Easter
OUTREACH
SURVIVAL
GUIDE
50 CHURCH-TESTED IDEAS
FROM OUTREACH MAGAZINE WITH JENNIFER KABBANY
Easter Outreach Survival Guide

50 CHURCH-TESTED IDEAS

Easter is a time when the message from the pulpit, the outreach on the streets and the celebration among the community can reach the most people and have the best impact for turning unchurched hearts and minds to Christ.

Are you ready? Whether the undertaking is big and bold or simple and sacrosanct, observing Easter with forethought, preparation and intentional choices is essential to honor God and reach the masses with the Gospel.

Here you’ll find 50 proven ideas and stories from churches about how they have reached their communities effectively and powerfully at Easter. Each suggestion offers a sound approach for making new connections in any community.

These examples include twists on Easter Sunday services, ideas to consider for the weeks preceding Easter to build excitement and interest in the season and your church, and ways to keep your momentum after Easter.

These ideas have the potential to transform your typical Easter season into something special and meaningful that will leave a strong impression on the congregation and visitors alike, draw newcomers back for more, and lead people to Christ. We hope they inspire you and encourage you to rethink Easter.

The Editors
Outreach Magazine

Do you have creative outreach ideas to share? Email: TellUs@OutreachMagazine.com.
OUTWARD-FOCUSED AND ON MISSION

What better time to reach out to the community and serve others—especially the hurting, needy and neglected—than Easter? Take the message beyond the four walls of the church and minister to those who need the Gospel message the most.

1. SERVE OTHERS

This year, mark Easter weekend with a significant act of service to your community (restore hiking trails, host a dinner for the homeless, hold a blood drive, run a 10K for a local women’s shelter, etc.) and invite your community to join you.

2. CELEBRATE WITH THE HOMELESS

Austin New Church in Austin, Texas, shuts its doors on Easter and heads to the streets. Church members set up shop on a downtown street corner, hold a worship-and-communion service for the homeless there, and grill cheeseburgers for everybody.

While the church’s Easter service is an outreach to the homeless, Lead Pastor Brandon Hatmaker says it gives those who do the serving a new perspective that affects them beyond Easter.

“It’s a ‘taste and see’ thing,” he explains. “We want to get people out of their red brick homes and around people who have so much less. Then as they begin to talk to homeless people, the Spirit starts drawing them toward that—and after a while, it’s no longer OK to just serve cheeseburgers.”

HOW TO TAKE EASTER TO THE HOMELESS:

Determine who runs the outdoor space you want to use. Rent it, and have written proof of the rental agreement in case you need to produce it for authorities on event day.

Ask volunteers to sign up to perform one task each.

Bring more supplies than you think you’ll need.

Keep it simple. Austin New Church passes out water bottles, bags of chips and cheeseburgers—that’s it.

Be orderly. Ask everyone to line up and then pass out tickets. If you only have 300 burgers, don’t distribute more than 300 tickets. If you have to turn people away, do—and be firm.

Don’t try to be too polished. There’s something cool about “the scramble” when everyone rallies, Hatmaker says, so don’t try to control it too much. Let it be messy.

Let people approach you. Then look them in the eyes, say hello, ask them their names and where they’re from. Listen to their stories.

Bring your kids to the service. It will change the way they view people.

3. MINISTER TO THE SICK

Ask permission to host an Easter worship and prayer service in a local hospital. During the service, ask for prayer requests and pray for each one aloud. The next week, follow up with those who attended.
4. VISIT NURSING HOMES, JAILS
Send teams out to offer Easter celebration services at locations in your area with people who may not be able to make it to church—nursing homes and jails. Ask permission first, and provide a service complete with music, communion and a Scripture-based message. If a local church already has a jail ministry, partner with it for an enhanced service.

5. MAKE A SPECIAL DAY FOR SPECIAL KIDS
Kennedy Fowler, 7, has participated in Easter egg hunts in the past, but other kids always beat her to the goodies. But at Guts Church in Tulsa, Okla., Fowler, who is blind, walked away with an overflowing basket. The hunt was tailor-made for children with special needs, and the eggs she found contained audible beeping devices that let her track them down with no external help. Her only competition for the eggs came from others with visual impairments.

The egg hunt was part of a special needs Easter party at Guts Church on the Saturday before Easter 2011. For those with autism, the church roped off a special section in a quieter area, and for people in wheelchairs, the church hid eggs containing magnets, retrieved with metal poles provided to each participant. The eggs contained candy, change or even paper money, with the occasional large bill.

