

Fall Festival Playbook

Introduction

Welcome to the Ultimate Step-By-Step Playbook for navigating your Fall Festival, Harvest Party, Halloween Bash, or Trunk or Treat. This Playbook will help you reach more first-time visitors than ever before, and take advantage of the natural momentum that comes with the Fall Growth Season.

There are a lot of ideas in this Playbook and if you follow it then you're going to have a massively successful Fall Festival.

But first...

“LOSER-PROOF” YOUR MINDSET

I learned these 3 principles from Marie Forleo and they have completely revolutionized the way I learn new things and consume books, online courses, coaching etc.

Key #1 - Loser-Proof Your Mindset (Train Your Brain)

1. Don't ever say "This won't work for me" - instead turn it into "How can this work for me?"
2. Don't ever say "I know this already" - turn this into "What can I learn from this?" Having the knowledge of how to do something is completely different than actually executing and doing it.

Key #2 - Don't Trust Your Instincts

1. Change is Uncomfortable: Recognize that it'll be uncomfortable and push through that resistance.
2. New ideas create new neural pathways in our brains and we begin to see the world differently, but this takes time. Be patient.
3. Celebrate the Discomfort: Embrace the discomfort, knowing that Breakthrough is on the other side of that resistance.

Key #3 - Drink From The Firehose

1. Just catch what you can and don't freak out.
2. Don't worry about the fear of missing something.
3. Do your best and execute to the best of your ability, knowing that you'll get better at this over time. :)

When Should I Start My Marketing?

If you are doing a Big Event and you want to get a ton of people there then the best time to start your marketing is two weeks away from the event.

If you're doing a smaller community event that is open to the public but you have a small budget or want to focus more on the families in your church then you'll want to start a week out.

Okay, let's get this party started...

Note: If you've followed some of my other playbooks, then some of this will be a review. It still may be helpful to go over it again because it's important to remember the "Why" behind the Marketing Strategy.

Step 1: The Event Stack

Luke 14:23 says that we are to “go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled...”

So we have to ***compel them to come in***. It's never about gimmicks, it's about creating a hook or magnet that will naturally attract unchurched people in your city so that you can share the gospel with them and invite them into a personal relationship with Jesus.

So, for October we are going to throw a huge Fall Festival. BTW - for the purposes of the Playbook I will use Fall Festival, Harvest Party, and Trunk or Treat interchangeably. It doesn't matter what you call it, the strategies are the same.

Ok, here's the deal...

You may have heard me tell this story before but it's worth repeating...

Example: A friend of mine wanted his grandkids to come visit him more. So what did he do? He built a massive playground in their backyard with all the bells and whistles. Slides, swings, a playhouse, sandbox, rock wall, monkey bars, rope swing, this playground has it all! And guess what happened? This “magnet” attracted his grandkids and now they beg to come over to his house **AT LEAST** once a week!

Notice that he didn't just get a tire swing or a slide in his backyard. He built a MASSIVE playground with dozens of attractive options for his grandkids to play on and then all he had to do was announce it to his grandkids and they took care of the rest.

He didn't have to bug his kids and annoy them every week to bring the grandkids over to visit. He built an attractive offer, told his grandkids and then waited for them to show up every week.

That's what churches should do for their Fall Festival (Harvest Party, Halloween Bash, Trunk Or Treat, etc)

- Build an attractive offer (**The Event**)
- Tell the community about it (**Marketing**)
- Sweep them off their feet when they show up (**Hosting**)

The single biggest mistake churches make is not offering a “stack” of attractive items for their events.

In the marketing world, we call this an **Offer Stack**.

Most businesses make the crucial mistake of only offering a single product, instead of an offer stack with multiple items that work together to form an offer.

Churches make this same mistake too, and that's why we have to create an attractive offer for every event.

The first step (just like Easter, Mother's Day, Summer Slump, Back To School, etc) is creating a **Fall Festival Offer Stack**.

In this case I like to call it an **Event Stack**.

This is where we put together the hooks or magnets that will attract the community to your church.

Your Event Stack will be your Main Marketing Message.

