

EVANGELISM PLANNING

Developing a Strategy



Churches with an evangelism strategy have many more baptisms; some 20% more. The key is to be intentional and specific, seeking the Lord's leading in the planning process.

Think of a strategy as a roadmap. It is a way to align with God's heartbeat. The founder of World Vision once said, "May my heart break with the things that break God's heart." Lostness breaks God's heart. Creating a plan that honors the Lord, His will, and His ways brings glory to the name of Jesus!

God revealed His strategic plans in the Bible to Noah to build upon, Moses to stand before Pharaoh, Joshua sent out his spies, Gideon walked in the enemy camp, Nehemiah got the walls built, and on and on. Jesus said that we must count the cost before engaging in an activity. And evangelism for your church is blessed when it marches out with God's plan.

Step One: Get Organized

Pray that God would lead you to assemble an evangelism planning committee. Pastors are typically champions. The project will likely die if the pastor has to supervise the project month after month. It's a matter of calling, capacity, and capability.

Lottie Moon, a Southern Baptist missionary to China, once asked a church to send a helper to her that was so capable that it would leave a hole in the sending church. What a vision! Who is active in your church that has the calling, capacity, and capability to develop and hold church members accountable to fulfill the strategy?

Step Two: Endvision

Begin with the end in mind. Create a "preferred future." Describe in detail what your community would look like to have transformed lives and communities with the Gospel. Look ahead and if Jesus tarries, what steps does it take to make disciples, multiply churches, and develop leaders? Keep stepping backwards identifying each step along the way. Use the steps below to flesh out an evangelism strategy that encompasses research, prayer, equipping, sowing abundantly, and training new believers?

Strategies are the big picture. It's the overarching ideal that drives specific tactics and tasks. Just as Jesus' parable addresses the need for counting the cost in advance, so does a strategy. The planning process should not change too easily, but it should also not be so inflexible that it creates problems.

What is your success criteria? Here are a few categories to prioritize on your checklist:

- ✓ Relationships: What deep and wide relationships have you nurtured?
- ✓ Trained volunteers: both in your Receiving Church and in the Sending Churches
- ✓ Salvations: What location? When? Who worked with them? Is there a trend going?
- ✓ Baptisms: What characterized those who were baptized over those who were not yet?
- ✓ New believers: Are new believers telling others about their faith in Christ?

Step Three: Research lostness

Who has a keen mind and can handle computer-based information? Will they assemble decision-making information and be willing to go out into the community to collect information? And will they be willing to do it at odd hours, not just while everyone is at work?

Getting boots on the ground knocking on doors vital. Where are the greatest pockets of lostness? Zip Code demographic information is available free from the Cincinnati Area Baptist Association for every zip code. Request the zip code data from Patti (CABAoffice@gmail.com). People Group information is online at: www.peplegroups.info. And for churches in Ohio, a county-by-county assessment is free the asking from CABAdirector@gmail.com.

Evaluate resources available: Be realistic about people, time, and budget. But as missions strategists like to say, "If it was do-able in your own power with your current resources, it wouldn't make you rely fully upon the Lord." Push that envelope of faith!

Step Four: Pray intentionally

Who will be a prayer leader and get people praying? Will they produce a prayer guide to the people and place where you want to work? Are prayerwalks needed? Will the prayer team seek to "pray without ceasing" and stand against spiritual warfare?

Ask each member of your Sunday School classes for names and complete contact information for those that they know that are lost. Assemble the list and begin praying over every name. Consider conducting 24-hour prayer vigils. These contact names will be vital during the "sowing the Gospel" part of the strategy.

The Jericho Prayer Walk is a simple idea from Neal Hughes. A church prayerwalks a community seven times and encounters each person living there as much as possible. They take prayer requests and pray on the spot. Those they encounter are possible candidates to not only receive the Gospel, but start a new Bible study. The paper on [Jericho Prayer Walks](#) is online.

One Cry is a "win" to draw believers into a closer relationship with the Lord (www.onecry.com). One Cry's training is encapsulated in a six week program, but can initiate a movement. Sunday School classes need to know how to pray and what to pray for. Getting segments within the church engaged in specific ways is important.