Guts Church provided hosts who interacted with participating families and let them know the church could meet their needs. Every participating family also was invited personally to attend Easter Sunday services, says Bryan Tyler, events director at the church.

“We felt it was very important to reach out to those families,” Tyler says. “We wanted to offer our services and show them we care. It seemed like a challenge for us, but looking around, we hadn’t seen a lot of churches doing anything like this.”

**HOW TO MINISTER TO KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

**Connect with people** in the church who have family members with special needs. Pick their brains for ideas on how to proceed.

**Contact local schools** and talk to teachers and helpers working with kids with special needs. Nearly every community in America should have an expert.

**Get the word out** to the congregation and community to easily find volunteers. Start early to secure background checks, and let people know all volunteers have been checked out.

**Assign an individual host** to each family that participates in the event. Hosts stay by their side throughout the event and help however needed.

6. CARE FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS
Work with ministries or student groups at nearby colleges to identify students who aren’t able to go home for Easter. “Adopt” those students, recruiting families to pick them up for Sunday services and include them in personal Easter celebrations. Host a brunch for these students at the church.
7. CONNECT WITH SENIORS
Bring the movie classic *Easter Parade* to your local senior center to create a special night of nostalgia. Don’t forget the popcorn and lemonade.

8. THANK YOUR COMMUNITY
Instead of spending money on Easter lilies to decorate the church, buy lilies as a donation to local businesses, hospitals, law enforcement, schools, etc. Attach a small tag from your church: “With appreciation during this Easter season.”

9. SHARE THE GOSPEL
Offer a communitywide Easter egg hunt that involves several avenues to share the Gospel. From puppet ministry to music to sharing the parable of the empty egg (representing the tomb), use this event to introduce people to Christ and invite them to your Easter services.

10. HOLD A GARAGE SALE FOR CHARITY
The week before Easter, host a huge, communitywide garage sale to benefit a local charity or cause. Offer a tax receipt to any donors and even offer to pick up larger items. Make it a fun community event by providing food, music and fliers promoting your Easter-week activities.

11. HOLD AN EASTER BONNET BENEFIT
Organize a hat fashion show during a women’s brunch at the church, selling tickets in advance, with proceeds going to a local charity. Contact boutiques, stores and antique malls in your area for the hats (older women in your congregation may have wonderful vintage hats to show off), and use women—young and old—in the church and community to model them.

12. ENGAGE ATTENDEES WITH A GIVEBACK
The leaders of River City Church of Missoula, Mont., did the unthinkable for a new church plant. They took the Easter Sunday offering and gave it back to churchgoers, challenging them to reinvest it in the community.

   Lead Pastor Brian Moser told the congregation to give the money back to those in need in some way—and not to a family member or church member. He also encouraged them to use their offering as “seed money”—telling others how they were multiplying their funds.

   Then he urged people to return the next Sunday to hear the stories of how the money was used. The church also set up a website, allowing participants to share online. The resulting stories ranged from assisting the homeless to offering class field trip scholarships for students and contributing toward a church-planting ministry in Asia.

   River City initiated the giveback to spur personal evangelism, create a culture of generosity in the church and bless the community—not to boost church attendance, Moser says.

   “Sometimes we go for the big things that affect a whole bunch of people at once, but if we can affect one person at a time, we can reach our entire community pretty quickly for Christ,” Moser says.
REACH THE UNCHURCHED

The unchurched are often skeptical or cynical. How you approach them could be key to whether they accept Christ or become more open to His redemptive love. The following ideas will help you relate to them in nonthreatening and creative ways.

13. RETHINK YOUR VENUE

The Moon, a premier nightclub in Tallahassee, Fla., initially was not a serious suggestion when it came up at a City Church planning meeting as a potential site for Easter services. The Moon’s marquee usually displays events like dance parties, Chippendales shows, a Willie Nelson concert, or filming music videos by rappers like T-Pain.

But City Church followed up on the chance to rethink Easter and church and ended up having services at the nightclub. Pastor Dean Inserra says the church didn’t go with the nightclub venue to be ‘edgy or cool.’ It simply wanted a larger site for its Easter service—hoping to make the most of people’s curiosity about Easter and leverage the fact that Easter Sunday draws people to church.

