

stuff you wish they taught in seminary



== *10 Last-Minute* ==

LOW-COST CHRISTMAS PROMOTION STRATEGIES FOR YOUR CHURCH

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10 LAST-MINUTE, LOW-COST CHRISTMAS PROMOTION STRATEGIES FOR YOUR CHURCH

Christmas is just around the corner and it's a [strategically important time of year](#) for churches looking to grow. How should you focus your communications efforts leading up to the big day at your church? Here's a core truth for growing churches when it comes to special days like this: The majority of guests who attend your Christmas services come because someone invites them; therefore, the majority of your efforts need to encourage people to invite their friends.

Rather than spinning your tires on efforts that have low probability of returns, focus your attention on encouraging people to invite friends. Below is a collection of ways to get the word out about the good things happening at your church this Christmas season — beyond the normal channels of your announcement time and message. Pick a few of the following tactics that you haven't employed before and commit to trying them this year!

- **Social Media Countdown** // Generate a series of fun social media graphics that count down to the big day. Use images that reflect your programming to build anticipation. Change your Facebook cover photo for the week leading up to your Christmas services. Tell a visual story about what people can expect at this year's celebration. Every morning for the week leading up to it, post a new Christmas themed image on Instagram...and encourage your team to repost it!

- **Automated Phone Calls** // Robocalls aren't just for politicians! For about \$0.05 a call, you upload an MP3 audio file of your choice to a service like [Phonevite](#) and they call your database of contacts. When used sparingly and with some creativity in the messaging, this can be a powerful and effective way to get the word out. Choose wisely when you time this message to maximize effectiveness and minimize the creepy factor.

- **A "Last Week" Email Campaign** // Most new guests who attend your Christmas services will decide to do so at the last minute. We need to keep the "invite" message in front of people in the last week before the event. With some planning to come up with different approaches (to avoid frustrating readers), repeat the message and keep people engaged at the same time. Create email content that sheds new light on what's happening at your Christmas experiences or gives "behind-the-scenes" peeks at preparations.

- **Invite Cards** // Physical invite cards have [value in an increasingly digital world](#). You can print simple business-card-sized invites that contain all the information about your Christmas experiences for less than a dime apiece. Distribute a few together in an elastic to reinforce that you want people to invite multiple friends. These cards are great reminders because they contain all the information people need to tell their friends... whether or not they actually pass them along.

- **TEXT MSG** // You'd be amazed what you can communicate via text message! A well-timed text message can communicate urgency and move people to invite their friends. Remind them about what's happening at your church and why it's important to invite a friend. Choose wisely and use sparingly. Think of text messages as a lightly used spice in the meal of marketing plan. Don't overdo it or people will be turned off. For a [few pennies per text](#), you can reach people with a message that moves them to action.

- **"Behind-the-Scenes" Video** // People love seeing what's happening behind the scenes. Luckily, your phone's video camera can capture and share video easily. Whether it's [Periscope videos](#) in the week leading up to your event or more traditional [YouTube videos](#), there's something compelling about getting a glimpse "behind the curtain." Make sure you tease the content... only show enough to get people intrigued!

• **Press Release** // Your local newspaper is looking for Christmas stories... really! The editor assigns writers to look for stories from your community. Find the unique "angle" on what your church is offering and package it in a way that [makes it easy for the press to report on it](#). Although press coverage in itself is a great way to get the word out about what's happening at your church, there's even more value in encouraging people to share the story with their friends and family. The third-party validation of your church makes their personal ask easier. Also, look for [hyper-local online news sources](#) to share your stories with. Often these sites are hungry for exactly this sort of content.

• **Direct Mail to Your Database** // You've collected all those names and addresses over the years in your church management system ... use them! Although a little more pricey to execute, sending an oversized postcard to everyone who has attended your church is a great way to invite them to bring their friends to your Christmas services. At this time of year, it's mostly advertising, fundraising appeals and bills that arrive in the mail ... a well- designed direct mail piece can be received happily!

• **Savvy Local Social Media** // On Facebook there are local groups discussing events happening in your community. Listen in on those conversations and find an elegant way to promote what's happening at your church. Don't "spam" these groups or you can get a bad reputation very quickly... but people will welcome thoughtful engagement from your church. Search Twitter for people asking questions about what to do over Christmas in your region and reach out to them offering your Christmas experiences. Use community hashtags when posting on Instagram or any social media site to encourage "discovery" from others in your community.

• **Foyer Fun** // Every Sunday people come in and out of your church ... slow them down and get them thinking about your Christmas services. For a few Sundays leading up to the event, have a sample from your services for people to see, as well as invite cards for your friends. This "speed bump" will get them thinking about what's coming next and reinforce the need to invite people.



Watch the Webinar Replay // [Click here to watch the nearly one-hour webinar replay](#) where we cover this information plus a bunch of other great tidbits to help accelerate your outreach this year. During this webinar, we were joined by Russ Perry, founder of [Design Pickle](#), the innovative flat-rate unlimited design firm that helps churches. Russ challenged us to think beyond Christmas and look at how we can leverage this season to build growth momentum for the coming year. Listen to the webinar today!

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