



# How to run an Invitation Cross Sunday

Many people in our communities are ready to say 'yes' – to an invitation to church or a church event. Others deserve to be invited, even if not yet ready to accept.

However, making this invitation is not always 'easy'. First, we must acknowledge the fear that holds people back and learn to think more Biblically about what invitation involves.

This is why an **Invitation Cross Sunday** – which is part of a regular worship service - is vital in helping people to become inviters ahead of a Weekend of Invitation. It's a way to equip people in your church to invite others to experience Christian community and the Good News of Jesus.

Indeed, an Invitation Cross Sunday can have a transforming effect on a church as can be seen in the video [How an Invitation Cross Sunday impacted our church](#)



## When to hold your Invitation Cross Sunday

It is recommended you hold this Sunday three or more weeks before a planned Weekend of Invitation. This means you will have already planned your invitational event(s).

With this in mind, printed invitations for your event(s) need to be available for people to take away after your Invitation Cross Sunday to give to those God prompts them to invite.

An Invitation Cross Sunday works especially well when timetabled in the context of the Thy Kingdom Come season of prayer for evangelism and witness. For a possible timetable see [here](#).

However, churches are free to choose the Sunday that will work best for them.

## What happens on an Invitation Cross Sunday?

The aim of an Invitation Cross Sunday is to –

- Help people think more Biblically about invitation and so be released from fear and pressure
- Give them time to ask God who he may be nudging them to invite

- Bring the initials of those to be invited on a post-it note to a cross in an act of worship

### What you will need

- A large cross positioned at the front of the church
- Pens or pencils for everyone – hand out as people arrive, or pass down the rows at the appropriate moment
- Post it notes – at the end of the rows (check they stick to the cross before the service. To be sure, consider putting double sided sticky tape on the cross.
- Invitations or details about the invitational service or event to which people will be invited.

## What to say and do on an Invitation Cross Sunday

During the service give a sermon or talk which presents three ways to think more Biblically about inviting others (see appendix 1) and also use the video [Thinking Differently About Invitation](#).

Follow this with the Invitation Cross activity. It is explained in the video [How to Use the Invitation Cross](#) and involves the following -

*Say: We are going to ask God if there is someone God is calling/prompting/nudging you to invite to 'XYZ' and then we are going to keep a silence as we listen to what God may be saying to us.*

Make sure this is not rushed and then close with 'Amen'.

*Say: If you sense that God has prompted you to invite someone, then that is wonderful. And if God hasn't prompted you to invite someone, then that is also wonderful. We only want to do that which God prompts us to do.*

*You will find post it notes at the end of your rows. Please pass them along so everyone has one.*

*If God has prompted you to invite someone, please put their first name, or initials on the post it note. And if God hasn't prompted you at this time, please put a question mark on it. Perhaps a name will come when you are shopping on Tuesday, or sat on the sofa on Wednesday.*

*Now please turn in two's or three's – making sure no one is left out – and talk about what happened when you asked God who you should invite.*

Allow people time to talk as this helps people 'own' what God has said to them.

*Say: Now, as an act of worship, please bring your post it note and place it on the cross here at the front. (Demonstrate by placing yours there).*

*In doing so, you are bringing those God has prompted you to invite to the cross or continuing to ask God who to invite.*

*Please come forward now.*

Take time to marvel at the call of God as people come forward. Afterwards, lead a prayer for those called to invite and for those waiting for an invitation.

*Say: Next week we will make time to hear some of your invitation stories and what God has done as a result of today.*

## **What happens next?**

The Sunday after your Invitation Cross Sunday, we recommend celebrating the obedience of those who have invited and having some people to share what happened and what this meant to them.

# Appendix 1: Three ways to think more Biblically about inviting others

If Christians are to deal with their fear of inviting, they need to see God and 'success' in three very different and more Biblical ways. These are –

## 1. Rethink what God expects of us

**The way we think now:** Christians tend to wrongly imagine that God is only pleased with 'success'. In a world that's obsessed with achievement, growth and numbers this is not surprising.

However, this wrong thinking creates a fear to invite, in case 'failure' is the outcome. And, if they do invite, a response of 'no' deepens the sense of failure.

**The way we need to think:** To think more Biblically we must take account of Jesus' words, *'Well done you good and faithful servant'* –Matthew 25.

Because it is faithfulness and obedience that matter to the God we serve. And, if we can see this, in itself, as 'success' we are released from the fear of failure and pressure to 'succeed'.

## 2. Rethink about what God wants to do for us

**The way we think now:** When it comes to mission, churches tend to think the only issue is that of the needs of the one being invited. As a result, they ignore the potential for spiritual growth – or damage – of those who are reaching out.

**The way we need to think:** We need to think in the same way that Jesus thought. This is seen in what happened after he sent out the 70. When they returned he was as interested in what happened to them as he was in what happened through them.

And we need to take the same approach and see obedience in mission as part of the inviter's spiritual development.

## 3. Rethink God's role in mission

**The way we think now:** There is a tendency to see mission as 'all about us' – with God just giving us help on the way- that we have been 'sent to make disciples' and now it is up to us – with lots of pressure to 'deliver' the goods.

**The way we need to think:** We need to recognise that God is already on a mission. Indeed, Jesus was the first missionary – ‘God sent his son’. Mission is God’s work, it is on his shoulders – with us invited to join in.

This means God doesn’t start to work when we turn up but is already active in people’s lives – including those we may be prompted to invite.

Mission is God’s work, the results are up to him. We just have to be available to play our part.

## **The result of thinking differently**

These three ways of thinking differently represent a totally new and more Biblical approach to mission.

When people understand that all God asks is for faithfulness, that their spiritual growth is part of the activity of mission, and that the results are down to God and not us, something wonderful happens.

Time and again, those who come to see mission in this light say ‘I feel liberated’.

A video expressing this clearly is [Thinking Differently About Invitation](#).