, it takes money, time and physical energy, all often hard to come by.

Through Laundry Love Projects, or similar initiatives, churches are not only chipping in the quarters and soap, but actually washing clothes for struggling individuals and families. Behind Laundry Love Projects—an initiative of the nonprofit JustOne focused on raising awareness of poverty—is the mission to convert Laundromats into hubs of relief. Those who live in shelters, motels, cars or on the streets can get their clothes cleaned and talk to someone who will listen, encourage and help in other ways too. As the washing machines hum and the dryers tumble, conversations begin.

Collect quarters. Involve your children's ministry and youth group. Encourage kids—and their parents—to save quarters to help those less fortunate wash their clothes.

Collect laundry detergent. Lead a detergent drive and encourage church members to pick up an extra bottle or two of detergent and water softener the next time they're at the store.

Designate a Sunday for everyone to bring in their saved quarters and detergent.

Connect with a Laundromat (and its owner). Explain to the owner who you are and that your church would like to host a time to wash clothes for patrons. Ask when the least intrusive date and time may be, and leave your contact information should the owner have questions.

Advertise your project. Leave door hangers or posters in nearby motels, shelters or other appropriate social agencies.

Enlist teams of four to six volunteers for each washing event.

Wash! Using the quarters and detergent collected, wash the laundry of those less fortunate. And don't forget to ask, "How can we pray for you?"

THE CHURCH ON MISSION

On the first Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. to noon, volunteers from Irving Bible Church in Irving, Texas, head down the street to Amigo Laundromat. There they wash nearly 100 loads of laundry for their neighbors in need using detergent and coins collected by the rest of the church. Those getting their laundry washed often ask what the kindness is for, and volunteers are able to share their testimony and explain that they're living out the Great Commandment. So successful with its one monthly event, the church is hoping to begin another Laundry Love event each month hosted by its youth group.

TOOLS: Canvas motels and housing projects with custom doorhangers promoting your Laundry Love event. Select a fixed date (the first Saturday of each month) and use the same doorhangers each time to create a consistent impression.



SEND A BACKPACK

\$150 average cost for a child in Africa to attend school for a year.

—*Children's Cup*

For schoolchildren in Africa, going back to school is much more expensive than the cost of purchasing items on a long list of school supplies. For some, education is a premium, hard to come by, and the cost dangerous, if not insurmountable. Many, in fact, are forced into prostitution and slavery to make the money necessary to attend school.

So this year, in addition to supporting local elementary schools with a school supplies drive, make it possible for kids across the globe to get an education. Plus, encourage kids receiving backpacks filled with supplies to give back by assembling one for a peer in Africa and even writing a note to the recipient.

Partner with a nonprofit organization like Children's Cup that can facilitate the global portion of the backpack drive. Each backpack is \$15 and covers the cost of shipping them (filled) to Africa.

Encourage families in your church to take a backpack and fill it with school supplies, including crayons, colored pencils, pens, pencils, erasers, sharpeners, scissors, glue sticks and stickers.

Write notes to the children who will receive the bags. Include words of encouragement and scripture verses. Encourage children to draw pictures.

Return the filled backpacks back to Children's Cup, which will, in turn, mail them to children in Africa.

*If you're already in partnership with a ministry or organization in Africa, consider purchasing your own backpacks and working directly with your partnering ministry to distribute them to children in need.

THE CHURCH ON MISSION

In 2011, Healing Place Church in Baton Rouge, La., collected more than 8,000 backpacks full of school supplies that were shipped to children in Southern Africa through Children's Cup. They also set a goal to raise enough funds for 150 school fee scholarships for children in Swaziland and Mozambique. Not only did they surpass their goal, but doubled it with funds for 329 scholarships—more than \$49,000.

TOOLS: Inside each backpack for both local and global students, include a copy of the Bible.



HOST FREE DAY CAMPS

An estimated nearly half of all Americans who accept Jesus as their Savior do so before reaching the age of 13 (43 percent).

—The Barna Group

Expand the reach of your traditional vacation Bible school by transforming it into a series of interest-specific day camps. If you're running out of space for your VBS, day camps allow you to invite more children to your church over the course of many weeks while running two or three camps simultaneously. You'll also draw parents or children who are interested in sports, music or nature, but not necessarily "Bible school." Camp themes can include: soccer, T-ball, basketball, nature/outdoors, music and drama/theater, science, etc.

Choose day camp themes and find volunteers. Based on your community's interests, select appropriate sports or activities. Then begin enlisting volunteers who can help lead the specific camps. Your youth group is a great source!

Create camp schedules. Consider one or two mornings a week for four to six weeks. Divide the camps into manageable age brackets depending on estimated participation.

Complete background checks on all interested volunteers and let parents know everyone working with their kids has been checked out.

Tell your community. Market your day camps via local paper advertisements, your church's website, moms or Meetup groups and mass mailings.

Solicit local businesses and stores for donations of food, craft items, sports equipment, etc. Many will donate resources for your camps if they're for the community. Consider asking permission to use local parks (i.e. soccer or baseball field) or even a community theater.

Begin registration. Enlist a team of volunteers devoted to registering children and answering parents' questions.

Host! Much like a traditional VBS, welcome the children and their parents as they arrive at camp. Open and close each camp with prayer and a short devotional. And don't forget to have fun.

THE CHURCH ON MISSION

Every April, Grace Community Church in Washingtonville, N.Y., begins receiving phone calls from its community asking about "SummerQuest"—the church's free summer day camps. Excited parents want to know when registration will begin and what camps will be offered. For the past 15 years, the church has hosted day camps for sports including soccer, basketball, even roller hockey, theater/drama, music and nature/outdoors. Some 50 to 60 Grace volunteers (half of which are teens from the church's youth group) run each camp for about 200 kids (kindergarten through sixth grade), and last year, 150 children made commitments to Christ.

TOOLS: Use door hangers, banners and direct mail to let your community know about the camps. The last day of camp, pass out Bibles children can give to their parents.



LUNCHEONS WITH LEADERSHIP

“Leaders need to develop a practical plan and resources that allow people to begin the journey from ‘here’ to ‘there.’”

—Willow Creek Community Church founding and Senior Pastor Bill Hybels

Budgets are tight, employee morale down and resources short. Business leaders today juggle a lot to be successful in their workplace, let alone home or in their spiritual lives. Come alongside the business owners, doctors, lawyers, attorneys, CEOs, managers, etc., in your community. Invite them to make room in their busy schedules for some support, direction and encouragement on making ethical, Christ-like decisions that will positively impact them—and the people they lead.

Select one day out of every month to regularly meet with leaders over the lunch hour.

Select a place. Consider a neutral location central to a large business district.

Invite leaders. Ask marketplace leaders in your church to invite co-workers.

Select topics. You may choose to take leaders through a book like *Lead Like Jesus* by Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, or ask leaders in advance for issues they'd like to discuss—leadership principles, balancing work and home, reducing debt—and write your own study.

Meet. Each meeting should include prayer, time for conversation and discussion. If specific issues are raised or questions asked, follow up the next time you meet.

THE CHURCH ON MISSION

Pastor Bil Cornelius at Bay Area Fellowship in Corpus Christi, Texas, recently met with 20 to 25 business leaders from the community over lunch once a month for six months. Basing his meetings on the leaders' individual needs and challenges, he used Scripture illustrations to focus on applicable biblical principles. Bay Area also hosts annual leadership conferences drawing people locally and nationally to encourage leaders to tap into their God-given potential.
