

THE BIG

5

EASTER OPPORTUNITIES

Prepare to Make the Most of the Season



SOLUTION GUIDE

Every Easter provides an opportunity to reach new people for Christ, grow your church, and expand the Kingdom of God. Unfortunately, there are often a lot of things that get overlooked, leading to a lackluster experience for visitors and regulars alike.

We've identified 5 key areas that you need to master so that your church can make the most of the season, grabbing hold of all that God has in store for your community.

This guide will show you what to be aware of and how to approach the Big 5 Opportunities.

1

INVITING: Promoting Your Easter Event

New people will attend churches in your community this year. You know this. But what are you doing to make the decision to attend your church clear and easy?

The first step in inviting people to your church is to have a unique offering on Easter Sunday.

That might be a new message series, a sunrise service, a special event, an egg hunt (if you're into that sort of thing), or some appealing liturgical aspects (studies show Millennials are increasingly drawn to liturgy). Once you know that God will be using your church in a unique way, then don't be shy about getting the word out!



Mobilize Your People

The tried and true - and still most effective - way of growing your church is through personal invites. When people's lives are changed at your church, they want to invite their friends and family. Their friends and family see the change and it validates your church. Whether or not people are seeing the transformation, there are still ways you can get your people to invite visitors this Easter.

Ideas to Consider:

- Create an invitation card and make sure everyone in your church has one to give out for each of the four weeks leading up to Easter.
- Preach on evangelism and the need to share the Gospel (Romans 10:14).
- Create a sign in your lobby that lists reasons for people to invite their friends.
- Make "canned" content that your people can share in texts, emails, and social media.
- Have a special page on your website dedicated to Easter with an easy link to share.



Leverage Social Media

Facebook Ads is a super simple and easy way to create a buzz. Follow its suggestions for boosting a post or creating an ad, invest a couple of hundred dollars, and watch people start attending your event. Give people reasons to respond with “going,” like offering a free gift to a random person or offering some sort of cool resource.

Instagram Stories is another great way to leverage social media. By creating interesting stories, you give your followers an opportunity to engage in and share the conversation.

Ideas to Consider:

- Once people have indicated they are going to your Facebook Event, keep posting cool content and teasers to keep them engaged and sure to come.
- Use questions and polls on social media to get your people talking and sharing posts.
- Define your audience as specifically as possible, while still reaching the most people, on Facebook Ads.
- Using images and pictures for ads that have less text and more genuine appeal is key.
- Have your people share your posts and make posts with the content you provide.

Update Your Homepage

For 4-6 weeks leading up to Easter, you should have a big, bold banner on your church homepage with Easter event details and an option to “Plan Your Visit.” This link/button could lead to a simple webpage with event details, what to expect, and a contact form. It’s a great way to help people through the awkwardness of a new church experience and capture their information for easier follow-up later.

Ideas to Consider:

- Create a banner across your entire homepage that appears above the fold on desktop and mobile devices - front and center.
- Help people plan their visit by making general information about parking, kids, attire, and service flow easily accessible.
- Display pictures of the entrance and lobby of your church so people feel like they already know where they are going when they arrive.

Do an Outreach

Help people get acquainted with your church before the big Sunday by doing an outreach or service project a few weeks before Easter. This will help others in your community foster name recognition and allow you to meet some more people you can invite.

Ideas to Consider:

- Simple and easy street evangelism, like handing out invitation cards or free gifts, puts you in front of a lot of people.
- Serving a particular institution (school, shelter, etc.) will help you get to know people in the community who could benefit from a church home.
- Always include information about your Easter service while serving so people looking for a church will never have to guess where they can find one.



2

GROWTH: Retaining & Following Up With Visitors

Now that people are showing up at your church, what will you do with them? First, be okay with the truth that most of the people who visited on Easter are not likely to come back. Don't take it personally; it's not you. It's simply because they only ever go to church a few times a year. But if and when they respond to God's prompting to come back because you followed up well - whether it's the next week or the next year - you have a better chance that they'll find belonging with you.



Capturing Contact Information

The old-fashioned Connection Card still has merits but only if people can easily find and access them. The key to getting someone to fill one out is to offer an incentive: a free gift, a promised response, or a next step they can take by indicating on the card. If people are sufficiently moved to connect, they will fill one out. But, if they aren't sufficiently motivated, there are other ways to get contact information.

