



How to run a Weekend of Invitation

Almost 3 million people are open to being invited to church. That means many in our communities are ready to say 'yes' to an invitation – to church or a church event. Others deserve to be invited even if they are not yet ready to accept.

During a **Weekend of Invitation**, events and appropriate services are hosted by a church to which people can be invited to *'be our guest'*.

The suggested weekend for 2019 is Friday 21 – Sunday 23 June as this ties in with the Archbishop's prayer initiative Thy Kingdom Come. However, churches are free to choose whatever dates suit them best.

Helping people invite

However, making an invitation is not always 'easy' because of the fear that holds us people back. This is why a church planning to engage in a Weekend of Invitation needs to think more Biblically about what invitation involves.

This includes –

- Its leaders helping them to [Think Differently About Invitation](#)
- Holding an [Invitation Cross Sunday](#) to help people prayerfully consider who they should invite and commit them to God as an act of worship.

Planning

What kind of event?

There are many choices for your invitational event or service. It could be –

- Big or small, for young or old, for a special group or for everyone.
- A regular part of your church activities, or a special one-off guest event or guest service.
- Just one event or many smaller ones with every section of the church doing something on the Friday and Saturday, followed by a guest service on the Sunday.

Covering the cost

With the invitation being to 'be our guest', the assumption is that the guest doesn't pay. So consider either the church sponsoring the cost in full, or those doing the inviting covering the 'ticket' cost for themselves and their guest.

Realistic expectations

It is important to have a realistic understanding of what 'success' for your guest events might look like. Most people outside our churches have little understanding of the Christian story.

Because of this, 'success' might be as simple as them leaving the event feeling good about what happened and open to 'something else sometime'.

Guest Events

There is an endless array of events a church could run to which invitations could be made. Here are some suggestions and resources that may also spark ideas of your own.

But do remember this is about more than getting people together. At the heart of it is also giving people something of an introduction to Jesus and why he is relevant to them. So whatever you plan, make sure you know how you will include this important aspect.

With that in mind, how about any of the following?

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Karaoke evening | Talent show |
| Music recital | Wine tasting |
| Choir performance | Beer festival |
| Chippy tea | Community BBQ |
| Family disco | Street party |
| Art exhibition | Skittles evening |
| Community arts afternoon | Family outing or trip |

Other ideas include -

Sports quiz: In pub-style with multi-media. Everything you need for this is available here from [Christians in Sport](#).

A tea dance: A perfect afternoon for an older generation – with a talk on 'God's Great Dance' or 'Following His Footsteps'.

Film evening: Show a film like Dead Men Walking, The Shack, The Mission, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, The Blind Side or topical film that generates discussion. See the guide: [How to...Run a church film club](#).

Parents and little ones: Hold a Messy Church afternoon. See the guide: [How to...Start a Messy Church](#).

Helping your kids grow up right evening: For parents, with wise advice on discipline, self-esteem and growing up with God as a one-off. Or the first session of Parent Talk the Teenage Years or Parent Talk the Primary Years. See our guide: [How to... Run a parenting course](#).

Men's or Women's breakfast: With speaker with a life story or relevant subject. See the guide: [How to... Run a Men's breakfast](#)

Concert, theatre production or comedy evening: Possible artists could be: Abby Scott (Eaton), Daughters of Davis, Ellen Lockwood, Jacob Lloyd, Ian MacDonald, Jonathan Veira, Lara Martin, Paul Kerensa, Philippa Hanna, Steve Parsons, Mark Ritchie, Chelsea Alice Scott, Nicki Rogers, John Froud, Dave Scott Morgan, Keith Ayling, Todd, Alexander, Tom Elliott, Rob Thomas, Steve Price, Steve Legg, John Archer, Andy Kind, Tony Vino, Jo Enright, Tom Elliott, The Monks.

They are listed with links to their websites [here](#). And do remember some may be more artistic than evangelistic. Mutually agree expectations in advance regarding how explicit you wish them to make the Christian message.

Has science seen off God? presentation: A presentation from a scientist who is a Christian with questions.

Supper party: Hosts invite two or three others from the church to their home for supper and all invite guests. Use one of the [TableTalk](#) sessions to promote conversation.

Guest Events

You may feel it's appropriate to invite people to what you normally do on a Sunday. If so, it is still best to consider how to make the experience as accessible and engaging as possible for those invited.

Consider choosing an interesting subject for the talk to give an extra reason to accept the invitation. This could be something like -

- Who made God?
- Five surprising things about Jesus
- Why does God allow suffering?
- All stressed up and nowhere to go?
- Finding peace. Why do bad things happen to good people?
- Do all religions lead to God?
- The key to a happy life.

Creating Welcome

As you plan, consider how someone who has never been to a church service or event might feel. It's perhaps similar to if you were to go into a betting shop or other situation that was unfamiliar and outside your comfort zone.

In some settings you may want to include words on your invitation such as; *'We don't dress up for Sundays. Just come as you are'*, *'There is no need to book or to bring anything with you'*, or *'special activities for children will be available'*.

There is also guide: ['How to... Provide a great welcome'](#). And a useful list of things to consider [here](#).

Publicity

Those doing the inviting – which needs to be personal - need an invitation, flyer or ticket to give to those they are inviting. This is a visual representation of the invitation, provides key information and is a reminder of the details as the date approaches.

Consider whether this can be made available digitally for those who extend their invitations by email or via online messaging services

A range of publicity on the theme 'Be Our Guest' is available to order [here](#). And the National Weekend of Invitation logo, to use on your own invitations, can be downloaded [here](#).