

Twenty Ways to Reach Out

By David Arrol Macfarlane



It's wise to present the love of God often and in many different ways to those around us. It's not too late to try out one of these ideas!

“Hazel, look at this!” hollers Merv, from his La-Z-Boy towards the general direction of the kitchen. Hazel scurries in just as the on-screen truck drives off into the distance and a big “Ford” sign appears in its place. “We should get a new vehicle, and that Explorer XLT looks like the one!”

In his morning paper Merv sees an ad for the Explorer. “Hmm, it has a 5.4 litre engine. That’s the kind of power we need!” Later he sees his neighbour washing a new SUV. “I’m glad I bought this Explorer. You should get one too, Merv,” he says. That afternoon Merv hears a catchy commercial for the Explorer on the car radio as he passes under a billboard for the vehicle. “It sure looks nice,” he mutters to himself. On a whim he pulls into a Ford dealership. A salesman with amazingly white teeth takes him for a test drive.

On Tuesday Merv and Hazel are driving a new Explorer.

What made them decide on that vehicle? Was it the TV commercial? The newspaper ad? The testimony of the neighbour? The billboard? The salesman? Actually, it was the cumulative effect of all of them.

So it is most often with the gospel. I read that the average American hears the good news eight times before they turn to Christ (maybe in Canada it is 10 or 12). This means it is wise to present the love of God often and in many different ways to those around us (which is what Celebration 2005 will help you do. Visit www.Celebration2005.ca). Paul expresses this in 1 Corinthians 9:22: “I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.”

Here, then, are 20 ideas for evangelism:

1. Organize a fun festival in the church parking lot. (The young families might be very grateful that you tell them all about your mid-week children’s programs.)
2. Deliver Welcome to the Community baskets. (New neighbours can be looking for new friends and a church.)
3. Hold an interchurch sports tournament for youth in the community. (The police in one area said that juvenile crime went down when it was on.)
4. Hold a community golf tournament. (Announce that a businessman will talk later about faith in the workplace.)
5. Invite neighbours to a renewal of marriage vows event. (Married couples often re-evaluate their lives and faith.)
6. Go door to door with free batteries for smoke detectors. (One church got free batteries from the manufacturer.)

7. Hold a Foods From Around the World event. (Showcase traditional finger food items from various homelands.)
8. Gather food from the neighbourhood and fill the local food bank. (Always appreciated.)
9. Have a single mom and child banquet, where kids are entertained separately and moms are made to feel special.
10. Do acts of kindness: mow the lawn for seniors; paint a women’s shelter; wash car windshields for free.
11. Beautify a subsidized housing project. (I heard one resident say: “Your actions have made me think about God again. I will be in church next Sunday.”)
12. Have an evangelistic banquet. (In spite of the bad press these are still extremely effective if done well—with relevance and sensitivity.)
13. “Check out Christianity” home meetings. (Offer an ALPHA, Quest or other thought-provoking course.)
14. Hold a one-time course on basic self-defence.
15. Raise money for relief work. (Fill a container for overseas.)
16. Run recovery programs for the community. (Such as Divorce Recovery.)
17. Offer a free parenting course. (Many people today are looking for help in bringing up their children. Of course faith will be a key ingredient.)
18. Teach English as a second language. (Immigrants are looking for relationships and are very open.)
19. Have a “Celebration of Friendship” event (87 percent of people find Christ through a friend or relative).
20. Hold a public event called: What was *The Passion of the Christ* really all about? (Show the movie—a new less-violent version is also available—and have a Q&A dessert.)

Finally, a few aspects that cannot be taken for granted: all evangelism must be rooted in much prayer; everyone should be retrained periodically in how to share their faith and give their testimony; a strong follow-up track should be in place to help the new believers to grow.

Effective evangelism is a wonderful, exciting, multifaceted team effort, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:6: “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.” ■

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