Ideas to Consider:

- Capture parent contact information when kids check in, then follow up with what you'll be doing in your kids ministry the following week.
- Have your people take an online poll or survey on their mobile devices as an aspect of the service, right during the service. Get creative!
- Do a prize giveaway where people have to enter their email to claim their prize.
- Equip your greeting team to be able to capture people's contact info on the fly.
- Offer a free class or resource to help in a particular area of their life that will require follow-up; something like a marriage class or financial peace seminar.

Giving Visitors a Gift

People love getting stuff. But no one values free swag. What people really want is something nice that shows you care and took the time to give them something special. By offering a more expensive gift, you can elevate your “ask.” If your gift is good enough, every person who comes for the first time will fill out a card and bring it to the designated person/table/area to get their gift.

Ideas to Consider:

- Don't give them something they would buy for themselves without a thought.
- Include subtle church branding on the item so they can remember where they got it but not so ostentatious that they'd be embarrassed to bring it in public.
- If you give away apparel, use a cool design on the front, not your giant-sized logo.
- Gift ideas (all high quality): insulated water flasks, travel/work bags, earphones, gift cards, t-shirt, hoodie, car phone cradle/charger, mobile phone case (have a variety with your logo and URL printed on them), or even a digital resource.



Give Them a Task

Once you have their contact information, a great way to keep visitors engaged is to follow up with a request for help. People like responding to help. To get people helping and to gather valuable information, you should consider creating an online Visitor Survey and send the link to everyone who attends. As part of your follow-up process, simply let them know that you want to keep doing the best with what God has given you, and to do that you need their help to provide honest feedback. Send them the link and see what happens!

Ideas to Consider:

- Don't hide the survey link in a big general follow-up email. Send it separately for a clear call to action.
- Keep the survey simple - no more than 6 questions.
- Ask questions you really want answers to; it's a win-win.
- Let people know you appreciated their feedback, and maybe even offer another gift that they have to come back to church to claim.



Create a Follow-Up Pathway

Following up is not a one-and-done proposition. Your follow-up process should meander through a pre-defined path that involves multiple people on your team. For example, after filling out a connection card, a visitor might receive a “Thanks for worshipping with us” email, then a Visitor Survey request, then a personal message from the pastor or team leader, then a two-week follow-up about a new message or event, followed by a message from the children’s director about some kid-related stuff, then a link to a resource or valuable information on your website, then a request to “like” or “follow” on social media; all spaced out over an appropriate amount of time, using language that is natural and friendly.

The key is to make a very calculated response feel conversational and genuine. And the truth is, it is genuine. But it’s also automated so you can be genuinely welcoming to many more people in a more excellent way.

Ideas to Consider:

- Utilize a whole team - Don’t let all your follow-up originate from the same person or it will feel spammy and overdone.
- Deliver information to visitors from the people who are most well-associated with it in your church.
- Use an online follow-up system to automate as many of the responses as possible.
- Don’t automate everything; personal touch is still touching.
- Think ahead to what things you can invite people to for two, three, and even four weeks out. Then assemble a general email or text list for future invites.

3

GIVING: Making an Offering Request

Some people don't like talking about money when a lot of guests are present. Those people don't understand the nature of giving. To give is a blessing. If we believe that, why not ask people to be blessed through their giving? Don't let other people's mishandling of the money talk discourage you from being a blessing and being blessed.

Consider Your Guests

If people come to church on Easter, they have some kind of religious bone in their body, which means they also understand the nature of giving to charity. But nothing turns people off like a shameless ask for money if it's not connected to the fruitfulness of ministry. Nonetheless, they came to your church because they thought it a valuable enough place to worship. If it's worthy to worship at, it's probably worthy to give to.



Ideas to Consider:

- Help people understand that giving to the church is giving to life-change.
- Share the fruitfulness of your ministry by providing testimonies of transformation.
- Invite people to be part of what God is doing in their community.
- Avoid long-winded pitches to raise a certain amount or meet a specific goal.
- Keep your invitation to give simple, confident, and Spirit-led.

