

# promote your church library with flair!

## Tips for successful promotion:

Before you plan the next promotional activity for your church library, consider these helpful guidelines.

### 1. Choose what your church library would like to promote

New resources? A one-time library event? A holiday or emphasis week? New services offered by the library?

### 2. Determine what you hope to achieve

Is it to raise awareness of the library? Connect teens to the church community? Provide stronger support for your church's Christian Education program? Having a clear purpose will help to guide your choices when planning a promotion. During every step of the planning ask, "Is our promotion plan helping to achieve our goal?"

### 3. Identify who you want to reach

Identify your target audience(s). Who is your main audience? Are there other secondary groups?

### 4. Prepare a promotion schedule

Successful events don't just happen—advance planning is your strongest tool for creating one.

- **One-time events** may take up to 4-6 months planning. The last month is focused on promotion.
- **For recurring events or year-round activities**, an annual planning calendar can be helpful. (Ex: Martin Luther King Day or a multi-week focus on mission)
- **New library services** should be promoted when they are most likely to be used. For example:
  - a) Promote titles that support a pastor's current sermon series before and during the series.
  - b) Promote a mobile library or home-delivery service would prior to and during inclement months.

As early as possible, work to get your event on church calendars and on the calendars of your target audience.

### 5. Create ideas for your promotion

Start with the facts—what, when, who, where and why—then lead a brainstorm session with staff. What themes might be used? What tag lines or key phrases say it best? Choose a visual element such as a logo and colors that are to be used consistently in the promotion.

### 6. Choose which promotional tools you will use

The larger the event, the more methods you may wish to use.

- **Visual** (poster, video, mobile, a CD-ROM labeled with teen event info, etc.)
- **Verbal** (announcement during service, word-of-mouth)
- **Printed** (fliers, bulletin inserts, bookmarks, table tents, kids' seasonal coloring sheets)

- **Promotional activities** (coffee hour promotion, visit from a storybook character, “Name Our Library” or other contest, emphasis weeks)

## 7. Delegate!

Not only do many hands make light work: different skills bring creativity to any task.

- **Find volunteers.** Draw volunteers from as many sources as possible. Reach outside of your library committee to help share the load.
- **Fit the assignment to the volunteer.** An extrovert might enjoy making weekly announcements during the church service; a more subdued personality might prefer a more behind-the-scenes assignment.
- **Invite volunteers generally, but target others specifically.** Work with library staff to make a list of tasks needing assignment. Who in the congregation has the skills needed to accomplish them? Think outside the box—someone on the edge of the congregation may feel a greater sense of belonging by getting involved. Early on, make a general request for help, but also plan to make targeted requests for specific tasks.
- **Be specific.** Clear expectations make it easier for a potential volunteer to say yes. A specific assignment makes clear what is needed, when, and why it’s important.
- **Let them soar.** By giving your volunteer the space to decide HOW to accomplish the task, you honor the skills and talents they bring to the job. Give them what they need to succeed, and then step out of their way.
- **Say thanks early and often.** Whether it’s a hand-written note, a heartfelt pat on the back or an all-out volunteer thank-you party, there are so many ways to say thank you—all of them worthwhile.

## 8. Last but not least, evaluate

Every promotion, big or small, is a chance to learn. Once the event is over or your new service has been offered for a time, take time to review. What went well? What would you do differently?

Your volunteers will have valuable feedback, as will those who attended the event or utilized the new services. Use the feedback to pull together a promotion summary with recommendations for next time. You’ll be glad you did.

Adapted from an outline created by Sandra Burrowes, NCLA Consultant and Editor of *Libraries Alive*, for the NCLA National Conference Workshop, *Library Promotion—Unleash Your Imagination!*

Additional sources: Businaro, Charles. *Creating Promotion That Communicates*, 1997, Convention Press.

Copyright © 2007 National Church Library Association. All rights reserved. May be reproduced for local use provided all copies carry this notice. For other permissions, contact National Church Library Association, 275 South Third Street, Suite 101A, Stillwater MN 55082, 651-430-0770 or [info@churchlibraries.org](mailto:info@churchlibraries.org).

