

stuff you wish they taught in seminary



16 (Nearly Free) Ways

**TO INCREASE COMMUNITY
AWARENESS OF YOUR CHURCH**

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If the people in your community don't know that your church exists, they won't ever join your church.

If nobody in your city is aware of your church's services or Sunday gatherings, you've lost a chance to connect those people to your discipleship process. **A frequently overlooked step in connecting with a community is simply building baseline awareness of a church in that broader community.** [The first step in connecting with new guests at your church is making them aware of your church in the first place.](#)

When was the last time your church reached out to the community to make your presence known?

How are you actively ensuring that people in your town know about your church and the services you offer?

Here are five categories that outline different ways you can build community awareness of your church. (Granted, I know that some of these things cost money, but I presume you either have budget money allocated or could reallocate resources towards this area.) **We're passionate about reaching people in our communities because the local church is the only organization in the world that doesn't exist for its own people.** We exist for people outside our walls and reaching out to them starts with them knowing us.

Community Outreach

Getting your people out of their seats and into the streets is the most effective way to build community awareness. In my book, [Church Growth Flywheel](#), there is a whole chapter dedicated to leveraging community outreach for church growth.

Good old-fashioned community service is great, not only for building your community's awareness of your church but also for paving a path towards trust. The reality is that people drive by our churches and aren't always sure what goes on inside. **Rather than waiting for people to come in, what if we motivated our people to go outside our walls and make a difference?** You'd be amazed at the doors that this will open as your church is seen and perceived as an active participant in the community. Here are a few examples of some community outreach events you could run:

- **Community clean-up day** // Contact your local parks and rec department and ask them if people from your church could clean up the park next spring. Get everyone a volunteer t-shirt and have some fun in the outdoors!
- **Free market** // As opposed to flea markets where people try to sell their junky stuff, a free market is where we bring our best stuff and give it away to people in need. Work with local community service organizations to spread the word to families in need who live in your town.

- **Winter carnival for families with special needs** // You're already planning fun Christmas activities, so why not turn those activities into something special for the children with special needs in your community? Again, partnering with local organizations that can provide resources and information on what families in your area require will be a big help when organizing these types of events.

Sunday Signage

If all your church has a single small sign at the road indicating you exist, you are missing an opportunity to create awareness with some temporary signage you can put up on Sundays. The truth is that people drive by and are unaware of what's happening inside your building—even on Sunday mornings! What if you invested some time and a few resources in signage for the outside of your church so that people could know what's happening inside? Here are some examples of signage you could add:



- **Flags on the corners of your property** // Giant tear-drop flags are always fun in the wind, and you'd be surprised how economical they are. If you placed one at each entrance to your parking lot and a few along the most visible part of your property, they will draw attention and make your facility pop!

- **A-frame signs** // Some A-frame signs are a quick and easy way to build visual awareness. These are great to place at the entrance to your property to invite people to come on in!
- **Pop signs** // You've seen folks holding small 2x2 signs at events as you enter that say things like, "We're glad you're here," and, "You're looking good today." Those are a fun way to add both people and fun messages out on the street.
- **Police presence** // Finally, you could pay your local police department to direct traffic at the entrance to your church parking lot. This is not only a service to your community, but it also helps draw awareness to the church. (I know this isn't really a "sign", but it serves a similar purpose.)

Family Fun Events

We know that your church is built on the back of great children's ministry. In fact, some of your most creative leaders are currently working with the families in your church.

Why not invite some of them to think beyond their Sunday morning routines about how could they develop events that folks in the community would enjoy?

Events such as these are not only a win for your church's families (because they'll enjoy coming to them) but they're also a win for their friends (because family events make for easy invitations). Here are a few family fun events that you could try at your church:

- **Movies in the park** // Chances are you have a projector and a large screen. Why not set them up at a local park this coming summer and invite the community for a movie night? Pop some popcorn to give away for free and it's bound to be a hit. Record a quick "trailer" about the church as a bonus to get people's attention and spread awareness.
- **Touch-a-truck event** // There are probably people in your church who drive huge transport trucks or maybe even firetrucks. A fun event for kids is to have a parking lot full of these vehicles and give the kids a chance to get up close and explore them. Events like this can be a great "back-to-school" event on the weekend before classes start up!

- **Summer kickoff** // We all love to celebrate the beginning of summer. Why not use some of your resources and rent a bounce house (or maybe even a dunk tank for the pastor) and cause a bit of chaos out on the front lawn as you head into next summer?

Serve Community Servants

You have police officers, first responders, firefighters, and many other community servants within your neighborhood. Going out of your way to find an opportunity to care for and love these people is a great way to build awareness while showing God's love to others. Here are a few examples of ways you can serve your community servants:

- **Meals for first responders on Christmas Eve** // What if you sent your people out with meals for the first responders in your community on Christmas Eve this year? Have them packed up and ready to deliver following the evening service.
- **Prayer services** // Some churches will host a special service every year where they invite police, fire, and ambulance teams to the church for prayer. What a great way to connect with the community figures that serve you!
- **Adopt-a-school** // What if you approached a school and asked them how you could help, no strings attached? Offer to come and clean the school or grounds before kids come back in the fall, host a free meal for the teachers, or provide backpacks and running shoes for kids who don't have any. Your community will love this sort of help and word will spread about your church!



Inform the Local Press

The local press is always looking for great stories, especially stories related to community events. Reach out to your local newspapers, radio stations, news teams, and bloggers about what's happening at your church. Getting your church into a regular practice of sending out press releases

or community event postings when anything special happens is a great way to build awareness of your church. While you won't get coverage every time you do something, you might be surprised to find consistent coverage once you've released a few press pieces on a website or two. Get used to writing a 400-word press release and sending it out. Don't go overboard though—start by sending out your information quarterly. Here are some examples of things you can do to inform the press about what's happening at your church:

- **Christmas events** // In the first week of December, the local press is looking to report on what's happening in town on and around Christmas. Make sure your church gets on that list.
Special speakers // Make sure to tell the press about any expert, out-of-town speakers you have visiting and speaking at your services. As crazy as it sounds, I've seen churches get great coverage because of guest speakers!
- **Special events** // Report anything that's out of the ordinary or new at your church to the press as an opportunity for people to come to your special events.

Building the community's awareness of your church is the beginning of any church growth or evangelism process. If people in your community don't know your church exists, they won't take the steps towards plugging in and becoming part of it. **I'd love to hear your ideas about how you've been able to build awareness in your community. Share your comments on [unSeminary](#).**

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