

# Summer ideas to serve the community and bring in new members



This summer add an extra activity program to let people know that your church is there, and what your church does.

Opening your activities to the community serves two purposes:

## 1) Missional

The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. This is an opportunity to show others the love of God. We can do this without any expectation that they'll become members, but simply because we know how much God loves us, and we want others to know that too.

## 2) Encourage new membership

Parishes that hold programming in the summer months actually increase their membership throughout the year. Many people are "church shopping" before school starts – be a place they can find with a thriving, energetic, and welcoming community.

Here are some fresh summertime ideas:

### Worship

- Plan a "Summer Nights" series of outdoor worships and fellowship.
- Offer worship in a location where people already gather and will see you (the town green, a public park, or a beach).
- For the Sunday prior to July 4<sup>th</sup>, plan a "red, white and blue jean" Sunday.



### Food & Fellowship

- Invite the neighborhood for an ice cream party.
- Have an afternoon or evening cookout – hotdogs, vegetarian baked beans, & watermelon, with face painting and outdoor games
- If you already have a gathering or activity (Vacation Bible School, kids' camp, or summer picnic), invite the community
- Combine an outreach activity with a community invitation. Print up invitation cards to your next event and pass them out as you're going door to door to collect canned food for the local food shelter.

### Open your doors

With volunteers, a little space, and a lot of advertising, you can do one of these activities for (and with) the community

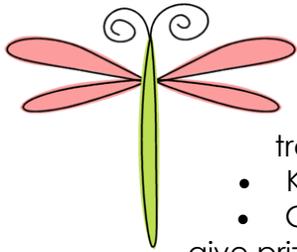
- A reading club or weekly kids' story hour in the church library.
- A bike ride that ends at the church. (Old time "Steeple Chases" were from church to church –

**Fun in the sun** or steeple to steeple)



- A teens' art day-camp.
- Outdoor tournaments, such as volleyball, horseshoes, softball, bocce ball, 3-on-3 basketball.
- A father and kids' campout on the church lawn.
- A mother and kids' trip to a local zoo.
- A huge kids' sprinkler party.

- Become a "Cool Zone" – Provide low-income families and seniors with a place to come when the temperatures skyrocket. Set up a "cafe" or library area in your church where neighbors can come to read, surf the Internet, watch DVDs or socialize while staying cool.
- Concerts/Guest Speakers – Plan some special evening events with guest speakers or musical groups, or even plan a summer series.



- Art Day -- Invite a local artist to teach art basics
  - Music Day -- Have kids bring their own instruments for a band. Have a kazoo marching band
  - "Green" Day -- Teach about reuse, reduce, and recycle. Have kids plant trees in your community
- Kite Day -- Supply kite-making materials. Serve families pizza or hot dogs for lunch
- Game Day -- Have kids bring their favorite table games. Hold a tournament and give prizes

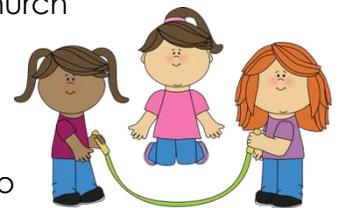
### With a little more planning

- Summer is a great time for sponsoring or helping with civic activities. Partner with your local or city resources to plan an event to meet the needs of your community; consider a senior health fair, summer tutoring, a Bike Rodeo (a bike obstacle course for kids), or a Family Safety Day.
- Network with other churches and community groups and organize a community service day, such as a beach trash pick-up, food bank collection, blood drive or 5K for a local hospital, AIDS center or other cause. Host a "thank-you" barbeque for volunteers afterward.

### Going out & evangelizing

Take your message to the streets

- Find out what activities your community is already doing & reserve a booth or table
  - County fair
  - Street fair
  - Farmer's market
  - 5k run
  - Blood drive
  - Your town's firework display
- Turn your booth into anything that is appropriate for the skills of your church
  - Kids' story time
  - Crafts demonstration and activities
  - Face-painting
  - Lemonade, water, or snow-cone station
- Hang a banner with your church information and pass out brochures to those who stop by.



### From fun activity to evangelism

Use any of these activities as a platform to reach the community. Advertise your next event at your current event. This gives people an opportunity to try you out, and a reason to come back.

If you live in a resort community and know that many of the people won't be joining you during the school year, think of this as a mission of your church. And, remember, some of the people may still come back summer-after-summer, so you can also think of it like a summer camp community.

Some ideas taken from: <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/Eighteen-ideas-for-summer-church-fun> and <http://blog.outreach.com/heat-up-your-outreach-with-these-summer-ideas>

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