

Outreach Ideas



reimagine
Leading the church out of lockdown

“Christ is the Lord of a history that moves. He not only holds the beginning and the end in his hands, but he is in history with us, walking ahead of us to where we are going.”

Thomas Merton

“Beware of harkening back to what you once were, when God wants you to be something that you have never been.”

Oswald Chambers, My Utmost for His Highest

In John 6 when the people were hungry and in an isolated place Jesus told his disciples to something absolutely ridiculous – “you give them something to eat”.

Philip replied expressing that they did not have the resources to do this as it would take eight months wages to buy enough food for them. He didn't realise that Jesus was suggesting they could multiply five loaves and two fish.

The implication of the account is that the disciples were to meet the needs of the people through Jesus' resources and what was available to them. In the post-pandemic world we are in we can feel overwhelmed if we think that everything we have to do will cost enormous amounts of money or require lots of staff or people time.

Instead let's remember that we have the most precious gift of the Gospel and people's greatest need is spiritual and we can introduce them to Jesus. Here are some outreach ideas on how to equip people to engage in evangelism:

Prayer Cards

Respond to the reality of people continuing feeling isolated and lonely and looking for connection. Design a prayer card with prayers people can pray and with a link to a page on your website / QR code. Create packs with a card, candle, greeting from church for people to give to their friends and neighbours. Or you could organise a systematic visiting scheme in a certain area where you organise teams of people go to people's homes and say "We're from your local church and now we are able to contact people we wanted to see how people are and offer prayer. Is there anything we could pray for you?" And whatever happens leave them with a prayer pack.

Pay it Forward

Possibly after a service of renewal for the church in which people come and make commitments, bring a thank offering to God for his faithfulness and receive prayer for God to renew their faith, you could give everyone a £10 note and commission them to go and bless their neighbours and see this gift multiplied by them using it creatively. Offer suggestions of how they could use it – to buy baking materials to bless people with, to buy art materials and send hand made cards, to get children involved in washing cars now we will be using cars again and buying materials for this, of buying food for homeless or vulnerably housed. And create a card to offer with the gift that says something about it coming as a sign of God's love from the name of your church with your website details and online services.

Testimony Training

How can I share something of Jesus in my testimony of lockdown? – e.g. when someone asks you how are you? Or what was your lockdown like? How can we share the difference knowing Jesus made to us? Take church members through some basic training on preparing their post-lockdown testimony. And get them posting this on social media.

Back to Church Sunday in September

Plan a guest service that people could be invited to that includes the different themes and sings the songs of the age: UK Blessing, Abide with me, You'll never Walk Alone, Don't stop me now (Queen), Go your own way, Here comes the sun, Don't look back in anger, Wonderwall, etc.

Could you do a video of our local community to celebrate it and thank God for it? Include any heroes from the community event in the Summer. Take video from that event about the plans to see positive change in your community and use it at the guest service where you will present some plans.

Remembrance Sunday

Don't miss that this will be the chance to invite the local community to remember formally. Make plans for publicity and invitations.

Recovery

Each of the areas of loss and brokenness (addiction, relationship breakdown, mental health difficulties, debt, unemployment, abuse, parenting issues) have resources within the Christian world. But we are not all called to do everything. What is the pressing need for your area? Why not ask church members what they are hearing and what they would appreciate? And some of this will be determined by the skills and experience within the church membership. How can we help people recover? Things like: CAP money course and Job Club, Kintsugi Hope for Mental Health, Celebrate Recovery for addictions, starting a foodbank. You could plan to launch one of these in response to local need in September.

Enquirers Courses

Plan Alpha, Christianity Explored, Start courses to begin in later September after your guest service and Summer events. Statistics show that one third of people have connected with an online church service and one third have started to pray.

Don't miss the opportunity of seeing who wants to explore faith and spiritual life. Announcing soon that you will run a course in September gives you time to prepare in prayer (Thy Kingdom Come) and invitation over the summer.

