



COMMUNICATE MISSIONS VISION via Imaginative Print Media

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MISSIONS MATERIALS TO CONNECT WITH YOUR CHURCH

Examples at <http://www.dualreach.org/missions/resources/mc-t6-5.shtml>.

1. Publish an overview brochure.

Many churches develop printed pieces introducing the big picture of their global outreach programs. These can be available for newcomers and are a good tool for use in new members classes.

2. Produce an annual report.

Some missions leadership teams publish overviews of their programs in the form of annual reports that often include financial summaries explaining how missions funds were invested. An annual report is a great place to review how much God has accomplished through the church's global ministries over the past 12 months and present a challenge for the coming year.

3. Bookmark it.

Hudson (OH) Community Chapel produces a series of bookmarks called "The Good Report" which combine photos and text that highlight something God has done through the church's missions involvement. A short concluding paragraph asks readers to take a moment right there in the service to pray for the featured ministry. The handy bookmark can be kept in a Bible as a reminder for ongoing prayer. Ev. Free Fullerton (CA) uses a larger format to present information about their adopted people groups, but tucked into a Bible, the piece is also a great prayer reminder.

4. Publish a regular missions newsletter.

A periodic broadside provides a vehicle for presenting missions information and excitement to your congregation. Although the newsletter does not need to be large or elaborate, it should have a distinctive name, its own masthead, and perhaps a unique graphic design approach. Include stories of your missionaries, introductions of short-term teams, and explanations of new missions projects.

5. Present missions projects.

Appeals for global involvement—whether for the investment of time, resources, or finances—are strengthened by quality supporting literature. Clearly spelling out details in writing helps individuals to prayerfully consider contributing. A detachable return form facilitates the collection of all pertinent information from those who respond.

6. Produce an annual missionary directory.

Each missionary single, couple, or family can have a page complete with photograph, contact information, birthdays, ministry description, and long-term prayer requests, as well as a summary of their country or field, usually including a map. Those serving in creative-access countries may have to be omitted for security reasons. Some churches choose to create small, loose-leaf notebooks so that pages can be added easily to keep the directory up to date. Other congregations produce a laminated card for each missionary unit that includes photos and basic information to use as daily prayer reminders.

7. Go creative!

The Mechanicsville (VA) Christian Center publishes an annual PrimeTime Café “menu” that lists not only their short-term trips, but all of their missions activities and involvement opportunities.

8. Hang eye-catching pieces.

Choose your most exceptional photos from recent short-term missions trips and have them blown up to poster size and hung in strategic places around the church. Intriguing face shots are always attention getters. Attractive posters can announce upcoming missions classes or special events. Missions banners hung in the sanctuary, narthex, hallways, or on outside walkways can communicate powerfully.

9. Stick to them.

Magnets (typically 2 x 3½ inches) can be purchased preprinted with your missions theme or other message. North Heights Lutheran Church in Roseville, MN, developed magnetic prayer reminders for their adopted people group and distributed them following their adoption service.

10. Post literature on your church’s website.

You will want to communicate key ideas via web pages, but additional information can be made available by uploading brochures in pdf format.

11. Use your church’s regular communication vehicles.

Although space may be limited, why not ask permission to include missions highlights in the weekly church bulletin? Even a sentence or two can pique interest, if written creatively. Offer to write an article for your church newspaper or other communiqué.

12. Send articles to your local newspaper.

Is there someone in your church who works in public relations or communications? Why not recruit him or her to write an article about a recent exciting missions trip or an upcoming project? Submit it to your local paper, including photos, if possible.

PUBLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN

13. Begin with pre-schoolers.

Ev. Free Fullerton has found that their 3- and 4-year-olds are among the most faithful to support missions projects. Each month the children are introduced to the missionary or need via stories and posted pictures. Mission agencies are often good sources of stories and other teaching materials designed for children. World Relief (<http://www.worldrelief.org>),

World Vision (<http://www.worldvision.org>), and Wycliffe (<http://www.wycliffe.org>) are three potential sources.