- **Facebook Ads**
- **Instagram Ads**
- **Print**
- **Invitations**

- **Posters**
- **Digital Invites**
- **Even Social Media Posts**

All of them HAVE to include your Event Stack.

Here is the Fall Festival Framework you're going to use to create your Event Stack & your Facebook Ads:

- **Attractive Item 1:** Main Event / Big Attraction
- **Attractive Item 2:** Kids Magnet #1
- **Attractive Item 3:** Kids Magnet #2
- **Attractive Item 4:** Kids Magnet #3
- **Attractive Item 5:** Family Magnet
- **Attractive Item 6:** Free Food
- **Attractive Item 7:** Add Ons (**See the 3 F's section below*)

Here are some ideas for each Attractive Item or Hook...

1. **Main Event** - Trunk or Treat // Fall Festival // Harvest Party // Halloween Bash
2. **Attractive Item:** - Inflatables // Bounce Houses // Contest
3. **Attractive Item:** - Carnival Games // Rides
4. **Attractive Item:** - Face Painting // Balloon Animals // Puppet Show
5. **Attractive Item:** - Family Photo Booth // Free Family Photos //
6. **Attractive Item:** - Free Hotdogs // Cupcakes // Cookies // Candy Apples
7. **Attractive Item:** - Free Candy // Prizes // Free Goodie Bags

And here is a sample Event Stack:

- Attractive Item 1: Fall Festival
- Attractive Item 2: Bounce Houses
- Attractive Item 3: Hayrides
- Attractive Item 4: Carnival Games
- Attractive Item 5: Free Candy
- Attractive Item 6: Face Painting
- Attractive Item 7: Costume Contest and Prizes

The 3 F's

If you want your Event to be super sticky and attractive then don't forget the 3 F's:

- **Food**
- **Family**
- **Fun**

All of your church events should include all 3 of these if possible.

Here are some easy “add-on” ideas to spice up your Events (especially if you're on a budget):

FOOD:

- Food Trucks
- Snow Cones
- Free Candy
- Hot Dogs
- Hamburgers
- Popcorn
- Candy Apples
- Cupcakes
- Cotton Candy
- Candy Corn
- Grab Bags
- Hot Chocolate
- Hot Cider
- Apple Cider

FAMILY + FUN:

- Face Painting
- Pumpkin Pie Eating Contest
- Bounce Houses
- Hayrides
- Costume Contest
- Bonfire
- Scavenger Hunt
- Pumpkin' Chunkin'
- Bobbing For Apples
- Puppet Show
- Make A Corn Maze (or Regular Maze)
- Family Photo Booth
- Tunnel of Terror (or Tunnel of Fun)
- Rent some Inflatables
- Cake Walk
- Toilet Paper Mummies (let kids wrap their friends/parents in toilet paper)
- Free Prizes (from the Dollar Store)
- Bubbles (or a Bubble Machine)
- Pumpkin Carving Contest
- Pony Rides
- Fake Tattoos
- Paper Airplane Flying Contest
- Get A Fire Truck/Ambulance/Police Car (let kids look inside and take pictures)
- Free Balloons (especially if there's Helium involved)
- Homemade Carnival Games
- Magic Tricks (or hire a Magician)
- Hire a Clown
- Hire Disney Princesses
- Finger-painting Station
- Tiki Torches
- Stringed Lights
- Create an Obstacle Course
- Haunted Wood

Step 2: Write Your Facebook Ads

Now that you've created your Event Stack, it's time to write your Facebook + Instagram Ads.

Using our example Event Stack from Step 1 here's what that Facebook Ad copy/video script would look like:

HEADLINE:

FALL FESTIVAL: Carnival Games // Bounce Houses // Hayrides // Face Painting // Free Candy and More!!!

AD COPY:

FALL FESTIVAL: On Sunday, October 27th @ Journey Church we are hosting our 2019 Fall Festival with tons of free candy and family-friendly events...

- ✓ Fall Festival
- ✓ Bounce Houses
- ✓ Hayrides
- ✓ Carnival Games
- ✓ Free Candy
- ✓ Face Painting
- ✓ Costume Contest
- ✓ And of course... more Candy + Prizes than your kids can handle!