Remind People of Purpose

People give to vision. If you're going to ask for money, you need to remind people: 1) how God is using the church, and 2) how the church will use its resources to fulfill its purpose. The following is an outline for a good giving request:

Outline to Consider:

- Describe what God has called your church to do or be in this community (your vision).
- Share a testimony or story about how the church is impacting a life or lives.
- Tie the testimony to giving by connecting the dots between someone's donation and how that allowed the church to develop leaders/disciples/initiatives to effect change.
- Offer people an opportunity to be part of what God is doing by giving of their resources.
- Thank every person who has prayed, given, or generally supported the vision.

Make No Excuses

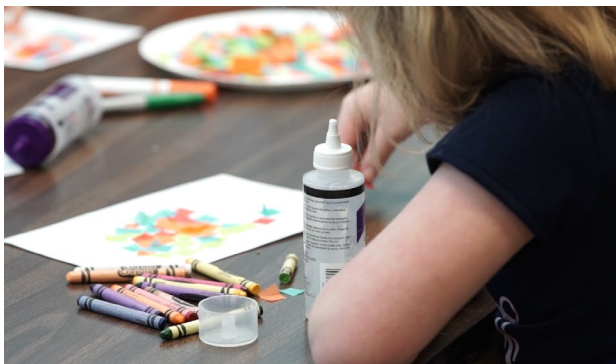
When you doubt yourself, others will, too. You've got to believe that the money someone gives will really result in the impact you're claiming. If you don't believe it, don't ask it. If you do believe it, then stand behind it. Don't let your fear of people's perceptions about money dissuade you from giving them the opportunity to be part of the eternal thing God is doing right in front of them!

Ideas to Consider:

- People came to your church to worship on Easter. We worship God - in part - with our giving. If you ask them to "stand for worship," why not ask them to "give as worship"?
- Trillions of dollars are donated to various organizations every year, what you're asking is not some brand new idea that repulses people.
- Give people the opportunity to be blessed by being a blessing. Don't deprive the gift-giver of the gift of giving.

4

KIDS: Convenience & Security



With a few demographic anomalies, families with kids will likely be the largest portion of visitors you see on Easter.

Now more than ever, parents have high standards for their kids' care and maybe even higher standards of customer service. This means your kids' program - and check-in process - needs to be fast and easy while

providing confidence and security. Not to mention that you actually have to have great programming for the kids during service.

Conveying a strong commitment to safety, balanced by fun and excitement, wrapped in a seamless customer experience, puts the pressure on your kids' ministry to function like an Apple store with a fraction of the resources. Fortunately, there are things you can do to meet and exceed parental expectations.

Declare Your Values

Let parents know right from the start how you feel about their kids, their spiritual formation, and your commitment to safety. When parents see that you have taken the first step and answered their questions before they even asked, you're already starting in the green. Plus, you put parents at ease because you've dissipated the awkwardness created by the unknown.

Ideas to Consider:

- Post signs in the child check-in area that outline your ministry vision, values, and commitment to safety.
- Include a handout to new parents that lists your safety protocols - like ensuring that every volunteer has passed a background check.
- Highlight what the kids will be learning in class so parents know you're experts.
- Publish all your kids' ministry info on your website so by the time they visit, they already feel like they know you and your heart for their kids.



Get Rid of the Lines

Chances are, the parents who are checking in their kids are already feeling flustered and out of sorts by rushing to a new church and being out of their element. Don't add to that frustration by making them wait in an awkward stance with people they don't know just to drop off their kids. Instead, have a well-thought system that can process new people easily, putting them in control.

Ideas to Consider:

- Use an online check-in system with matching security stickers.
- Use touchscreen technology so parents can enter their own information.
- Have multiple check-in points to share the load.
- Station greeters to connect with one parent while the other is filling out info.
- Have different lines for first-time guests and regular attendees.

Have a Plan

Developing and sharing a safety protocol is essential, not only for the health of your own ministry but also for a point of reference that you can show parents. Parents don't just want to know that you have a plan, they want to know what that plan is. Create a plan, print it out, and share it however you see best.

