



## PREPARING FOR AN EVANGELISTIC EVENT

A checklist of the “obvious” and “not-so-obvious” practical details to help things run smoothly.

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### BEFORE YOU START

Be clear about the purpose of the Event you are planning. Is it primarily:

Bible Teaching - for Christians?

Pre-evangelistic - to help build relationships and bridges with non-believers?

Evangelistic - to bring non-believers to Christ through a clear presentation of the gospel

The following material will hopefully help you have a good **Evangelistic Event**.

A good Evangelistic Event is one:

- Where unbelievers are present and the program is tailored to the unbeliever
  - Where the atmosphere is warm and welcoming
  - Where the program is centred upon a clear explanation of the gospel
  - Where there are opportunities for Christians and their invited friends to chat/discuss
  - Where a response is invited and follow up is offered
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### “WHERE UNBELIEVERS ARE PRESENT AND THE PROGRAM IS TAILORED TO THE UNBELIEVER”

- Alert all the Christians in the congregation that this event is not, in the first instance, for their pleasure or fellowship. It is primarily designed for evangelising the non believer. So it is important to encourage them to pray for their friends and to have courage to invite them. Make sure to emphasise that everyone should still come to support those who are there. We should all want to meet, and encourage, each other’s friends.
- Aim to accommodate the target group you are hoping to reach. Attractive Evangelistic Events usually try to reflect the balance between formal or informal, and whether to be activity based or meal based. E.g. Consider these factors in your decision making:
  - Age and gender
  - Interests
  - Lifestyle
  - Felt-needs
  - Occupation
  - Education

- The size of the Event (i.e. estimated number of participants) will help you consider whether to have

A 'Dialogue' Meeting (a small group of approximately 8-12 people, predominately non Christians, with a trained Christian leader/facilitator to answer questions)

A "Q and A" session where (previously notified as well as on the spot) questions can be answered. Sometimes visual aids, whiteboards, etc can be used.

A larger, slightly more formal, gathering in which the speaker/s address the group in a standard speaking format.

- Events held during the day will exclude the majority of paid workers and full time students (men and women).
- Events held at weekends, or at night, may require a tighter and more simplified program so as to avoid conflict with other commitments.

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## **"WHERE THE ATMOSPHERE IS WARM AND WELCOMING"**

When choosing the venue bear in mind

- The cost – remembering that it is best if guests are paid for by the person/s extending the invitation.
- The atmosphere – it needs to be warm and welcoming. Women particularly notice any effort spent on decoration and hospitality!
- Access for cars and people
- Suitability – Evaluate for any background noise, suitable lighting, fool-proof PA system, helpful acoustics, seating where everyone can see speaker easily and comfortably while allowing for eye contact with speaker.
- The possible adverse impact of using the actual church building for outsider Events. If there is no alternative then try to de-spiritualise the furniture and décor.
- Parents may require safe and adequate child care to enable them to enjoy full participation in the event.

A special word for women:

- Childcare needs to be well planned
- Craft is often a drawcard (e.g. Ginger Bread House or jewellery making)
- Meals (breakfast, lunch or dinner) can be costly but they allow for conversation

A special word for men

- Guys really appreciate the non church based venues
- Make sure that the regular men are willing to genuinely relate to new comers
- Experiment with special interest Events (cars, sport, music, family, work,)



## "WHERE THE PROGRAM IS CENTRED ON A CLEAR EXPLANATION OF THE GOSPEL"

**The Talk** needs to be located at the point when it will have the most impact in the program.

- Not first (in case people arrive late) and not last (in case people leave early or don't have time to discuss the content).
- With meals the talk is best placed before dessert (so people don't leave before the talk) and can still discuss it before leaving.
- Avoid plate clearing and kitchen noise during the talk ...
- If a night meeting then start the talk no later than 8:00-8:15pm
- If there is an activity (e.g. craft or Ginger Bread House making), place the talk before the craft so that those listening are fresh and attentive. And keep the tables clear of the activity to avoid distractions.