Church starts at 10am and then the Fall Festival will be directly following service.

Your kids are going to think you're a Superhero after you bring them to Journey Church for our Annual 2019 Fall Festival (and tons of free candy).

Come out to Journey Church on Sunday, October 27th @ 10am for a safe day of family fun. Church at 10am and then the Fall Festival right after service...

And don't worry, this event is 100% FREE and open to the public!

All we ask is that you click on the "Learn More" button below sign up for Plan Your Visit on the next page so we can save you a spot, and give your kids a free welcome gift in Kids Church!

So Plan Your Visit now and we'll see you on Sunday, October 27th at 10am...

News Feed Description

100% Free Event // FALL FESTIVAL at Journey Church // Sunday, Oct. 27th @ 10am

Step 3: Create Your Facebook Ads

In this step we're going to create 2 different Facebook Ads and run them simultaneously to get the word out about the Fall Festival:

1. Picture Ad
2. Pastor Selfie Video Ad

Ad #1: Picture Ad

Use the ad copy we created in Step 2 and find a few images using Facebook's free photos. (Use a picture that is fun, vibrant, and eye-catching. Remember, we want to stop the scroll. Typically a good picture of bouncy houses, carnival games, pumpkins, kids in costumes, hayrides, etc will work great. Just make sure to use pics of things you'll have at the event. Inside FB ads manager you can use the "choose stock photo" option to do this. You can also find great royalty-free images on [Unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com) that you can use for your ads.)

Ad #2: Pastor Selfie Video Ad

You're going to shoot a "selfie-style" video using the ad copy from Step 2 as their script. You can have the Senior Pastor and their spouse do it, or you can use a mom from your church (bonus points if they're holding a baby or have one of their kids in a Halloween costume in the video with them)

The person in the video should hold the phone slightly above their head (3 inches or so), aimed down on them and then use the ad copy from your Facebook Ad as the video script.

*Make sure you tell them to click below and Plan Their Visit. (This Is Important!)

****PRO TIP: Don't worry about reading the script word-for-word, just make it feel laid back and natural. Use the script as a guideline but don't read it like a robot.***

If you prefer to have a script, you can use a teleprompter app that allows you to record your selfie video and read the script at the same time. I personally recommend an app called BIGVU...

Then you're going to split your daily budget evenly between these 2 ads...

Again, don't worry about repeating the script perfectly, do your best, but it's extremely important to stay fun and energetic here. (Not robotic, mellow or monotone)

Remember the WAY you invite and communicate with people in your community is a type of "magnet" that will attract (or repel) new visitors.

Step 4: Targeting & Budget

Now that you've created your Event Stack and written the Facebook Ads, let's talk about FB Ad targeting and your ads budget.

Targeting:

Keep it simple and target everyone within driving distance of your church. Usually, that's 10-15 miles depending on your community.

For urban areas that might be closer to 5 miles, or 30-45 miles if you're in a rural area. Next you'll want to people ages 18-65+

You want your potential audience size to be as big as possible. We used to try to keep it around 500,000 people, but we've been seeing better results lately when we leave the targeting wide open and the audience size as big as possible.

Campaign Schedule:

In order to Run This Play effectively you'll want to start your ads 1 to 2 weeks before the Event.

- **Phase 1 (Two Weeks Before):** Monday through Sunday
- **Phase 2 (One Week Before):** Monday through Sunday

You'll run your ads non-stop for 2 weeks leading up to the Fall Festival, but there is a specific formula for your Ad Spend...

Ad Spend:

Here is the formula for your Facebook Ad Spend:

Week 1: Starting Budget

Week 2: Double Your Ad Spend

Example Budget For Churches **Under 200** People:

Week 1: \$30 per day (\$210 / week)

Week 2: \$60 per day (\$420 / week)

Total Investment = \$1260

Example Budget For Churches **Over 200** People:

Week 1: \$100 per day (\$700 / week)

Week 2: \$200 per day (\$1400 / week)

Total Investment = \$2520

Notes:

- If your church is OVER 200 people in average attendance, then we spend recommend starting at \$100 a day if possible
- If you *can't* start at \$100 a day, then just do what you can and follow the “doubling formula”
- For example: \$10 a day to start, then go \$20 a day in Week 2

The more money you invest in Facebook, the more people Mark Zuckerberg will show your ads to. If you can do the recommended ad spend then do it, but if you have to scale it back then scale it back.