14. Vacation Bible School.

VBS is a great place to introduce children to missionaries and compassion projects. Send a printed piece home with each child on the first day of VBS, and then on subsequent days or at the end of the week, provide an update on the offering and what it will buy. For example, on day 1 children might take home a pictorial “directory” of farm animals being purchased for Africa. At the end of the week, they and their parents will be delighted to read that their offering bought 2 cows, 40 rabbits, and 200 chickens! It’s very exciting for everyone.

WHERE TO GET IDEAS AND RESOURCES

15. Borrow ideas from other churches.

Ask to be added to the mailing list of a church that produces top-quality materials. While your church’s publications budget may be too modest to underwrite extensive, full-color brochures, thanks to computer publishing software and high-speed desktop printers, any congregation can produce attractive materials. A number of sample brochures are included in DualReach’s tool package: <http://www.dualreach.org/missions/resources/mc-t6-5.shtml>. Remember to respect copyrights.

16. Search the Internet.

Use an online search engine to find references to “mission themes” or “mission conferences.” You will be rewarded with dozens of sites containing hundreds of ideas.

17. Ask permission to use photos or graphic designs.

If you see a great picture or effective design layout used by another church, ask if you may reuse the concepts for your congregation. Most publications teams will be flattered that you asked and are more than happy to share their resources if not prohibited by copyright.

18. Get the Picture!

While “point and shoot” cameras make taking pictures easier these days, getting quality photographs suitable for publication still requires skill and an eye for composing shots. Each time you send a short-term team, develop a list of pictures you would like and make sure a member of the team has a digital camera and will work hard to come back with quality shots. On some occasions, you may want to send an experienced photographer whose primary assignment is taking digital photographs and video footage. You will also want to make sure that someone takes pictures at missions events sponsored by the church.

19. Use stock photos.

Thousands of photos are available online. Use a search engine such as Google (<http://images.google.com/> is one source), and list your topic: “photo of dad with baby,” “Hindu temple,” or “child at desk,” for example. While some shots are free, many are copyrighted and must be purchased. The cost may depend on use and the quality (dpi or resolution) of the photo. Sources from which to purchase high-quality international photos on missions themes for PowerPoint (but also available for print) are: <http://www.worshipphotos.com> and <http://www.whitmers.com/index.php?folder=stock/international>.

INCLUDE YOUR MISSIONARIES

20. Send your missionaries your church publications.

Don't forget to include your missionaries on your mailing list for copies of your all-church publications, invitations and other information. Even if they are ten thousand miles away and unable to attend a particular event, they appreciate being included. They love to receive updates on the other workers in your missions family, as well.

21. Include your missionaries in your church's pictorial directory.

Your church directory offers another opportunity to emphasize that your missionaries are a part of your church family. Also make sure they receive a copy of the directory, either as soon as it is published or just before they arrive at your church for a visit. Missionaries are grateful for this memory jogger that helps them connect names to faces.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

22. Consider security concerns.

While your literature may be designed only for your church family, there are a multitude of ways that a brochure can fall into the hands of someone who could do damage to ministry or even endanger lives. Make sure that you are aware of your missionaries' wishes about restrictions on information.

23. Start from your audience's point of view.

Present the big picture; don't assume that members of your congregation already understand the purpose or strategy of your global outreach program. Avoid "insider language." Words such as "tentmaker," "10/40 window," and "global professional" may be meaningless to some of your readers.

24. Distributing literature does not necessarily mean you have communicated.

In our media-saturated world, many people ignore everything except what they absolutely must read, and younger generations are much more tuned to video images than to brochures. While printed material can be a wonderful expansion and reinforcement of your global challenge, never rely on just one means of communication.

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- ◆ For more ideas on mobilizing your church for global impact, subscribe to DualReach's *Synergy Newsletter* at <http://www.dualreach.org>.