



Simple steps to inviting people back to church.

We all have a network of contacts - people we know well and acquaintances - that we can invite to Church events, but normally we don't! Some reasons are:

- We are embarrassed about speaking about God/Jesus/Church/faith: it's just not British
- We are worried that inviting people back to church might somehow damage our relationship with them
- We are worried that if we did invite them, they might come, and the service might be really bad quality or have a high 'cringe-factor'.
- *We are worried about being seen as 'Bible-bashers'.*

But Jesus tells us that 'all the world' needs to hear the good news of the kingdom. In the end it is up to the leadership of the Church to engender in its members the confidence that should be ours in Christ. What we have in Jesus is good - we should share it.

Here's a simple plan to help people invite others back to church.

Step one: 5th September

- Have the BTCS leaflets and pencils available on pews for everybody.
- As part of the normal church service, introduce the concept. Be very positive about it. Stress its importance and its potential. Be positive about the potential for new people, new faces, new energy etc. Stress that BTCS is something the whole church is involved in and that members of the congregation are 'part of the team'. They are in fact central to its success, both in their prayers and in personally inviting people to Back to Church Sunday.
- Stop for prayer. Pray for the event as a whole.
 - In prayer, ask members of the congregation to think about the people they know that aren't yet committed to following Jesus as part of his Church - not just close friends and family, but even those they know only a bit.
 - After a minute, ask the Holy Spirit to show members of the congregation which two of these people they should invite to the event. Be aware that the Holy Spirit might bring more than two names to the fore.
 - Ask them to write down the two names on a piece of paper or on the invitation card.
 - Pray for the names they have written down, that they will be open to be invited and will respond positively.

Mention that you'll be coming back to this over the next couple of weeks and ask them to keep the slips of paper with the names on and bring them to church next week. Continue with the service.

Step two: 12th September

During the intercessions, remind people of the leaflets they filled out last week – ask them to have them in front of them.

Have extra leaflets and pencils for those who have forgotten their leaflets or who were not present the previous week - briefly explain what to do with them.

Ask them to pray silently for the people whose names are on the leaflets, that they will be open to be invited and will respond positively. Ask members to pray for these people every day this week as part of their own prayer life. Pray for them as people, not just as potential invitees. Suggest that they look for ways to renew/deepen their contact with these people this week.

At another point in the service, announce that you want to say something about inviting people to the event. Say that we often shy away from inviting people to church events for a whole variety of reasons. Tell them that you're going to give them the secret to successful invitation. Tell them that there are only five things to remember to say (you can use your fingers as a mnemonic!)

1. **Our church is holding a special service for people who don't usually come to church. It's called Back to Church Sunday and is part of a national day.**
2. **There will be lots of new people there and it's going to be good**
3. **I'm going**
4. **Would you like to come with me?**
5. **'Don't make your mind straight away - I'll see what you think in a couple of days.'**

All five parts are vitally important! This is not just information, it's an invitation.

You can get them to rehearse the lines with you! You can get them to practice on each other! It can be fun ...

The fifth point is to stop people from saying 'yes' just to please you, when they really don't intend to come. It gives people a chance to think up excuses. A couple of days later, ask them what they've decided. Accept their decision. Arrange to meet up to come together, if they've decided to take up your invitation.

Ask the congregation to pray for an opportunity to give the invitation this coming week, and for the courage to actually invite!

Step three – 19th September

Early in the service, ask how many people have been able to invite others to the event. Be positive about what they've achieved in doing so. Pray for those who have been invited, particularly those who are still deciding whether to come.

Go through the invitation steps again (get people to say it along with you) and encourage those who haven't yet invited people to do so. Pray in the intercessions for those who have been invited and are intending to come, that God may work in them. Pray for those who have been invited and haven't yet decided whether or not to come, that they may decide positively. Pray for those who

haven't yet been asked that they may respond positively to the invitation. Pray for the event as a whole, both in your own setting and nationwide.

That's it - it's an attempt to take inviting people seriously. Of course it's vitally important to let the community know through other means about BTCS – this provides a context and excuse for the members of the congregation to invite people.

However, without personal invitation, the event is likely to have few non-church people in attendance.

More resources are available on www.backtochurch.co.uk



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