The important thing is to **do what you can** and be consistent.

Final Thoughts:

If you have the budget to run ads for 2 weeks, do it. If you have a smaller budget, it's better to spend the budget for 1 week prior to the event than to spread it out over two weeks.

Just do what you can :)

Step 5: Your Landing Page

Your landing page is a big deal. It has to be consistent with the ad that people are clicking on. If they click on your Fall Festival Ad but then they're directed to a page on your website that talks about small groups and your women's ministry then they might get confused and leave your site.

Make sure your landing page restates what your ad is saying.

This is your first impression with a visitor and you want it to be simple and clean.

The best thing to do here is to create a dedicated Fall Festival Landing Page that reiterates everything from your ad. You can even use the same ad copy, and then send all of the traffic from your Facebook Ad to this page. Make sure to include a Plan Your Visit button as well.

Your Landing Page Checklist:

- Make a dedicated landing page just for your Fall Festival (First impression is huge)
- Use <https://gtmetrix.com/> to make sure your landing page loads within 5 seconds (if your page loads too slowly, people will hit the back button and never check out your church!)
- Keep the landing page "light" (meaning not a lot of media/video) with compelling info about your church and more info on the event (Don't try to load this page down with every single thing ever written about your church!) If you say more than one thing then you say nothing at all - so don't talk about anything else except for the Fall Festival
- Add the "Plan Your Visit" widget to your site and set up the system using [Text In Church](#) (👉 Click For A Free Trial)
- KEY: Pretend you're a first time visitor who knows NOTHING about your church. Put yourself in their shoes, then walk through the steps of reading the ad, clicking the Learn More button, and experiencing the website from their point of view. Does the page load

fast? Is the message congruent from the ad to the landing page? Is all the info on there? (Times/locations/details) Is it easy to Plan A Visit?

- Most importantly test all this from your PHONE. About 80% of your visiting traffic will come from a phone, not a desktop computer. Make sure the experience is flawless from a phone.

Step 6: Print Invites

If you want to go all out and have a massive event then I recommend creating posters, invite cards and “bring-vitations” for your people to hand out to their friends.

Simply design a 4x6 postcard invite with the Date, Service Time, and Location on one side, and your Fall Festival Event Stack on the back.

Do the same for a business card invite.

Then, print up posters (8.5x11 or 11x17 if you want to stand out) and then put these up all over your church, city, coffee shops, community boards, etc.

Print up:

- 250 Posters - 8.5x11 ([\\$89 on clubflyers.com](#))
- Or 250 Posters - 11x17 ([\\$159 on clubflyers.com](#))
- 5000 4x6 Postcard Invites ([\\$99 on clubflyers.com](#))
- 5000 Business Card Invites ([\\$49 on clubflyers.com](#))

As soon as you get these immediately pass them out to your entire congregation and ask them to give them to anyone they come into contact with that week (friends, family, teachers, waiters, coaches, bank tellers, etc).

Place stacks of these invites all over your church, in local coffee shops, gas stations, and businesses - anywhere that will let you leave a stack of invites.

Step 7: Tell The World

Your people will want to naturally share this with everyone they know. People who have never invited a single friend or family members will be handing out invites to strangers and posting all over social media about it.

Why?

Social Currency.

People naturally share things that make them look good, in the know, or look like they have insider information.

When they invite their friends to a party or event and they end up having a great time, then it makes that person look like a rockstar and gives them more social currency.

If you followed this Playbook then you will have created an attractive Back To School Event with food, fun, family and TONS of social currency for your people.

So don't be shy about asking your people to invite and giving them the tools to do this effectively. In the end they will thank you for it because they'll look smart and connected by inviting their friends to an incredible event...

BONUS #1: The Thunderclap

I call this strategy the **Social Thunderclap** and I actually learned this from my friend Steve John.