It turned out to be a popular decision. On Easter 2011, the church welcomed 3,000 people to its two Sunday services.

When attendees arrived on Sunday morning, they were greeted from the minute they pulled into the parking lot to the moment they sat down in their seats. The church planned seven greeting stages, training volunteers in each area. Music blasted outdoors, building energy for the morning.

“The Moon has allowed our people to see Easter differently,” Inserra says. “It’s about the resurrection, not where you’re eating lunch with your family after [the service].”

HOW TO HOST WORSHIP IN A SECULAR VENUE

Consider atypical, well-known venues like a nightclub that can accommodate larger crowds. Don’t be afraid to ask to use the venue.

Think through every detail—from the parking lot to the exit—from the perspective of a guest who has never before attended a church.

Emphasize sharing the Gospel with as many people as possible, not just getting people together.

Promote the event, rather than the holiday, two to three months in advance to give regular attendees a sense of urgency and ownership.

Promote primarily through word-of-mouth, but consider social media as well. City Church’s only formal advertising was a $100 Facebook ad.

Pray for the event. For six months, City Church prayed for 3,000 people to come, but also focused on the vision to share the Gospel more than getting a specific number of people to church.

Plan a strong follow-up message series and promote it on Easter Sunday.

Enlist volunteers to clean and prepare the venue before the service. City Church volunteers arrived at The Moon at 4:01 a.m. to clean and convert the karaoke bar into a children’s area.
Invite people to receive Jesus during the service. Provide guests with a response card and a gift bag containing a handwritten thank you note and usable items. Within 24 hours, follow up on each response card. Encourage regular attendees to follow up with people they invited.

14. SHOW THE PASSION
Offer the community a free showing of the 2004 movie *The Passion of the Christ*. If your church hasn’t already shown unchurched friends this powerful film, this is a great time to do it. (Make sure you obtain the appropriate license for a public showing.) Encourage your youth groups as well as families to invite their friends. Include free popcorn and snacks.

15. REACH INNER-CITY KIDS
Teaching children about the Easter message isn’t exactly an easy task, but one ministry has simplified the approach, handing out bags filled with toys, candy, fruit, activity books and, most important, the Gospel message. Children are accepting Christ thanks to the bags, an initiative of Here’s Life Inner City. The urban ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ, Here’s Life Inner City partners with local churches to distribute thousands of Easter bags each year to reach inner-city children.

16. TAKE EASTER ON THE ROAD
Develop a team that can conduct Easter services—even a children’s service and egg hunt—at locations around your community such as housing projects, senior citizens’ developments, etc. You’ll hit individuals and families who might never have the chance to visit your church and hear the Gospel.

17. REV UP INTEREST AMONG BIKERS
Hold a Resurrection Run motorcycle rally, and invite motorcycle enthusiasts from the community to join in. Organize the event a week before Easter, then invite everyone who participated to the service.

18. COLLABORATE TO CELEBRATE
Several Southern California-based congregations held a joint “Easter Together” worship service for years to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ as one united body. A service like this offers the unchurched a safe venue to experience God’s redemption and helps overcome the perception of disunity or competition between churches that keeps some people away.

“‘Easter Together’ is the result of our unity,” says Boogie Rose, lead pastor of the Dana Point-based Branches Church. “It only works because we trust each other.”

About 3,500 people came to the 2011 Easter Together service at a local park in San Clemente, Calif. Advertised through door-to-door invitations, yard signs, bumper stickers, social media sites
like Facebook—even a large banner hung on a busy San Clemente thoroughfare—the service attracted a fair number of newcomers, the participating pastors say.

“This was a highly approachable event for a person who wasn’t familiar with church,” says George Hulse, senior pastor of The Shoreline Church. “No churches were there to push their own agendas.”

Nor was the service just a gimmick to add more bodies to pews, the pastors say. “It wasn’t like the stuff I’ve normally been involved with: How do we get new visitors? How do we maximize this opportunity?” says Holland Davis, senior pastor of Worship Life Calvary Chapel. “This was really about preaching Christ to people.”

**HOW TO JOIN FORCES FOR EASTER SERVICE**

Seek God’s desire. Confirm through prayer that merging for Easter follows His will and direction.

Set aside agendas. Forgo promoting church names and denominations; be one united church.

Meet every few weeks. Brainstorm to strategize on event logistics.

Share responsibilities. Rotate roles annually, from sermon to emcee to children’s ministry.

