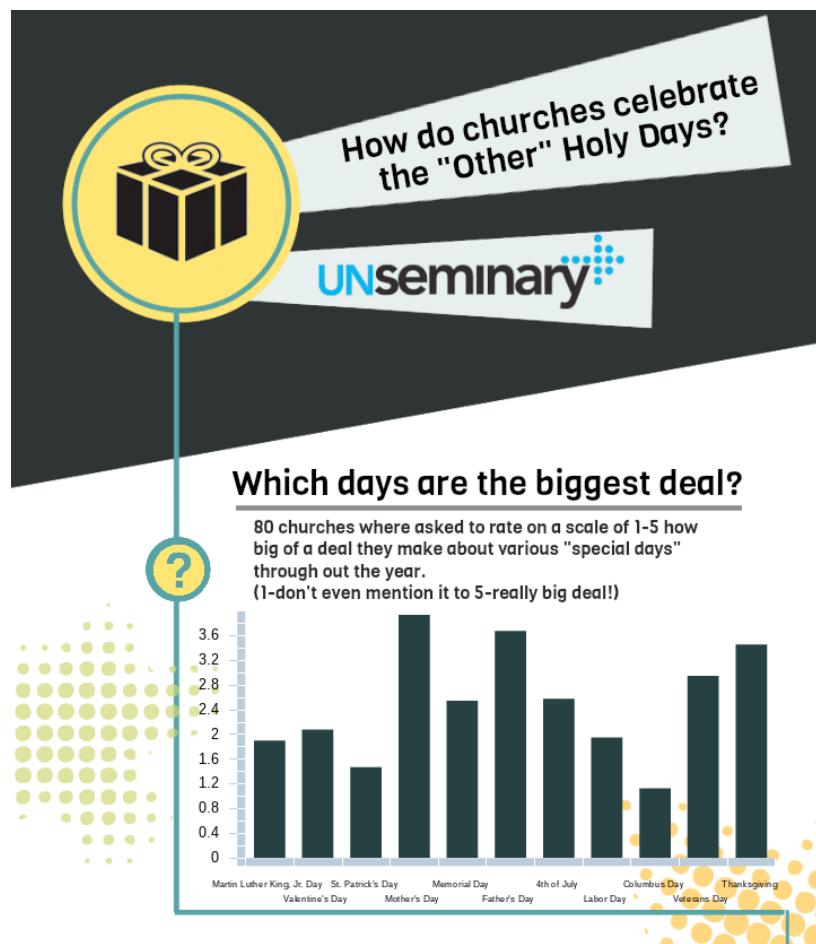


Introduction

Throughout the Christian calendar there are days that it seems like the community is more likely to accept an invitation to come to church. For our church it's Christmas and Easter ... **but what about those "other" holy days? You know ... the one's that our culture (and greeting card companies) have made super important for people to celebrate.** Does your church do something special for Mom's on Mother's Day? Do you serve bacon ice cream Sundae's on Father's Day? We surveyed 80 churches from across the country and asked them to rate how "big of a deal" they make these sorts of days. We also ask them to give us some ideas of what they do to celebrate these days. We compiled all these findings into this ebook that gives you a glimpse into some ideas that you might apply at your church.



Father's Day

Father's day is huge for us! We have Father Fest. We have a bacon bar on sunday morning, after church we have games where dad's can compete, we grill steaks for dad's and everyone else can have hotdogs and burgers. We start a new series that focuses on what it takes to be a biblical man, ManCard this year.

-Justin Banks, Audacity Church



We always have a targeted message on Father's Day. Each campus celebrates in unique ways. My favorite is that this year one campus is holding "Bacon Fest" for Father's Day with a breakfast before service and a lunch afterwards incorporating bacon in every dish.

- Kristy Rutter, The Chapel

Father's Day...we call it DadFest around Willow and use it as an evangelistic outreach to get dads who don't normally attend church to come; it used to be one of our least attended services of the year and now it is the biggest behind Easter and Christmas; we hold a grilling competition and dads can eat free; we have guest speakers (past speakers include Devon Hester, Johnny Knox, Mike Singletary; this year we're having comedian Michael Jr. and Paul Teutul Jr. from American Choppers) but the message is always given by our Pastor Bill Hybels; we hold a car show in our parking lot with custom cars, motorcycles, boats, etc.; we have games for kids and families to participate in/with; we advertise on social media and local radio stations; in the past, though not this year, we have a live band performing in our parking lot. The whole thing is put on by our C.A.R.S. ministry (<http://www.willowcreek.org/cars>), which helps get the word out about that ministry.

