

# 13 WAYS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR FALL OUTREACH

As summer plans are already getting done, it's time to plan for fall. Don't miss this crucial season, especially as families settle into a more regular schedule. Here are ways to maximize your fall.



## 1. START PREPARING NOW

Decide that your preparation will begin in an adequate timeframe to enable the execution of a workable strategy for fall. Start now. Bring leaders into the discussion.

## 2. CAST A VISION FOR FALL

Don't just keep this among the leaders, get the members involved. Preach on the vision on a strategic Sunday in early/mid August. Build anticipation for what God will do.

## 3. SET MEASURABLE FALL GOALS

Adopting the shotgun approach will achieve little. What you need is to narrow down the broad vision into 2-4 workable goals that are clear and measurable. What do you want to achieve this fall at your church?

## 4. CONSIDER THE SCHEDULES OF FAMILIES

Map out local schools. Coordinate your fall with the back-to-school schedule of families. Don't miss out on the opportunity to connect with, serve, and attract young families toward the ministry you're offering.

## 5. DE-BLAH YOUR WEBSITE

It's frustrating for potential visitors to experience an inefficient and outdated website. You don't need to break the bank. Keep the design simple, fix links, make it easy for people to find what they need. It's an important tool.

## 6. USE RELEVANT SOCIAL MEDIA

Harness the power of social media by choosing relevant platforms (Twitter, Facebook, etc) and create a simple plan to communicate what's next. Pick a staff member or leader or two to oversee this important means of connecting.

## 7. ENLIST ENCOURAGERS TO CONNECT

How do we help visitors take the next steps so they will return? Get gifted encouragers (you may already have names popping into your head) into church chats or meet-the-pastor times after worship to connect. Coach them well to help visitors take the next step in your church. Give them a clear pathway to follow.

## 8. GIVE VISITORS REASONS TO SHOW UP

Don't just expect visitors to show up. Give the unchurched or dechurched in your community reasons to visit. A MAIN REASON should be..a fall sermon series starting after Labor Day. Maybe create a fun activity after a worship service for kids. Fall is a great time for a cookout or bonfire. Invite your community!

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## 9. MAKE A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION

First impressions matter, so create checkpoints at your church to help visitors feel welcome. Create teams to connect in the parking lot, at the front door, and on the way into the worship area. Have a well-manned info table. Provide info on your church there and have helpers to take families to the children's ministry and nursery.

Visitors, especially families, will love the friendly help. They will know they are valued.

## 10. GIVE VISITORS REASONS TO COME BACK

You found ways to invite people in for a fall sermon series, and as they came you welcomed them...now give them reasons to return. Every service should have announced "next step(s)." What new is happening with small groups in the fall? A new study? A new mission focus? Are there new classes or ministries? Ask... "Why should a visitor return?" and then give them solid reasons to keep coming.

## 11. FOLLOW-UP VISITORS

Once you've made a good first impression, it doesn't end there.

You create a plan to follow-up & engage visitors after Sunday. We suggest 4 touches: Sunday evening call, church letter mailed on Monday, handwritten note mailed on Thursday, and a call from the pastor on Saturday. Who will be on your team to keep this process moving week after week? Be intentional in your follow-up.

## 12. PLAN A SPECIAL DAY FOR PEOPLE TO BRING THEIR FRIENDS

Don't only give a sermon series to attend. Have one special day where inviting someone new will be a priority. Maybe it's the Sunday just after Labor Day and just before the series begins. Then your sermon series geared to connect with newcomers is the means by which you encourage their return.

## 13. SET A DATE TO ASSESS GOALS

**DON'T MISS THIS.** You can't just create goals like the ones above or whatever goals your leadership determines will maximize your fall. To get them done well you need everyone involved to know that there is an assessment coming. Look at the planned outcome of each measurable goal and the actual outcome. How did you do? What were your wins? What aspects of the plan did not work well?

What can be honed and how for future plans and goals?

Talk about it with your ministry team and among your leadership. Feedback is an important aspect of growth in any organization.