How to ...

Produce a great church notice sheet

Welcome sheets are a great way for people attending services to find out what is happening in your church. They not only keep your congregation up-to-date with the latest news and coming events, but can help visitors learn more about the service.

How you design and fill your notice sheet can say a lot about the type of church you are. It is important to create a sheet that is easy to read and appealing to look at, as it may encourage more people to come along to other events or services. There are plenty of things you can do which will help people take in the information.

Create a template

People like consistency. Placing things in the same spot on the notice sheet each week will make it easier for the reader to find what they want. Having a template that can be updated every week also saves time for the compiler.

What to include

There are a number of different things you can include in a notice sheet. Here are some ideas which you may want to think about using:

- **Welcome**
  People need to feel they are part of the service, whether it is their first time or hundredth time in your church. Make sure you include any important information that people visiting may want to know, such as Sunday School classes or where to find the toilet.

- **Readings**
  Include the Bible readings for the week. Some churches also include songs used during the service.

- **Notices**
  These need to provide all the information needed such as what, when and where. Also include contact details so people know where to go for more information. Keep each notice short – ideally they should be no more than a paragraph per item.

- **Prayer requests and sermon notes**
  A small space could be left for people to fill in if they would like prayer for something or want to make notes on the lesson. Remember to have pens available if people need them.

- **Contact details**
  Make sure you list contact details for the incumbent and key members of the church, such as the office administrator, as this is always a handy reference for them to keep in their homes. Include contact details for the people who put the notice sheet together, so that people know where to send their contributions. Giving a deadline for submissions can also be helpful.

Layout

Simple designs can be more effective than fussy, complicated layouts. Make sure that things are grouped together under larger headings to make things easier to find.

- Keep all font sizes to 12 point or above, with a larger size for headings
- Stick to one standard font. Sans serif fonts without small lines at the end of characters are quicker and easier to read (use Arial rather than Times New Roman)
- Avoid clip art if possible as it can easily look unprofessional. If you must use some clip art, try to use designs with a consistent style to coordinate it
- Avoid using light coloured font on a light background or dark coloured font on a dark background. Not having adequate contrast can make it difficult for people with limited vision to read. If you want to highlight a section of text, create a box around it rather than using different colour backgrounds
- Avoid underlining, as this can be confusing for those with limited vision. Instead, use bold or slightly larger text
- Do not write phrases in capitals i.e. WELCOME TO OUR CHURCH. Lower case letters are easier to read because there is more shape to the words, whereas capital letters are uniformly rectangular in shape. Writing in capital letters is often considered aggressive and impolite
- Remember those who may be visually impaired by ensuring that you have a few large print copies with a 14 point font size

Proof reading

Always ask someone else to proof read the document before you distribute it. Choose someone with excellent spelling and grammatical knowledge or mistakes might gradually appear.

Most importantly, follow up your welcome sheet with a genuine welcome. If someone new comes to your church, have a chat, invite them over for coffee and enjoy getting to know them.

Written by Ben Evans, Diocesan Communications Officer