- Ian Philpot, Willow Creek Community Church

When we have special days we give stuff away - a BBQ for Father Day. Mothers day we gave away spa packages to a few moms.

- Joel, Brooks Church of God

For Father's Day we have a Man-a-vile ... we have manly type activities for the Dads. Last year our Man-a-vile included one of those sledge hammer ring the bell games, and a few other games geared around the Dads. We will have a contest each service for 3 of the fathers up on stage.

- Steve Drohan, Centerpoint Church

This year our Minister Emerita will do a special sermon on "The Unique Power of Men." In her research, she has interviewed men of several generations and plans a dramatic skit during the service. She acknowledges that the dynamics of men, women, and power are quite challenging.

- Kathleen Ellis, First Unitarian Universalist Church-Houston

We celebrate mothers and fathers. Fathers serve the mothers on that weekend and the mothers serve the fathers. We celebrate family.

- D. Samuel Madden, Resurrection New Covenant Church

For dad we are starting a series called Biblical Manhood.

- Bobby Williams, Ridge Church

Mechanical bull, give away a grill each service, jalapeño eating contest with prize, lawn mower riding contest, free throw contest.

- Daniel McCabe, Legacy Church

Father Day... a game during announcements.

- Damian McCrink, River City Church

Fathers Day we have kegs of root beer, popcorn, lazy boy chairs, and something fun in the service.

- Andy VomSteeg, New Vintage Church

For Father's Day this year we're kicking a "God At The Movies" series. Superman: Man of Steel is just too perfect for Father's Day. So, we're having our own "Man of Steel" competition. Father's submit their name then we draw 3 fathers in each service to compete. First competition is to see who can put down 1/2 dozen glazed donuts first. Then the top two compete in a football throwing contest across the auditorium. All three father's win Fandango gift cards.

- Scott Clevenger, Christ's Church Camden

For Father's Day, every dad gets a king sized candy bar and a numbered ticket. We use the ticket to draw for prizes like gift cards to Outback, Bass Pro, gas cards, Mike's Carwash, coupon books, Car or truck detailing, devotional books, Bibles and DVD's. (In the past we gave away grills and lawnmowers - but everybody already had one they liked, so we scaled down and gave more smaller prizes).

- Scott Gamel, New Hope Community Church

Mothers Day is the highest attended day besides Christmas and Easter in the American Church. We use both Mothers Day and Fathers Day as an outreach opportunity, ensuring fantastic programming that will draw families and lead to salvation/ life change. This year Pasty Clairmont spoke on Mothers Day; Carl Lentz is speaking Fathers Day.

- Andrea, The Father's House

This year our stage will be set like a motorcycle garage, with real motorcycles set on the stage and at the front of the room. A group of guys will be hanging out at the garage discussing issues that men deal with, using the parts of a motorcycle to describe the characteristics of a man. At one point a couple of the bikes will be ridden out of the room. We also offer a BBQ cook out following our second worship service.

- Greg Howse, Cornerstone

For Father's Day this year we're going all out with activities for Dad's & kids...NASCAR Tire Changing, Nascar Driving, Basketball shooting, Buck Hunter game, rock climbing wall, football toss, Ring-the-Bell, bounce houses, popcorn, skeeball games, cotton candy, snow cones, giving away a grill at each service in both campuses...should be fun. We're making it an event that Dad's will enjoy.

- Willie Matos, Church @ The Springs

For Father's day, we have a video about Father's Day, sports related game / activity during the service, a gift and a small reception after church. Father's Day is sometimes a bit hard to plan for. But it's a work in progress and a day we need show appreciation.

- Amanda, Emmanuel Church

We encourage dads rather than tell them how lousy they are. Then, on their way out they all get a frozen sirloin steak.

- Shawn Vandop, Promontory Ministries

Entire service program geared towards special holiday. Guest speakers. Big service openers. Handouts/Gifts. Big marketing/invite strategy.

- Andrea D'Angelo, The Father's House

Mother's Day

For Mothers Day we normally do some kind of "thank you" video to Moms and a gift. In the past, we have even centered the message around it.

- Carrie Evans, Southbridge Fellowship



Mother's Day - We have a guest speaker come in (this year we had Nancy Ortberg); we decorate our lobby in a special way; we have roaming

photographers in our lobby to take pictures of moms and their families and then we make the pictures available for moms to download from a special page on our website; we ran a special social media campaign with images of Willow moms

(<http://pinterest.com/willowcreekcc/mothers-day/>); we had special snacks in our lobby (pineapple, poundcake, strawberries, etc.) that could be dipped in a chocolate fountain.