PRO TIP:

You can only use this once or twice a year max. Easter is the best time to do it and the second best is either Back To School, Fall Festival, or Christmas.

If you did the Thunderclap at Easter, you may want to slightly change the play by asking your people to post an Invite Graphic (make sure to include the Fall Festival Event Stack) or ask them to do a Live video on Instagram instead of Facebook)

Ok, here's how it works...

You're going to ask everyone in your congregation to do a Facebook Live or Instagram Live on their personal profile on the Monday before the Event.

All they have to do is briefly share what God is doing in their life and then invite everyone watching to the Fall Festival, share the Event Stack, and then tell people to go to your website and Plan Their Visit.

That's it.

On the Sunday before your Event you are going to ask everyone in the congregation to commit to doing this. Then, send out a church-wide text or email at 10am the next day reminding everyone to Go Live today.

Send out another one at 4pm as a reminder for anyone who hasn't had a chance to do it yet.

Finally, send out one last text or email on Tuesday @ 10am for anyone that may have forgotten to do it the day before.

So it looks like this...

- **Sunday Before Event (In Service)**
 - Ask the congregation to commit to the Thunderclap
- **Monday Before Event @ 10am**
 - Send out text/email to Go Live, and at 4pm send a reminder.
- **Tuesday Before Event @ 10am**
 - Send out text/email for anyone who might have forgotten to do it the day before

BONUS #2: Additional Promotion

I recently found an article from Kendall Conner on affordable ways to promote a sermon series (or church event) and wanted to include it here in case you want to check it out. Although a lot of the ideas in the article are already in the Playbook it's always good to have a little extra inspiration...

Side Note: The only thing I disagree with is his recommendation for Twitter Ads. Just stick to Facebook and Instagram and leave Twitter for celebrities and elected officials. You'll get much better results :)

6 AFFORDABLE WAYS TO PROMOTE A SERMON SERIES

by KENDALL CONNER

Here are six easy and affordable ways to get the word out about your sermon series and equip your church family to invite their friends:

1. INVITE CARDS

This is one of my favorite ways to spread the word about a series. You can get 1000 business cards printed with your series details for around \$25 and put them in the hands of everyone in your congregation. I like to give everybody a bundle of five cards and encourage them to personally invite five people to come check it out. Be sure to include your series graphic, dates, times, address, and website. Printers that I use regularly for these cards are [Overnight Prints](#) and [Next Day Flyers](#).

2. SHAREABLE SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS

Social media is one of the best ways to spread the word about events, but you can take it a step further than simply posting on your church's profile. Provide downloadable square (612 x 612px) promo images with all of your series details on your website. This will allow people to share them with their friends on their own Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram profiles. The potential for reaching people in your community is endless with this method.

3. EXTERIOR BANNERS

It's likely that numerous people drive by your church every single day. Take advantage of this by hanging a large banner that's easily visible by drivers. [Next Day Flyers](#) has a 10' x 5' banner for only \$140 that we've purchased several times for promoting events. When I was promoting our movie theater church in Baltimore, the cinema manager even allowed us to display banners like this for movie-goers throughout the week.

4. FACEBOOK/TWITTER ADS

Facebook ads and promoted posts are super affordable and truly reach a lot of people. They are also really easy to target a very specific audience. These ads have been really effective for us. Also, Twitter has recently added some extremely powerful tools for advertising with graphics. Nothing stands out more on a feed full of 140-character tweets than a large photo.

5. POST FLYERS AROUND TOWN

Take advantage of every community board within a 20-mile radius of your church. Print some flyers with your series graphics and post them at Starbucks, Panera Bread, and anywhere else that will allow it. These kinds of places get a ton of traffic and require people to wait in line for their food. This is the perfect opportunity for them to read up about your upcoming event.

6. EMAIL CURRENT & PAST ATTENDERS

Have a database full of email addresses from people who have filled out your connection cards? Why not send out an email with the details of your series? Keep it quick and use images, rather than words, to do most of the communicating. Services like [MailChimp](#) are perfect for emails like this and have templates that make it easy to plug in your graphics.