



## **Practical Planning.**

Our communities care about how we care. They care about what we do. In other words, your church is defined by your community by what you do, more than being defined by what you say you believe.

Reaching into our community is a process. Everyone starts from where they are with what they have. Effective planning begins with the end in mind. "People who dream of what could be, create what could be." Laurie Beth Jones

### **Question, "What would it look like if?"**

One man saw a long traffic line in his community. It formed every day at the same time except on Saturdays. He wondered, "What would it look like if I grabbed a cooler full of cold drinks and went to the car window and offered a drink to the people?" He acted upon his, "What would it look like?" thought. He bought a roller cooler, soft drinks and ice. He went to the location and began to hand out the iced drinks. He was surprised! The people receiving the drinks were grateful and usually asked, "Why are you doing this?" His reply, "I'm just showing you God's love in a practical way."

Do you have a "What would it look like if we...?"

"What would it look like for your church to serve your community once a quarter or once a month?"

Hot Tip: Enlisting an administrative person is helpful in planning. They are detailed people who often begin developing a concept by beginning with the end in mind.

### **Start by taking a close look at your community.**

If this is the beginning place for you, take a careful look at you community.

What's going on? Where do people meet? What do people do? How can we serve and love in practical ways? Is there a special event where we can serve? What are the felt needs of the community? Where should we go? What can we do? When can you do, what you want to do? How do you accomplish what you want to do? Think: Where can we go to offer acts of kindness which will meet a need and encourage people.

I have a friend who has a church located near the beach in his community. They decided to serve and show kindness to the beach community by giving away small packs of sunscreen and bottles of water to the people walking toward the beach at the entrances of the boardwalks. People were grateful. Their kindness generated conversation. People asked questions and a felt need was met.

## **How often should we reach out?**

It really depends upon what you want to accomplish and how many people you want to reach. Some churches go out weekly, monthly or quarterly. Some large movement churches plan a weekend, or a week of kindness once a year.

Our church is a large African American Church, Phillips Temple in Trotwood OH. It is located a newer building in a depressed area next to all the public schools. Our outreach is usually once a month on a Saturday. Our goal is for our people to develop serving others with kindness as a life style. Therefore we have a yearly kindness calendar coordinated with the church calendar.

People in our community like to sleep in on Saturday's so we decided to meet at 10:30am and go out into the community at 11am.

We asked, "What do people not like to do on Saturday?" Wash clothes and wash cars. One team go to the laundromat with quarters and washing pods. We pay for the washing and drying and help fold clothes. At the Laundromat we introduce ourselves. "Hi! I'm here to help you today? Here are some quarters and laundry pods." People usually ask why we are doing this. We reply, "We are showing you God's love in a practical way." Conversations usually continue as we hang out, help fold clothes, love people and offer prayer. Prayer is often the connection point that connects the act of kindness to the heart.

The same is true for the car wash. "Hi! We are here to pay for your car wash. We have towels to help dry your car." Conversations usually flow from the connection of service.

## **More outreach projects that produce "Kindness Connections."**

### **Bus Station**

Go to your bus station with water and Gatorade. Offer people waiting the drinks. You can also offer prayer.

### **Large Groups at Events or City Center**

Fill coolers with ice and water and give the water away. You can use a \*connect card or a sticker on the bottle. Recently we asked Lowe's if we could give away water as a community service project. The answer, "Yes, that's a great thing to do for our customers. Thank you."

### **Gas Stations**

Getting permission from independent gas stations to wash car windshields, clean up the parking lot, and serve their customers. We also give away \$5 bills to the first ten or so people who pull in. We say, "Hi. We are here to serve you today. Here's \$5 to help you pay for your gas. Is there anything I can pray with you?" We hand the person a connect card, the \$5 bill and wash the windshield. We've been amazed at the response from the people receiving prayer. Most are deeply touched.

## Gift Bags to Shops.

Small gift bags with granola bars, peanuts, snack crackers, breath mints etc.