- Ian Philpot, Willow Creek Community Church

When we have special days we give stuff away - a BBQ for Father Day. Mother day we have away spa packages to a few moms.

- Joel, Brooks Church of God

For Mother's Day we decorated the stage with flowers (loaned to us by our local Home Depot) and had give-a-ways/recognition for the newest Mom, the Mom with the most kids, the Grandmother with the most Grandchildren. We also had a picture opportunity with a professional photographer to have family pictures taken for free in a very nice setting.

- Steve Drohan, Centerpoint Church

Mother's Day we have elements where we incorporate kids. So usually a kids choir and the nursery age kids on video. We always kick off a family series with Mother's Day. Last year my wife and I spoke together and this year she spoke solo about moms, marriage and family. We also do free family photos and email the pics to the moms and tag everyone on Facebook (it also helps us update our church database pictures).

- Jeremy Isaacs, Mt Paran North Canton

We celebrate mothers and fathers. Fathers serve the mothers on that weekend and the mothers serve the fathers. We celebrate family.

- D. Samuel Madden, Resurrection New Covenant Church

Mother's Day we will either begin a new series that moms & family's will really benefit from or we do a lot of extras. This year we had a photo booth & gave away free photos.

- Bobby Williams, Ridge Church

Gave away a housecleaning in each service.

Had a special area set up for moms only. Massage, drinks, etc. Spa feel

Created a man cave area for dads and kids to go and wait. Snacks and either a game on or Duck Dynasty (depending on day/time of service).

- Daniel McCabe, Legacy Church

Message, poem, gift.

- Damian McCrink, River City Church

Mothers day we will have a full brunch after each service, chocolate fountain, gifts for the moms, gifts during welcome to some special moms.

- Andy VomSteeg, New Vintage Church

Mother's Day we do Family Portrait Sunday. We have a couple professional photographers in our community of believers so it doesn't cost a penny. We have 5x8 pics printed up (only cost \$.38 each at Sam's Club) and available the following Sunday. Drives return traffic the Sunday after Mother's Day.

- Scott Clevenger, Christ's Church Camden

We choose one mother and give her a really nice gift, do a video, pictures of moms and family, and a message.

- Robert Johnson, The Journey Church

For Mother's Day, we celebrate and recognize mothers in special ways. One year we gave a rose to every mother, another year we had photographers set up and give family portraits (not simply the session).

- Daniel Thomas, Highlands Fellowship

Mothers Day is the highest attended day besides Christmas and Easter in the American Church. We use both Mothers Day and Fathers Day as an outreach opportunity, ensuring fantastic programming that will draw families and lead to salvation/ life change. This year Pasty Clairmont spoke on Mothers Day; Carl Lentz is speaking Fathers Day.

- Andrea, The Father's House

For mother's day we have a small skit, video about mother's day, a raffle and a small reception after church.

- Amanda, Emmanuel Church

Mother's Day is big. We honor moms and make a big deal. We pray for them and then we specifically honor single moms. We pray for them and then have our people bless them financially in the service by giving the. Money. Very powerful. People cry all over the place.

- Shawn Vandop, Promontory Ministries

Entire service program geared towards the special holiday. Guest speakers. Big service openers. Handouts/Gifts. Big marketing/invite strategy.

- Andrea D'Angelo, The Father's House

Family Portraits

- Roscoe Lilly, NorthStar

4th of July

For Fourth of July, we do an outreach event at the local fireworks show where we pass out water, church info and glow sticks.

- Carrie Evans, Southbridge Fellowship

On the 4th of July - our church is directly across a corn field from the town park where the big fireworks show takes place - we've got the best seat in town, and our parking lot is always full at showtime. A few years ago, we decided to leverage that, and began offering a free community cookout. In the past we have served free hamburgers, hot dogs, Bar-b-que, and fixings to anybody who shows up. We have snow cones and water features for the kids, a bounce house, live music, horseshoes, and volleyball. Our student ministry gives away glo-stick bracelets. We have had 300-350 attend - not bad in a town of 2000 people!

- Scott Gamel, New Hope Community Church

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Next year, we are planning a racial reconciliation day on MLK Day as part of our attempt to give a picture to our community (racially charged) of what that means for the Body of Christ.

- Scott Marshall, Real Life Community

Thanksgiving

On Thanksgiving our entire service is about being thankful to God and we also serve a free community Thanksgiving meal.

- Michael Murray, United Christians Assembly

Thanksgiving is a big deal for us we usually team up with a generous individual who donates 100 Turkeys and we then contact schools in the area and provide needy families with a Thanksgiving feast.