Step Five: Equip for disciple-making

Evaluate your church members' evangelism readiness. Are the members ready to share their faith? Are they doing it constantly to the point that you see baptisms regularly? Who is the best person in your church to equip every church member as a witness?

Available free online are [four-session Sunday School lessons](#) and [15 devotions](#) to train every participant in your church. Pastors should time sermons to encourage the lessons during the training weeks. Work with your church's discipleship leaders to urgently schedule a four-week training course for Middle School ages on up.

Role models: Pastors and church leaders must set the example for their members. Will they partner up with others and become intentional witnessing teams? What will it take for them to be trained?

Personal evangelism: Experience has provided that orality methods such as Bible Storying does this best. If orality is new, check out the free "[Orality in America](#)" paper developed for the Mission America Coalition. I believe Bible Storying holds relational and supportive keys to success. A catalog is available from snowdenministries@gmail.com and training is free online at <http://truthsticks.us> and at e-quip.net, search "Snowden."

Missouri Baptists have an oral tract ready to help. "C2C – Creation to the Cross Fold-it tracts" are provided at no cost from the Missouri Baptist Convention (evangelism@mobaptist.org). C2C is a meta-narrative told in about five minutes that is especially good to use with younger generations that just don't have a Bible background. It starts in the Old Testament and moves through the Gospel and into steps for new believers. The C2C tract is available as a free tract app for iTunes and Google Play.

Relationships: Receiving churches and Sending churches must have strong relationships. Receiving churches have a [guide](#) to help them establish relationships.

Decision Counselors should help new believers after their decision to follow Christ and make it public. They must know how to lead someone to Christ. Follow-up must be required to help new believers become active witnesses and disciple-makers. Counsel is available from Mark Snowden, the CABA director (CABAdirector@gmail.com).

Step Six: Sow down the Gospel

On one sheet of paper write down 100 evangelism ideas. Place a star by those that seem like they would provide the most impact and are the most "do-able" by your church and partners. Share the list and solicit input from evangelism project leaders. There is a free listing of "[100 Evangelism Ideas](#)" available to help encourage you and spark your imagination.

Widespread evangelization: Initiate a blitz during an evangelistic "season" that may last for one month at a strategic time.

Meeting the lost: When volunteers from Sending Churches are present, provide names of the lost people for which Sunday School classes have been praying. Have those who submitted the names go with the volunteers to make in-home visits to pray with the people, share the C2C Tract (or equivalent Gospel presentation) and ask if they would want to repent and believe in Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Turn in the names to the project coordinator.

Other strategies may include evangelistic block parties, servant evangelism projects in which you invite the lost to serve alongside a team that is doing work in the community, movie events ([God is Not Dead](#), etc.), and other evangelistic projects.

Internet: Recording and uploading member testimonies of believers in your church can be promoted using business cards. You may use an existing service such as www.mostimportantthing.org, www.whatvaluemost.com, or perhaps your church's website can host it. This may require a larger capacity server and a unique website that links to follow-up materials and counseling such as NAMB's Evangelism Response Center at www.nambcchat.com or by calling 1-888-JESUS20.

Commit to making disciples should be the church's number one biblical priority. Make sure everything done is reproducible and holds people accountable for spiritual development.

Step Seven: Disciple New Believers Following Jesus

Jesus. Obedience. Study. Love. Tell. All five aspects are vital for a new believer to grasp. Since it takes roughly 40 days to make an activity become a habit, engage new believers for the first 40 days after coming to faith in Christ.

[“New Believers Following Jesus”](#) was developed as a five-part lesson series for new believers. If this is followed lesson-by-lesson, then new believers will begin witnessing among those they know who are far from Jesus.

Baptisms should become more inclusive and celebratory. New believers should invite family members and the focus of the service should be on the need for salvation and baptism. This helps the new believer be a bolder witness for Jesus.

Ongoing Celebrations: As the campaign continues throughout the year, testimonials and experiences should be showcased in every communication vehicle of the church including the pulpit as a prioritized act of worship. Remember, you’re not bragging on what you, a committee, the strategy, or the church did, but giving glory to what God did through your church through the activity of the Holy Spirit. This is an Acts 14:27 event as the church gets together and learns how God “opened a door of faith.”

Please direct updates and comments on this manual to:

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Most of the links in this paper are available free online at
www.cincinnatiabaptist.com.