

BacktoChurchSunday



What it's all about

Back to Church Sunday is a simple but proven way of encouraging people who have had contact with the church in the past to give it another try. Church members give out personal invitations to people they know, and offer to accompany them to or meet them at the church. It is not a recruitment drive for church groups or the stewardship campaign!

The service should be the normal service for that day (the last Sunday in September – 28 September 2008) but church members should be ready to give an appropriate, but not over the top, welcome to newcomers. Some churches have increased their hospitality arrangements on Back to Church Sunday, offering coffee after the service, a shared lunch or family fun day and barbecue. The important thing is simply that people are made to feel at home. After BTCS last year, someone in one of our parishes said, “It was just like coming home.”

BTCS began in Manchester Diocese in 2004 and has spread all over the country. In 2008 37 out of the 44 Church of England dioceses are taking part, as is the Baptist Union. Several other denominations including the Salvation Army, the URC and the Methodist Church are trialling it this year as are the Anglican dioceses of Wellington (New Zealand) and Algoma (Canada).

Last year some 20,000 people came back to Church on the one day. Research in Lichfield Diocese last year revealed that about 15% of those who came want to come back for good. For others, BTCS is the first step in a longer spiritual pilgrimage, the results of which are still unknown.

In Peterborough Diocese, 180 churches took part in 2007 (half the diocese) and about 2,000 additional people attended services that day.