Amass volunteers. Recruit an army of people to help greet guests, set up and break down.

Reach the unchurched. Distribute fliers, post signs and banners, and use social networking.

Delegate duties. One church sets up the main stage, another brings desserts and another creates fliers.

Trust one another. Pastors must walk in faith, support their peers and meet together for prayer.

19. HOST A TRAILER PARK SERVICE

Throughout the year, Pouring Out Hope Ministries regularly reaches out to residents of the nearby Peppertree trailer park in Lake Elsinore, Calif., and that outreach includes hosting an Easter service and egg hunt for its residents.

In a nearby field, volunteers staged scenes of the cross, and children received a special keepsake item representing each station. Guests experienced a narrated tour from the garden of Gethsemane to the empty tomb, and the Easter egg hunt featured 400 candy-filled eggs and 12 Resurrection Eggs redeemable for special prizes.

Services wrapped with an altar call, where residents nailed their burdens to a cross. Those who made decisions for Christ received Bibles and were encouraged to seek fellowship at a nearby church.

“After services were over, two women stopped by, and they mentioned that, ‘This is where Jesus would have been today’—in this humble place among the dirt poor,” says Pouring Out Hope Director John Villa.

20. FACILITATE PERSONAL INVITATIONS

Some churches give all regular attendees printed invitations to their Easter worship services,
asking them to pray for one person that God is leading them to invite. Members either mail or hand deliver the invitations to the people they’ve been praying for.

**21. GET THE WORD OUT**
Make sure people in your community know your church and what you’re all about. Outreach Inc. offers a wide variety of resources to raise awareness and help regular attendees invite their friends. Customizable invitation cards, booklets, banners and bulletin shells draw interest to your church with a well-designed, cohesive message.

**22. PROMOTE YOURSELF IN PUBLIC PLACES**
If your resources don’t allow for a bulk mailing, post fliers on bulletin boards in schools, grocery stores, libraries, self-service laundry facilities or other appropriate public places in your community about your events or Easter service times.

**CREATIVITY TO CAPTIVATE GUESTS**
The Easter season lends itself to great artistry and powerful imagery. Many people exposed to hands-on and unique approaches to the Easter message can take away so much from that sensory experience. And while big and bold works, simple ideas can be just as powerful.

**23. OFFER AN OVERWHELMING EXPERIENCE**
Denver United Church partnered with three other congregations in the Denver area to bring *The Thorn* stage production to Magness Arena at the University of Denver, near the on-campus site of Denver United's weekly worship services.

*The Thorn* is a professional stage production that combines acting, music, dance, gymnastics, martial arts, pyrotechnics and more to create a compelling portrayal of the passion of Christ.

“Bringing your friend who isn’t a believer to church with you is, to many in our church, a bridge too far,” says Rob Brendle, lead pastor of Denver United Church. “But bringing them to a Broadway-caliber theater production at Easter . . . it was an easy step for them. We had a tremendous number of church members inviting family, friends, non-Christian co-workers and residents of their neighborhood.”

*The Thorn Easter Experience Church Kit* from Outreach Inc. provides any church, any size the tools necessary to offer a similar, powerful Easter service. The kit features exclusive licensed video and music from *The Thorn Live!* stage production, promotional materials and much more.

**24. HOST A HIGH-FLYING EGG DROP**
Draw families and host an “Are you kidding me?” event—something that makes people stop and take notice—with a helicopter egg drop. More than 2,000 guests attended when Elevation Church in Charlotte, N.C., put this idea into practice.

“We didn’t expect to see people at Easter services just because we had an egg drop, and we
didn’t use it as a platform to preach,” says Larry Brey, Elevation’s connections pastor. “We wanted this event to be a gesture of goodwill to the community—to get our name out there and let people know we’re around for the long haul. And that’s exactly what happened.”

Elevation passed along church information to guests and reached even more through the live radio broadcast and nationally televised news story about the event.

“People who came to the egg drop had an overwhelming Easter experience,” Brey says, “but the real benefit comes in name recognition. Several Sundays later, after reinforcement through invitations and other touch points, egg-drop guests began showing up in church.”

**HOW TO HOST AN EGG DROP**

**Lease or use** a location that can accommodate more people than you anticipate. Elevation expected 1,000 people, but far more than 2,000 attended the event.

**Plan ahead and consult the experts.** Helicopters and hot-air balloons are often sensitive to climate conditions and require specific permits. Check the weather, and make sure the company you work with obtains the proper permits.

