

# 19 promotion ideas for the church library



## Welcome all to an open house

Plan an open house once a year. September? Advent? Springtime? Serve light refreshments. Give away bookmarks. Let the congregation know you are ready to serve them.



## Satellite libraries

Do you sometimes have trouble getting people into the library? Why not meet them where they are. Place a collection of books in another area of the church. These can be for a special group, or they can just be your new books on a book truck in the narthex. Consider separating your young adult collection and locating a satellite library in another area of the church where youth groups meet.

## Want to increase teen traffic?

- **Teen Movie Nights.** Partner with your youth ministry colleagues to put on and promote a single movie night or a monthly series.
  - First you need a theme. Why not popcorn! Craft your invitation from a classic red and white popcorn box (filled, of course!). Attach a “movie ticket” with the evening’s details.
  - Or choose a DVD theme and make your invitations from a blank DVD with a label on it with event details. Blank CDs or DVD’s can be found inexpensively at office supply stores. Better still, use scratch or dent disks you haven’t been able to repair.
- **Start a Teen Board.** Who are the informal leaders among your congregation’s teens? Who are the avid readers? Get their recommendations for books, movies, music, and activities. Get their input on what makes events fun, what promotion catches their eye, etc. Put their advice into action!



## Encourage young readers and raise awareness of the library, too



- **Reading trail.** Using the season as your guide, celebrate each library book read by a young person by posting a trail of colorful construction-paper shapes on a high-traffic wall bearing the reader’s name and book (e.g., autumn leaves, snowflakes, flowers, beach balls). Encourage participation with drop-in visits to the Church School classes, an announcement during the service, notices in the bulletin, and signage in the children’s section of the library and at the checkout desk.
- **Seasonal coloring sheets.** Another idea is to create seasonal coloring sheets with space for five book titles to be listed. Every time a child finishes five books, they can color a sheet and post it for all to see.

## Find tie-ins with a sermon series

If your pastor is emphasizing a theme in coming months, you have a terrific promotional opportunity at hand. Review your collection get your pastor’s recommendations for related works. Work together to promote both the sermon series and the library’s offerings—such as brief mentions in the bulletin or newsletter, a mention during the sermon of the related reading available in the library—all backed up by eye-catching signage throughout the church and in the library. Brainstorm with your pastor for other promotion possibilities.



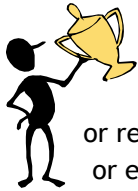


## Contests and user celebrations get the fun started

Everyone likes to have fun and sometimes it's even fun to be the star. Post trivia questions with answers to be found in the library, hold contests (say, a marathon reading event), or select a user of the month and post an engaging profile and photo with an interesting Q&A.

## Bring in the kids. . . with a computer, of course

Children today don't remember a time without computers. To quote Presbyterian minister Neil MacQueen, "Computers attract kids like rabbits to my wife's garden. A computer well-placed in the library will do more to bring kids back among the books and videotapes than all the flyers you can mimeograph." A good place to turn for guidance on appropriate software to use with children is [www.Sundaysoftware.com](http://www.Sundaysoftware.com). And as for hooking up the library's computer to the Internet, adult supervision at all times goes without saying. Safe-surfing software is plentiful and inexpensive. Just remember, the attractive nature of the Internet really creates a stir among children who can't remember a day without it.

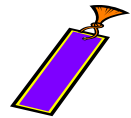


## Pique curiosity with staff or reader picks

Barnes & Noble does it, so can your church library! Devote a spot in the library to highlight staff or reader picks. Double the impact of these picks by highlighting one or two in the church newsletter or even on the inside of bathroom stall doors. You could also create bookmark size lists of recommended books that focus on one topic, then distribute to groups that are interested in that topic.

## Speaking of bookmarks. . .

Give your readers a tempting excuse to come back to the library with a bookmark listing all the titles in a fiction series. Patrons can check off the ones they read.



## Drop them a line



Some of the simplest and best promotion you can do for your library is to make and send attractive or unusual cards to someone who needs a lift. Just sign them from your library team. You'll get the attention of some who have never used the library. Our thanks to Librarian Eva Nell Hunter for this clever idea.

## Book discussion groups

Encourage book groups to meet in the church library if there is space. Offer to purchase books for members through your jobber or the publisher. Supply booklists of related items to supplement the regular reading.



## Use book or media talks to spark interest

Prepare book or media talks you can present to church groups, clubs, church school classes, women's or men's groups. Choose material of all types (fiction, nonfiction, biography) covering your theme. Share each book's content without giving away plots or making critical reviews. Choose books about which you're sincerely enthusiastic, and be at home with both your topic and your audience.

## A presence with presents

Who better to sponsor a gift corner than the library? Encourage the gift of reading and reflection with a well-chosen collection of books, CDs, DVDs, audio books, on consignment from your local Christian bookstore or publisher.



### That's *just* what I was looking for. . .

Draw up lists on special subjects. Provide lists of Christmas readings, books and media for Advent or Lent, lists for gift giving. Add clip art. Annotations are helpful, including age level if for children. Smaller lists make great bookmarks. Include library hours if pertinent. You can also have lists of new arrivals, popular titles, recommended reading from the pastor, and more.

## Read all about it! Budding new artist discovered in the library

Put on an art show of church school craft projects in the library. Invite children and parents in to see their handiwork. Or provide coloring sheets for preschoolers that can be displayed. Coordinate this with a shelf of related books and media covering history, biography, Bible stories, or fiction.



## Unleash the power of the Internet

Many people, especially younger ones, use the Internet daily. If your church has a Web site, ask to have a link made to the church library. Provide a frequently updated list of new books, seasonal books, or books on a topic being discussed within the congregation, links to current book discussion group information, and if your library is automated, access to the library catalog.

## And now, the rest of the story. . .

Coffee hour is a wonderful time to promote the library. Standing with a steaming cup of coffee in hand and a moment to spare puts us in a relaxed state of mind . . . giving us just enough time to scan an interesting magazine article. If your library has a good collection of periodicals, photocopy the opening spread of 1 or 2 current articles and create an attractive display. We all know where they'll need to find the rest of the story . . . in the library, of course!



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