

**Parish Event and PR Ideas**  
*Prepared by*  
*The Episcopal Diocese of West Missouri*  
*2008 Communications Committee*

***Event Ideas to Promote***

The following offers ideas on how to proactively generate additional interest in your church through special events. Remember to promote your event to the community through the media — newspapers, magazines, television, radio and the Internet/Web. Send information to newspapers a few weeks in advance, two months in advance for magazines, and a week (and day of event) to television and radio. If in doubt, contact local media and ask for their deadlines and suggestions on when and how to submit information. Feel free to use the media templates posted in the Communications Resources section of the diocesan website.

**Note:** In addition to sharing information with the media, remember to create excitement and promote your event by sharing your plans with the congregation. Write articles about the event in the newsletter and update your website. Make announcements in the bulletin and during worship. Ask the pastor to include hospitality concepts in his/her sermons. Hang banners. Include an invitation to your event on your recorded phone message. Develop flyers and ask each member to post them in establishments where they do business.

***Plan Events in Advance***

Plan any event at least a month in advance and create a list of invitees. Give each church member (include children and youth) five invitations and ask them to write a personal note in each and return. A list of invitees should be created and posted so members can become familiar with the names before the event. Invitations should be sent two weeks in advance. It is crucial that every member of your congregation be prepared to invite and receive newcomers into a relationship with your church.

***Event Ideas***

1.     **Blessing of the Animals**  
Invite the community and their pets to this service, which provides a wonderful photo opportunity for local media. Consider holding a reception following the service for attendees and their pets.
  
2.     **Summer Bible School**  
Hosting a summer bible school is a great opportunity to share the Good News with young ones and their parents. It's also offers an enriching and fun learning opportunity for children. If your parish holds a vacation bible school, forward the dates and information on planned activities to local media for inclusion in the calendar section or as a feature.
  
3.     **Saturday Night Live/Movie Night**  
Stage a comedy dinner show using church talent. Or invite the community to attend a free movie with popcorn and soda provided. Include a tour of the facilities and make sure each newcomer is introduced to at least five other people.

**4. Community Worship Services**

Plan special worship services to reach out to others in the community. Consider structuring services around issues and themes that are important to your community. Announce the events with door hangers, invitations and perhaps even personal letters to the community.

**5. Diversity Services**

If your congregation is ethnically diverse, celebrate that gift! Invite members to dress in native attire, to pray in their own languages, to introduce songs or hymns from their native countries, or to educate the congregation about their homelands' religious traditions.

**6. Serve the Servants**

Invite and recognize volunteers from the community (police officers, hospital workers, firefighters, etc.) and their families. Alert the media of your recognition of these special people. In some cases, it may be most appropriate to send photos and caption information to the local newspaper after the fact.

**7. Community Fundraising Events**

Host community fundraising events such as charity runs, parade floats, ice cream socials or auctions to benefit mission work or local charities. Promote the event to local media. At a minimum, place information in local community calendars.

**8. Parents' Night Out**

Ask the youth group to host (with adult supervision) childcare evenings at the church.

**9. Artisan Day**

Display the works of artists (woodworkers, sculptors, craftspersons) in the foyer/vestibule or invite the public to view members' collections of dolls, quilts, written works, trains, etc., and meet the congregation. Provide information about the church and tour of the facilities.

**10. Welcoming Weekends**

Invite guests and/or newcomers to a Friday night (free) dinner with contemporary music and introductions (don't forget name badges). Begin Saturday with breakfast and a mini-Bible study and conduct theme-specific discussion groups, special children's sessions, a picnic lunch with a storyteller or arrange for devotional or special music. Have members agree to pick up guests and bring them to Sunday's worship service and introduce them during the service.

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