**Give away prizes of varying values.** Elevation bought toys and high-end prizes, including a flat-screen television. “People came because of the prizes,” Brey says.

**Aggressively promote your event to the community.** Elevation advertised on a Top-40 radio station, which also broadcasted live on-site.

**Host registration stations** to gather names and distribute related information. Give each child a color-coded wristband based on his or her age and a bag to fill. Give parents a card listing the egg-drop rules and activities.

**Buy prefilled plastic eggs,** or fill them yourself with candy, trinkets and tickets redeemable for prizes. Elevation bought 50,000 eggs—30,000 dropped from the helicopter and 20,000 hidden on the ground.

**Host ancillary activities**—live entertainment, face painting, games and inflatables. If you opt for a hot-air balloon, offer tethered rides.

**25. BRING ART TO LIFE**

For years, Rolling Hills Covenant Church has offered the community “The Pageant of Our Lord,” an intense, live-art exhibit in Redondo Beach, Calif., that has drawn more than 180,000 visitors. The undertaking requires about 400 volunteers, art direction and production, but is well worth the effort, says pageant producer David Halverson. Countless people commit their lives to Christ.

The performance features famous art pieces that depict the life, death and resurrection of Christ—using live models and sets to replicate the original masterpieces. It also showcases a 50-voice choir and 24-piece orchestra. The result is a moving and artistic rendition of the Gospel story.

Because an estimated 60 percent of the people in the audience of each show are not church attendees, after each performance, Rolling Hills offers a guest reception where visitors receive a Bible and have the opportunity to pray with someone. Each performance sees a “very healthy”
response to the Gospel message, Halverson says, and a special outreach team follows up with those who respond.

“We’ve found that you must experience the Gospel message to believe it—which is what ‘The Pageant of Our Lord’ is all about,” Halverson says.

26. URGE PEOPLE TO REFLECT ON PALM SUNDAY
Invite your community to join you for a meaningful time of spiritual reflection on the Sunday before Easter. Create sacred spaces that guide people through the events leading up to the cross to help everyone prepare mentally, emotionally and spiritually for the Holy Week.

27. INVITE THE COMMUNITY TO A GOOD FRIDAY EXPERIENCE
A day of contemplation, meditation and thanksgiving, Good Friday is often observed as a personal experience—a journey with Christ to the cross. Extend a communitywide invitation to a personal worship experience. In 2006, for example, The Shoreline Church in San Clemente, Calif., invited its community to participate in a Good Friday service that featured hands-on worship stations. “We wanted something that would put people in a place to visually and thoughtfully contemplate Christ’s sacrifice for us,” says Ministry Associate Kristen Morrison, who planned the gathering.

Guests encountered a spotlight-illuminated cross in the center of a candle-lit room. Worshippers wrote personal confessions on pieces of paper and nailed them to the cross with a hammer, then headed to one of several worship stations. There, they painted, journaled and meditated on Christ’s sacrifice. The service even featured a special kids’ worship corner. Afterward, worshippers hung their creations for display in the church office.

28. PERFORM A DRIVE-THROUGH DRAMA
Instead of an indoor production, give people a convenient and intriguing way to experience the Gospel on Easter weekend. Use your church’s parking lot to stage a free, 10-minute, drive-through drama portraying scenes from Christ’s life and journey to the cross (Jesus’ birth, feeding the 5,000, triumphal entry into Jerusalem, etc.). Make the scenes interactive. At the end of the drama, invite motorists into the church for free refreshments and more information about Easter services.

29. RE-ENACT DA VINCI’S THE LAST SUPPER
Holy Thursday is traditionally remembered as the night Christ ate the Last Supper with His disciples. Attract art appreciators with an Easter drama of the scene, using Scripture as a script and Leonardo Da Vinci’s famous painting for costume and backdrop inspiration.

30. HOST AN ART SHOW
Attract artists and art aficionados by hosting an Easter-themed art show during Holy Week. Enlist experienced judges to make it a professional, juried event with cash prizes. Be sure to invite non-Christian and Christian artists to participate.
31. CREATE A MAKESHIFT ART GALLERY
Turn a gym or multipurpose room into a gallery of crucifixion art, poetry and music created by church members of all ages, as well as the unchurched in your community. (Be careful to note that the church reserves the right not to display gallery entries it deems inappropriate.)