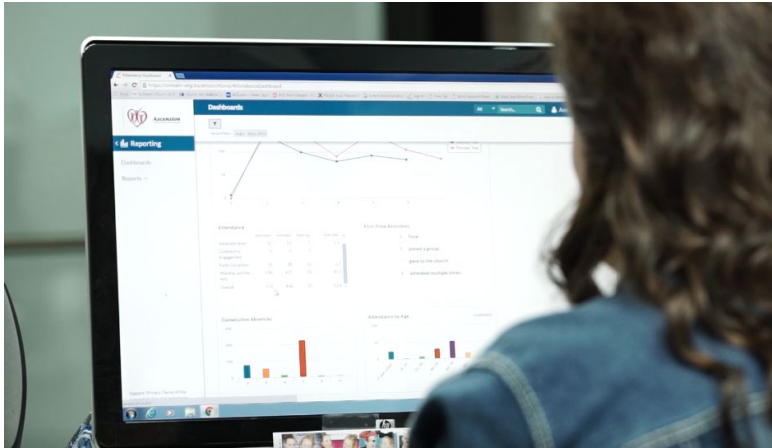
Ideas to Consider:

- All volunteers working with kids should pass a background check.
- Adults taking kids to the bathroom should always go in pairs.
- Diapers should be changed outside of the restroom, with more than one adult present.
- Fire and evacuation procedures should be visible in each room.
- Security checkpoints should be monitored with exterior doors locked during the service.

5

DATA: Capturing & Using Gathered Information

There's no sense in capturing information you can't use. And you won't use information you haven't considered. So it's worth taking a moment to determine what information you actually want, then leveraging it to gain valuable insights that could direct your future decisions.



Information You Can Use

Think through what your church values and how knowing more about those things could help propel the vision of your church forward. For example, if your church values small groups, you might want to find out information from visitors around which you could make recommendations for groups. If a family has young kids, steer them into the group with childcare. If they are single, steer them to the singles, or men's, or women's group. And so on.

This idea doesn't just apply to new visitors but to your entire church. What do you need to know? And how will you capture it?

Ideas to Consider:

- Use a variety of online surveys to gather information in small bits.
- Ask questions and get answers around topics that matter to your ministry, not just data for data's sake.
- Discover "felt" data, like how people feel about certain topics, issues, or ideas.
- Craft guest experiences and spiritual formation opportunities based on what you discover.

Power of Reports

When thinking of reports, your mind might conjure images of reams of paper with useless numbers that only accountants and geeks are looking at. You'd be wrong to limit the power of reports to those notions. Reports have the power to inform, not only your team but also your members. When people see actual data, it has the power to reinforce the truth and inspire participation. There are many ways reports can leap off the page and inspire change.

Ideas to Consider:

- On Easter Sunday, share a report of how many people gave their lives to Christ last year at your church and see how excited people become.
- Give donors a report on last year's giving and watch it increase.
- Show people how many items you donated to the food bank last year.
- Display your growth trajectory to help people see what's possible.
- Share the disparity between group signups and actual group attendance to help keep people accountable.



Using an Integrated System

The last thought on data: having a church management system that integrates your communication, discipleship, giving, check-in, and data systems in one place makes it exponentially easier to have all the data you need at your fingertips, for every area of your ministry. The ability to see group participation, attendance stats, giving records, and family structures gives you a holistic picture of how God is moving in your ministry and how you can plan for greater things moving forward.

Ideas to Consider:

- Tracking a person's family, church, financial, and spiritual dynamics and growth in one place provides a ton of insights.
- Training teams on fewer solutions increases the usefulness of each solution.
- Thinking proactively about how you will be alongside people on their journey at your church will help you connect with them better, right from the start.

Now Pray For It and Run With It

Okay, so we didn't end this guide with the coolest of topics. But hey, this is the Body of Christ, and each member has a part to play. So whether it's running reports or evangelizing in the streets, everything you do to prepare for Easter is important.

In all your planning, don't miss the power of the moment by being caught up in the preparation of it.

Remember that what we're celebrating is a miraculous spiritual event that has brought hope to billions of people throughout history. When people come to worship and celebrate the resurrection at your church, it's a big deal! So before you do any of the things in this guide, spend some time in prayer and keep your priorities straight. All of your plans are important, but not as important as letting God lead you to reach your community in a profound way this Easter. And remember, we're praying with you, trusting that God will lead your church to big things for His glory! So, take this advice and run with it!



Throughout this guide, you have seen several ways that Realm helps churches reach new people and manage the life and operations of a church. We're excited to share more about our revolutionary ministry tool, Realm.

Realm provides solutions that will make your ministry and life easier. It is cutting-edge church management software that combines administration, accounting, and community into one system. It also connects your entire church and personalizes each person's involvement in your ministry.

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