- Al, Commonground

We have a Bread Communion for Thanksgiving, in which people bring bread from their own ethnic heritage. Lifts of the diversity among us and gratitude for our myriad traditions.

- Kathleen Ellis, First Unitarian Universalist Church-Houston

We shape the entire Thanksgiving Sunday worship and sermon around the theme of gratitude for God's blessings. This includes the backgrounds on our slides, the songs, the Bible readings and prayers. I use this time to emphasize this important character trait.

- Mark, Bay City Wesleyan Church

Testimonies...special service project...special all church gathering
- Rich Gay, Central

Memorial Day

On Memorial Day we honor those who have served our country...this year we allowed people to tweet about loved ones who have served, and we scrolled the tweets throughout pre/post-service.

- Paul Miller, Bent Tree Bible Fellowship

We have an all musical patriotic service and lunch on the grounds with bounce house, snow cones, games...

- Nicole Patteson, Monument Heights Baptist Church

Veteran's Day

Veteran's Day is one of those "in between" days for us. We like to make a strong acknowledgement because we have many veterans in our community. We don't use it for triumphalism, however. We thank our vets and then talk about their sacrifice in the larger context of the sacrifice of Christ.

- Jim Govatos, Aloma UMC

We often pray for peace the week of Remembrance Day (Veterans Day in Canada) to acknowledge it and hold in tension of our anabaptist roots. Also we hand out MCC buttons at our info tables the few weeks leading up that say... "To Remember is to work for peace." People seem to like those and even a key military guy ordered them for all his military coworkers a year or two ago.

- Sandra Nicholas, The Meeting House

Other

We also do special themed hospitality refreshments for Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas.

- Steve Drohan, Centerpoint Church

Mother's Day / Father's Day / Thanksgiving - These are intergenerational services with lots of participation by children, youth and adults. Some of children sing a song they have rehearsed. Sometimes it's less of a sermon and more of a play that unfolds throughout the service.

- Erin Powers, Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa

While I don't have much input in the adult service, I do use holiday moments to celebrate

volunteers within Children's ministry. For Mother's and Father's day I celebrate those who serve with some sort of corny gift. For mom's I gave them a bottle of nail polish with a tag that said "You're TOEriffic for serving in....." for dads who serve I'm giving them a bottle of steak spice with an equally corny tag "thanks for being our secret ingredient in....

Other days in the summer we just party like rock stars in Children's ministry whether the adults celebrate or not :)

- Shawna Lester, Connexus Church

About Rich Birch.

Thanks so much for dropping by **unseminary** ... I hope that you're able to find some resources that help you lead your church better in the coming days!

I've been involved in church leadership for over 15 years. Early on I had the privilege of leading in one of the very first multisite churches in North America. I led the charge in helping [The Meeting House](#) in Toronto to become the leading multi-site church in Canada with over 4,000 people in 6 locations. (Today they are 13 locations with somewhere over 5,000 people attending.) In addition, I served on the leadership team of [Connexus Community Church](#) in Ontario, a [North Point Community Church Strategic Partner](#).

I currently serve as Operations Pastor at [Liquid Church](#) in the Manhattan facing suburbs of New Jersey.

I have a dual vocational background that uniquely positions me for serving churches to multiply impact. While in the marketplace, I founded a dot-com with two partners in the late 90's that worked to increase value for media firms and internet service providers.

I speak at conferences like Orange, WFX and various regional multisite church events. I'm a featured writer on Auxano's Vision Room, ChurchLeaders.com and MinistryBriefing.

I'm married to Christine and we live in Scotch Plains, NJ with our two kids and one dog.

unSeminary is a place to collect some thoughts about local church and doin' stuff right in local church. I really am not a "know it all" or "expert" but really just somebody who has made a lot of mistakes in leadership and is attempting to pass along some learning so you don't have to pay the "stooopid tax".

"... helped us get the big picture and then got dirty in the details of making it happen." - Bruxy Cavey, Teaching Pastor, The Meeting House

"... 'get-it' factor on the kind of church we're trying to become ... has customized his approach to be tailor made to our setting. We're so grateful for his investment in helping us expand our Kingdom-building capacity." - Jeff Lockyer, Lead Pastor, Southridge Community Church

"... I LOVE Rich's experience-driven insight and people-focused approach ... couldn't be a better fit for us as we seek advice and feedback in accomplishing what we feel God is putting before us." - Mike Leahy, Executive Director, Liquid Church

"... you have helped me bridge the gap between careful, strategic, logistical leadership and passionate love for Jesus and the people He's forming." - Greg Hill, Executive Pastor, Living Faith Church