32. OFFER AN EXTENDED LABYRINTH
Put a twist on the traditional labyrinth and stations of the cross. Turn the church gymnasium into an elaborate, 16-station labyrinth, complete with a walk through the torn veil and an illuminated 300-pound silver cross immersed in water.

33. ENJOY MESSIAH UNDER THE STARS
Rent an area in a local park and host an evening of live orchestra (musicians from the church and community) under the stars. Center the night on Handel’s Messiah. Conclude with refreshments.

34. HOST A BASKET DECORATING CLASS
Everybody—churched or unchurched—loves an Easter basket. Enlist an experienced basket decorator from your congregation or local craft store and host a basket decorating class, charging only for supplies.

35. CONNECT WITH NATURE
Instead of hosting an Easter egg hunt, consider organizing a family-centered Palm Sunday nature walk during the Sunday school hour, weather permitting. Using Mark 11, tell the story of Jesus arriving in Jerusalem. Have volunteers walk groups of families around your church property or nearby park, if possible. Pointing out flower buds, baby animals and new trees, explain the hope that comes with new beginnings. Pass out packages of seeds to families, encouraging them to plant their own garden at home.

36. EXPERIENCE A SEDER
Ask a local rabbi to officiate a traditional seder meal at your church and encourage attendees to invite others to learn about the history of Easter and experience authentic Jewish culture.

37. CREATE EASTER MEMORIES
Set up an Easter-themed backdrop for pictures after the worship service. Give each person a connection card, including a website URL for accessing the photos.
EXCITE TO INVITE FRIENDS

Easter is the best time to invite unbelievers to church. The Easter service always offers the heart of the Gospel, revealing the ultimate sacrifice of love to new ears and hearts. But getting newcomers to the service is half the battle sometimes. Here are some ideas to create bridges for newcomers to attend and hear the good news.

38. MAKE ATTENDANCE MEANINGFUL

The ongoing economic downturn did not appear to have any effect on Cherry Hills Community Church’s donations to the Denver Rescue Mission last Easter. The Colorado megachurch gave 1.4 tons of toiletries to the mission thanks to the generosity of people who attended the church’s special Easter Sunday service.

Cherry Hills has long embraced an ambition to serve the poor and oppressed, even including “elevate the urban poor” in its vision statement. The suburban congregation has partnered with churches and ministries in the city of Denver to accomplish that goal through food banks, tutoring, transitional housing and other neighborhood initiatives.

Building on that commitment to the poor, the church regularly holds donation drives on Easter because the higher attendance numbers provide opportunities for greater impact. Located in the affluent suburb of Highlands Ranch, Colo., the church averages 6,000 worshippers on Sundays. On Easter, attendance soars to 14,000.

“You can do greater good at Easter time,” Senior Pastor Jim Dixon says. “The only other time is at Christmas Eve, when you can take advantage of the number of people and help the poor.”

In addition to helping the poor, the donation drives help draw non-Christians to the Gospel because they see the church serving those in need, Dixon says.

HOW TO LEVERAGE LARGE ATTENDANCE FOR COMMUNITY IMPACT

Identify a local charitable organization to support with a donation drive that coincides with and leverages greater attendance at Easter services.

Several months in advance, ask the charitable organization what it needs, and set a date to start telling attendees about the donation drive.

Determine before the Easter service whether the organization will provide receptacles and pick up the donated items or if the church will need to do so.

Consider holding services at a site away from the church building. Non-Christians sometimes are more open to attending church in a different environment.

Enlist an “army” of volunteers several weeks in advance to serve as greeters, participate in a large choir and perform other functions. Recruit more help than you think you’ll need.
39. ATTRACT GUESTS WITH KIDS’ SHOWS
If your church runs a preschool or after-school tutoring program, you have an ideal opportunity to invite kids’ families to Easter services.

At First Southern Baptist Church of Floyds Knobs, Ind., the church’s Kids of the Kingdom preschool moved its spring performance to the Sunday school hour on Easter morning last year. The church invited families to stay for Easter services immediately following a short refreshment break.

The church ended up “busting at the seams,” says former Lead Pastor Sam Rainer, now pastor of First Baptist Church in Murray, Ky., as an estimated 200 guests showed up that morning for the program and Easter worship. Several guests made commitments to Christ and, after a few more touch points with the church, became regular attendees.