As well as the talk, the formal part of the program *could* include

- A Bible Reading – but check with speaker first!
- Drama – it would have to be well done, short and to the point
- Music/Singing performance – much better when placed before the talk
- Book, DVD or Video review

Remember, the preaching or the talk is the focus of the programme so do not distract from it. The guiding factor must always be "What is most helpful for non-believers?" For example

- Singing hymns or choruses can make outsiders feel uncomfortable
- In-house jokes create a sense of 'us-and-them' and make people feel left out.
- Church notices, no matter how urgent, have no place in Evangelistic Events

From experience we recommend

- Prepare a 'Running Sheet' with each item timed and give a copy to the speaker prior to the Event, as well as to each person involved in the program.
- Decide on the value, or otherwise, of nametags.
- Decide whether to have pre-arranged seating (it can avoid clusters of non Christians)
- A bookstall with 'accessible' Bibles, the Jesus video, free gospels, tracts and carefully selected booklets.
- Interviews or testimonies which go no longer than 4-5 minutes. Use questions such as "What did you discover about Jesus that made you want to become a Christian?"
- Steve Abbott's booklet "Guidelines for Sharing Your Story" for those preparing testimonies
- Always introduce those who are contributing to the program
- Interview the speaker and always ask if he/she has any pre-prepared questions.
- Only use drama or musical items if they clearly assist the talk
- Make sure all participants are well prepared.

## **"WHERE THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHRISTIANS AND THEIR INVITED FRIENDS TO CHAT/DISCUSS "**

Allow time in the program for casual conversation. Do not clutter program too much.

The **best thing** is to encourage the Christians to ask their friends what they thought of the talk. It is wise to position the talk, or gospel presentation, to allow for comment and conversation afterwards.

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## **"WHERE A RESPONSE IS INVITED AND FOLLOW UP IS OFFERED"**

Your preparation will include decisions about 'Follow Up' after the event. This should be designed to help those interested in finding out more about Christianity or helping people who want to become Christians.

Consider

- Who will do the follow up and are they properly equipped to do it?
- Will it be one-on-one or will it be in a group?
- Will a course be used? (Eg. Simply Christianity, Christianity Explained, etc)
- Is there another Event, group or Sunday/Mid-week meeting to which the person could be brought?

Whatever you decide, contact should be made either by phone, letter or personal approach within **seven days**.

How will you know if your guests want to know more about Jesus after the talk? Possible ways of assisting are

- Give away tracts, tapes, DVDs or books
- Ask them to tell the Christian friend who brought them
- Invite them to talk to the speaker at the end
- Have them fill in a response card

If you use a Response Card it needs space for

- Contact details – name, phone or email and name of friend who brought them
- Simple box or boxes to tick indicating if the event was enjoyed and the desire to know more
- Any comments (so every one can write something)

From experience

- Follow up is easier if you give people the opportunity to respond
- Response needs to be carefully planned – determine best method of collection
- Stress that all details are private and indicate who it is who will read them
- It is best if the Response Card/Slip, pencils/pens and envelopes are already on the tables/chairs before the talk starts
- It is best to collect all written responses soon after they have been completed.

Check the "Resources" link on this website for

- examples of Response Cards and Forms,
  - suggestions of Follow Up materials, books, tracts and electronic materials
- Evangelism Ministries can provide sample cards and response forms as well as suggestions for tracts and books (See Resources Guide)
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### **...AND DON'T FORGET TO KEEP YOUR SPEAKER 'IN THE LOOP'**

Please provide the speaker with the following, either by email or letter, as soon as possible

- All details such as date, time, address and directions if necessary
- What style or standard of dress would be acceptable
- A simple profile of the target group
- The approximate number expected
- Travel directions/car parking details if required

Please check with the speaker to see what they need, eg

- Lectern
- Projector – overhead or data
- Microphone or PA
- Photocopied handouts