"Hi! We are here to show you God's love in a practical way. Here is a gift for you and the other workers. Thank you for working in our community. Can we pray for your business?" If yes, we bless the business. We then ask, "Any personal need? If yes, we pray, if no, we thank them leave the gift bags.

## Nursing Home

Bring boxes of good tissues, hand lotion, or small gifts to encourage the staff and the residents. One lady in the home loves our visits. She is grateful for the good tissues, the flowers we bring and the time we spend with her. She is collecting our connect cards lining them up on her bedside table.



## Pre-Outreach Planning.

Tip: Always go to the locations of the planned outreach before the event. One time I sent a team to a car wash that no longer existed. Not great!

- When do you need to announce the planned outreach? At least 3 weeks out. This means your announcement / design media group and church program group need to have your information at least 3 weeks before the outreach event.
- What space can we gather to meet that is pleasant and large enough for people to feel comfortable? In good weather

some people meet outside.

- What kind of environment do I want to create for the people who come to go on the outreach? Fun, Upbeat, Inspiring etc.
- What time do we need to meet on the day? Tip: Mid to late morning are great times. In urban areas people sleep in on Saturday mornings.
- Will the people gathered be able to hear what we say? If not, we may need a microphone and a PA for sound. If we need sound, will we need a sound person?

## Decide what outreaches you will be doing.

- Once decided, order supplies, for each outreach, pick up supplies, and make the supplies ready and available on the day of the outreach. (Work up a time line for this process. Several people should be involved in the process or know about how your process works.)
- Create signs describing the outreach.(landscape paper or A-4 paper will work) Car Wash. Nursing Home, Bus Station, Town Center etc

- Create instructions with location or map to each outreach location. i.e. Bus Station use a google map or described location. Instructions should tell what people what they will be doing on the specific outreach opportunity. (You can combine Signs and instructions if a small group is anticipated.)

### **Example:**

Instructions are on the bottom of the map for the leader to share with their group. "When you arrive at the bus station gather as a group and pray. Then break up into two's, when you walk up to people say, "Hi. Would you like water or a Gatorade?" Or begin a conversation by asking where are you going? Sometimes the act of just handing the person the drink opens the conversation. At the end of your talk you can offer to pray by asking, "Is there anything I can pray with you about today?" If so pray with your eyes open so you can see what is happening to the person as you pray. Sometime you can see a deep connection which may have opened a person's heart to the Good News. Then share the good news.

### **Set up Day**

If possible set up the space the day before the outreach gathering. Setting up early removes most of the leaders stress and allows for a focused and calm spirit on the day of the outreach.

- Set up tables, create atmosphere etc.
- Have a sign in table with sign up sheets, pens, sharpies and name tags.
- Place the outreach signs on the tables or use painters tape to a wall for people to be able to see the outreach options.
- Place the outreach instructions / map, locations on the table. The instructions will tell people what the outreach is, where the outreach will be, what to do on the outreach and how many people are needed to go on the outreach.
- Set outreach supplies on the tables or floor for each of the outreach opportunities of the day. i.e. Gas Station, paper towels, \$5 bills in an envelope, and safe for tinted glass windshield spray cleaner.

### **On the Day**

- When people arrive. The first person to arrive is now the greeter. If you have a team pre-designate a greeter. The greeter encourages people to sign in and to write their name on a name tag and have a walk around to see the various outreach opportunities. Allow people space to wander about to view the outreach ideas and to think about which outreach they will chose.
- Chose leaders. This can be done in your team before the day, or as people arrive for the outreach.
- Call people together.
- Welcome everyone.
- Share what you are doing on the day by mentioning each outreach and the assigned leader.

