

# BacktoChurchSunday



## In the Diocese of Peterborough

### Just three weeks to go until Back to Church Sunday

#### 1. Keep inviting

By now everyone in the church should have been given their invitations to invite just one person to accompany them back to church. Please keep re-inforcing this. There is some fear about... what happens if people say no, or are hostile or indifferent. It's important to say that people's response is not the most important thing, but the invitation is!

#### 2. Keep praying

Make this a priority. Encourage the church members to pray daily using their cards.

#### 3. Welcome and Hospitality

Many churches think that they are already welcoming and put people first, but that is not always the experience.

Back to Church Sunday offers a great opportunity to really look at how we welcome. Over the next week you might like to walk to church either imagining that you are new to church or take someone who has never been.

Remember:

First impressions leave lasting impressions  
Make sure people leave with a sweet taste in their mouths...  
Welcome often happens after the service

#### Before the service

- Are the entrances clearly signposted?
- Is the door wide open for people on a Sunday?
- Are you accompanying your guest?
- Do you have people outside and inside the door?
- Are they the best smiling warm-hearted generous people you have?
- How will people find their way to their seats? Making sure that the spare seats **are not always at the front?**
- Are children catered for in some way – play bags, junior church or things in the **service to engage and attract them?**
- Are your books and hymn books in good order and easy to follow if you are not **used to the service?**

#### During the Service

- Can you help people through the service with page numbers, directions for **Coming to communion, short explanations about why we do what we do?**
- In some cases, it might be appropriate to say sorry on behalf of the church if its

**actions or the actions of an individual have caused people to stop coming**

- Make sure that there is someone sitting with guests and visitors to do this – it **doesn't always need to come from the front. It is the whole church which is host, not just the service leader.**

#### **After the Service**

- Do you have some quality refreshments – even a lunch?
- If the “prodigal” is returning, in what way are you celebrating that you are **pleased to see people again. By the best biscuits and cakes you can – even wine!**
- Make sure that your welcomers, are looking after guests.
- Take them to coffee, expect them to stay.
- Make sure you have everyone's names and **contact details where possible so that you can follow them up**
- Make sure you invite everyone to something else – whether social or spiritual.

#### **4. Goodie Bags**

Make up some Goodie Bags some churches have found that giving everyone a goodie bag is a well received gesture – even by regulars!

Please think carefully about what you put in them:

1. They are for everyone, not just those who have come back to church
2. Give everyone an invitation to a Christian basics course or an invitation to a Harvest Supper, or to the next Sunday morning or to a Christmas service. Whatever it is, keep the culture of invitation there.
3. Put in some information about the life of the church,
4. Put in some gift – chocolate bar, biscuit, sweets, small cross to help people to remember their visit.

#### **5. The Media**

The Diocese will alert local media to the event, and there will also be some national press coverage, but please do get in touch with your local community newsletter, radio station, TV, local paper. They will be pleased to hear from you! For more help on this, please contact Liz Hurst on 01733 887000

Coming soon, more on:

The Service, The Sermon, The Follow up

For more details, invitations, advice and help, please contact: Gillian on 01604 887048 (Downloads with more resources and ideas and a checklist are available from the Diocesan Website: [www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk](http://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk) and also ideas from [www.backtochurch.co.uk](http://www.backtochurch.co.uk)

#### **Inspire magazine for Back to Church Sunday**

CPO are printing thousands of extra copies of the Inspire magazine for churches to use for Back to Church Sunday. The articles each month are aimed at people who visit churches or who come to social and other events, as can be seen on: <http://www.inspiremagazine.org.uk/>