

Inviting the Unchurched

Participant Handout



The purpose of this module is:

To encourage church people to invite unchurched people from the community.

Introduction

1. Unchurched people want to talk about _____.
2. Surveys report _____ of today's unchurched will come to church if invited by a family member or friend.
3. The unchurched also includes the "formerly" churched and spiritually _____.
4. Unchurched people are most impressed by _____.

Moments of Sharing: Have you experienced something new or exciting, told a friend, invited them to go with you and they accepted your invitation? Express the emotions you felt.

Lecture

Invitation Insights:

_____ percent of unchurched Americans desire someone with whom to discuss their personal and spiritual needs. At the same time Christians say they want to _____ effectively and to talk with people one-on-one about God.

What are possible responses to the straightforward question—"Would you come with me to my church (party, home, etc.)?"

"Come and See" Bible Study Scenarios: In a group of four, read the passages below and discuss the following questions:

- Who came? To whom did they come?
- Why do you think they came?
- What was the result(s)?

John 1:35-39 (Andrew and Peter), John 1:43-50 (Philip and Nathaniel), John 3:1-5 (Nicodemus), John 4:1-44—note verses 29 & 39 (Samaritan woman), & John 4:46-53 (Royal officer and his ill son). Report your insights to the group.

Before You Invite

1. Get together with your church's _____ and brainstorm with them about possible ministries.
2. Developing a _____ with them is important. Build Bridges of Friendship with your unchurched friend by:

(1) Becoming personally acquainted with unchurched persons; (2) Cultivating friendships;

(3) Praying for your friends; (4) Sharing your social life with them; (5) Complimenting rather than condemning; (6) Talking about your journey of faith at the level of the unchurched person's receptivity; (7) Believing God is at work in the unchurched whether or not you see progress.

3. _____ for the unchurched.
4. Ask the Holy Spirit to _____ your spirit with Romans 10:14: *"How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"*
5. According to Thom Rainer in *The Unchurched Next Door*, "Only 2% of church members invited an unchurched person to church."
6. Jesus said, *"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to Myself"* (John 12:32). When Christians become attracted to Jesus and thus attracted to the unchurched, Jesus will **DRAW** the unchurched into a relationship with him.

The Heart and Mind of the Unchurched

1. The unchurched yearn for a _____ in which to belong.
2. Belonging leads to change in beliefs and _____.
3. Gallup's survey revealed that _____ of unchurched Americans indicate they intend to return to worship services.
4. The unchurched feel _____ about not attending church.
5. Church _____ the unchurched.
6. The unchurched _____ they will feel out of place.
7. Many believe church to be the most _____ in today's society.
8. Some unchurched report negative experiences from visiting churches, yet they are forgiving and view the church _____.

Needs and Interests of the Unchurched

1. They do not tie their _____ in a community of faith into their personal belief system.
2. The unchurched say that _____ needs are their most pressing concern.

Methods of Inviting

1. Spiritual Network

Members of your spiritual network are people with whom you _____ the routine of life.

2. Identify Your Network

Discover common ground and take the _____ in relationships prior to inviting the unchurched.

3. Invitation Readiness Indicators

People are more apt to be ready to _____ an invitation to the church and to Christ when (1) they have gone through an insecurity-producing situation; (2) they begin to discuss spiritual things; (3) they show signs of moving toward God instead of away from Him.

Action Planning/Reporting

Choose one of the following options:

Option #1- Dialogue Questions for Small Groups

1. Why are we members?
2. What is special about this congregation?
3. What might someone new to this congregation gain by being with us?
4. What might our congregation gain by inviting friends to visit with us for worship and other events?
5. How do we invite friends to visit our congregation?
6. How are newcomers welcomed and encouraged to become part of us?
7. Are we ready to invite people?

Option #2– Community Poll

Discover the felt needs of the unchurched in your community. Take an opinion poll of at least 100 house holds in your area. Rick Warren, of Saddleback Community, polled his community before starting his church by using these questions:

1. Are you an **ACTIVE** member of a nearby church? (if yes, wish the person well and end the interview.)
2. What do you think is the greatest **NEED** in [your area]?
3. Why do you think most people don't **ATTEND** church?
4. If you were looking for a church in the area, what kinds of things would you look for?
5. What advice would you give me as a layperson in my church? What could I do for you?

A Bit More Food for Thought...

George Hunter III offers themes and strategies for reaching and inviting secular “unchurched” people, such as:

1. Provide ministries of instruction—“what is Christianity?”
2. Help unchurched people make sense of their lives and find meaning and purpose.
3. Engage them in dialogue. Often the very process of unthreatening dialogue with a caring nonjudgmental Christian is a liberating experience.
4. Address unchurched people’s doubts and questions.
5. Provide opportunities to meet credible Christians.
6. Provide opportunities for people to overcome alienation. The key to the problem of modern day agnosticism is fellowship.
7. Offer people hope in the Kingdom of God.
8. Provide support groups for people with addictions.
9. Identify and reach receptive people.
10. Reach across social networks.
11. Multiple “units” of the Church—new classes, new congregations, new groups.
12. Offer ministries that meet needs.