- Tell a story for one thought practical kindness training. ie. Smile! Don't be so serious. Have fun!
- Pray.
- Instruct people to go to the area / table of their chosen outreach and gather as a group. Their leader explains outreach by reading the instruction sheet. Decide on who will drive to outreach. Let them know where the group will meet at the location to touch base before beginning the outreach. i.e. some training may be required. This is how you wash a windshield, or when the light turns red then give drink to people in car, light turns green stop get out of street.
- Pray as a group. Some people like to pray specifically for glimpses of the area they are going to, or the people they will be talking to. Similar to treasure hunting. They jot down clues, or impressions.
- GO: Go to location. At location gather, give instructions, pray. Leader lets owner manager of the business they have arrived. Hi, we are here to...
- Return to home base: People can return supplies, and return to share what they have learned, or they may have a story to tell. Sometimes people then go out for a meal as a group to deepen their community experience.

Hot Tip: If fewer people come than anticipated to the outreach you can easily remove an outreach and focus on the others. Always prepare several outreach projects. You will be able decide which outreach is most important or if removing an outreach is a good idea.

### **What about Service Projects?**

Service projects build bridges into the heart of our communities. Service projects involve meeting a specific need of an organization, or a community. Our good deeds create good will which builds bridges of influence and connection. Service projects often involve cleaning, landscaping, painting, renewing, building, giving, volunteering and serving.

- School Clean Up Inside And Outside
- Painting / Fixing School Playground Equipment
- Volunteer As School Mentors, Hall Monitors, Story Tellers, Book Readers, Team Sport Coaches / Helpers
- Providing School Supplies And Backpacks
- Adopting Families At Christmas For Clothing And Gifts From List, Family Given By School Counselor
- Teacher Appreciation Breakfast On Staff Training Day
- City Park Clean Up
- Serving At A Food Pantry
- Serving At A Homeless Shelter
- Painting Homes For People In Need
- Painting Playground Equipment At Low Income Apartments

- Throw A Party At An Apartment Complex Bouncies, Food, Games, Crafts, Face Painting, Prizes
- Trash And Litter Clean Up In Known Trashed Areas
- Providing Shoes And Socks For Kids In Need
- Washing Windows / Cleaning Parking Lots Of Businesses
- Toilet / Restroom Cleaning
- Mowing Grass For People Who Cannot
- Hospital Greeters, Hospital Chaplin Helpers, Visit Emergency Rooms With Small Gifts: Water, Coffee, Donuts, Small Packs Of Tissues...
- Host Large Community Events: Community Easter Egg Hunts, Creating a Safe Place For Families On Halloween With Games, Food, Crafts and Fun
- Free Car Washes (one dollar car washes, the person receives a dollar at the end of the car wash)

Every service project will need planning steps and implementing. Key people will need to be contacted, meetings arranged, permission given and a process put into place. Simply being with the end in mind. Form a team, and plan the steps similar to the steps in the first section.

Hot Tips: Go to the community chamber of commerce speak to the Mayor or the person who is responsible for community service. The aim is to discover what needs they have and how you can help meet their needs. The same is true for reaching hospitals, schools, health agencies, homeless shelters, food pantries, etc.

We went to a large elementary school and asked, "What is your greatest need?" The answer, "Please help us re-paint the school bus arrival and departure letters in the parking lot for our bus pick up drop off area." The school is one of the largest elementary schools In Ohio. It has seventeen hundred children attending, mainly bused to the school. We complied and painted the parking lot with matching A through Z letters. We also cleaned the playground, put up new basketball nets, mulched the playground area, and painted the playground equipment. This small task brought order back into the chaos and helped the kids feel better about their playground. We were also asked to remove the bushes from around the building. We removed six dump truck loads of bushes. The school looked better and the trash problem in the bushes fixed. Doing what we were asked to do with excellence opened other kindness opportunities within the school system.

### **End notes:**

- Begin where you are with what you have.
- Develop a plan.
- Be determined and intentional.
- Go.
- Tell stories. Stories create inspirational momentum.
- Seek to develop acts of kindness and good deeds as a lifestyle.
- Don't quit.

- Have fun!

For help and coaching contact [info@kindnessoutreach.com](mailto:info@kindnessoutreach.com)