40. PROVIDE EASTER EVANGELISM CARDS
Have special cards—maybe even egg- or cross-shaped—professionally made to hand out at your outreach event. The card should include your church contact information and service times, but you might also consider adding a verse, a prayer or the (brief) plan of salvation. (Hint: Make them general enough to be used again next Easter.)

41. ENLIST A CELEBRITY
No matter what kind of event you organize this Easter, having a high-profile Christian participate in some headlining way—as narrator, emcee, entertainment, etc.—will increase your response. Local figures like the mayor, the football star or even the local news anchor are great options if your church doesn’t have the resources to bring in a more well-known celebrity.

42. HOLD A SPRING SPORTS COMPETITION
Organize a friendly softball or flag football game at a local park, encouraging church members to bring friends and co-workers to play and watch. Hang a large banner to mark the spot. Be sure it contains your church name and Easter service times.

43. CONSIDER PRIZES TO ILLUSTRATE GRACE
First Assembly of God in Hibbing, Minn., decided one Easter to give away a $500 gas gift card and a $500 grocery gift card and to choose one family in attendance for whom the church would make mortgage or rent payments for the rest of the year. The Assemblies of God News reported that Easter attendance was more than double the typical Sunday attendance of 340. The giveaways served as a sermon illustration of what grace is and helped attendees better understand God’s grace toward us.
44. INVITE WOMEN TO SPRING TEA
A traditional English tea party—especially one in a colorful garden—offers a brief escape for today’s busy women who would never, of their own volition, take the time to sit outside and enjoy a cup of tea and a crumpet. Throw in a speaker (with a topic general enough to appeal to a broad spectrum) or even live music and you’ll have an event church women will feel confident inviting female friends to enjoy.

BRING THEM BACK FOR MORE
It’s not enough to get the unchurched to Easter service and then let it be. Drawing them back for more is vital to solidify their connection to church, Christ and their conversion. The problem is, many see Easter service as mandatory, but not necessarily the Sundays that follow. These next ideas may help overcome that hurdle for newcomers, get them excited about the other lessons and support churches and the Gospel message have to offer.

45. SHARE PROMINENT TESTIMONIES AFTER EASTER
For the past few years, Redeemer Church in Utica, N.Y., has run a testimony sermon series to portray how the power of the cross affects real lives. The church has scheduled three “human interest” stories with great seeker appeal. Over the years, Redeemer has featured former mobster Michael Franzese; Annie Lobert, a former sex industry worker; and infamous New York serial killer David Berkowitz via video. This series boosts normally low, post-Easter attendance to record-breaking numbers every week, says Lead Pastor Mike Servello.

46. LAUNCH A COMPELLING POST-EASTER MESSAGE SERIES
Keep up the momentum from Easter by starting a message series the following week that is sure to intrigue guests. The GodQuest Church Kit is one of several options from Outreach Inc. that will resonate with your community, providing everything you need for a six-week campaign that explores how our beliefs affect the choices we make, the paths we follow and ultimately, our final eternal destination. Other possibilities include The God Questions Campaign Kit, The Heaven Is for Real Campaign Kit, and kits based on the hit movies Soul Surfer and Fireproof.

47. HOLD A CONCERT AT THE PARK
At a local park on Easter afternoon, hold a family-oriented concert, weather permitting. If your church doesn’t have the resources or talent for entertainment, partner with a nearby church or charge a minimal admission fee and hire a small jazz band. Encourage families to bring blankets to sit on and have volunteers hand out board games that families can play while listening to the music. Consider serving ice cream sundaes or root beer floats for dessert.
48. CONNECT WITH FAMILIES AT A SPRING FESTIVAL
Follow up Easter Sunday with a spring family festival. Give the kids carnival tickets stapled to their Easter Sunday egg bags to use on the day of the festival for rides and games. It’s a strong motivator that turns an Easter-only visit into at least two visits. A barbecue and outreach-oriented message series give the parents a reason to return as well.

49. SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION
Give an inexpensive inspirational book to new families who come to Easter service at the welcome center, and include a card inside that lists the regular weekend service times and invites them back.

50. FOLLOW UP WITH LOVE
The ladies outreach group at Memorial Baptist Church in Verona, Wis., filled canning jars with brownie mix—layered and sealed with a lid covered with seasonal fabric. The church makes a personal visit to the home of each of Easter visitor. It’s a nonthreatening, nonpreachy visit that lets people know, “We’re glad you came; hope to see you again.”