
Five Church Growth Ideas That Aren't Expensive

We often hear that churches need to hire new staff. Or they need a budget for advertising. Or maybe they need to expand or renovate their facilities. But where are they ever going to find the money to make such changes?

Five Inexpensive Ideas to Grow Your Church

There are a lot of church growth strategies that don't require bucketloads of money. These are things you can work on as soon as today, despite any budget constraints.

#1 – Adopt a people-first communication approach.

I read a stat that said the average young adult today will take more than 25,000 selfies in their lifetime. That's a lot of duck faces and Clarendon filters.

The ubiquitous selfie might be a sign of the times, but it's an example of how people of all ages like to see themselves in photos. A picture of the Grand Canyon will never be as popular as a picture of you at the Grand Canyon.

Too many churches have the camera focused on them—talking about their services, their ministries, and their events. It's a selfie approach to communication. Instead, flip the camera around and start talking about people.

This is a subtle concept and it can be tough to grasp, so here's an example. We've all seen churches describe themselves as “a friendly church” to invite the community. But here's the thing.

People aren't looking for a friendly church. They are looking for friends.

See the difference? The “friendly church” descriptor is about you. And more and more, people don't really connect with that description. What they are looking for is friends. That's personal. That makes a difference in their life.

So when you talk about your church, as uncomfortable as it might be, make sure you're talking about what it means to people's real lives. Don't describe the programs and ministries; describe how those programs and ministries benefit people.

People's first communication means you don't just describe the dates and speaker for youth camp...it means you tell parents this is the best chance for their rising high schooler to make Christian friends who will be a positive influence over the next few years.

People's first communication means you don't describe how Financial Peace University works, it means you talk about what will happen in people's lives after they go through the program.

People's first communication means you don't just post pictures of your band or your sermon series, you post pictures of people having fun, praying, or singing. You put other people, not your church, front and center.

#2 – Put friendly people in visible places.

One of the knocks against big churches is that it's hard to get to know people. But I've been to some very small churches where everyone clearly knew everyone and I've felt like a complete outsider. Small churches where you don't know anyone are far more intimidating than large churches where you don't know anyone.

A lot of churches who consider themselves welcoming miss the fact that being welcoming to regular attendees and being welcoming to guests are dramatically different.

Great greeters make this possible.

If you've got a greeter with the personality of Captain Ahab, he's driving away people before they even give your church a chance. The good news is you don't need a complicated spiritual gifts test or a series of introductory courses to help identify friendly people. You can look around and see who is wired this way.

Identify them just like you would identify people who can sing and put them on the worship team. Hospitality is a gift that's easy to spot. And once you spot it, empower these people to make guests feel welcome. Make sure they are in the most visible places in your church. Let them do the welcome. Give them a platform to interact with people.

#3 – Design your homepage exclusively for guests.

Once someone is connected to your church, there are lots of ways for them to get information. They can read the bulletin, pay attention to the announcements, read the email newsletter, or find info on social media.

But people thinking about visiting your church for the first time are going to end up in one spot...your church's website.

That's why you should design your website for brand new people NOT your church members.

Pro Church recently published a post with 25 of the best websites. And there's a common thread that runs through all of them. Nearly every single one was designed with guests in mind.

Brady writes, “When someone lands on your church’s site, they’re not there to hear about how awesome you are. They’re there to see what your church can offer them.”

Grace Hills Church does a good job with this, choosing words that are more about the potential visitor than the church.

Your home page doesn’t need a calendar of events, a text widget listing the Deacon on Call, or an announcement to recruit new volunteers. People are not visiting your website for those things.

Instead, new people are heading to your site to learn the basic information. Things like...

- What time is the service?
- What should I expect if I’m going to visit?
- What about my kids?

Design your website almost exclusively for guests and point everything to one obvious call to action. We recommend “Plan a Visit.”

#4 – Equip your people to invite.

Pastors often do a great job encouraging their people to invite their friends, neighbors, and co-workers. But encouragement and equipping are two different things.

People don’t just need encouragement to invite, they need the tools. You need to do more than ask them to bring people to church, you need to give them resources that make it easy to follow through.

Here are two equipping ideas.

First, print up a bunch of invite cards, create a display and then take time to teach people how to use them. You can change these cards with

the season or create different versions for different ministries. But don't just make them available...talk about them and share ideas on how people can use them.

Here is an example of a simple invite card we love...



If you're a Church Fuel member, you'll find more samples in the Resource Library.

Second, write up a bunch of social media posts and create corresponding images and ask your people to share on their feeds. If you want people to do something, make it easier. Sure, some people in your church might respond to a generic request. But if you actually write the post, create the graphic and email it to a church member, they are far more likely to follow through.

#5 - Partner with existing events in your community.

Hosting an outreach event is time-consuming, people-intensive and expensive. Maybe it's the right call for you. But for most churches, you can see even more impact by partnering. There's no need to re-create something that happens elsewhere. Just jump in and make it better.

Your church can organize a community Easter Egg hunt, but if your town already does one, offer to send volunteers and help make it better. You could serve more people and help the organizers at the same time.

Your church might benefit from organizing a fall festival, but why not jump in with local schools and make their events better? Ask yourself if your community needs another fall festival, financial seminar, or food pantry. It might be smarter to partner.

Those are five things you can do to reach people and see church growth. They don't seem too difficult, but if you commit to even one of these ideas, the culture shift in your church will reap its own rewards. Let us know what happens when you start using some of these ideas.

Free Resource to Grow Your Church

Feel like your church should be growing, but it's not?

Ultimately, church growth is up to God. Are we being good stewards of what He's given us? Are we doing everything we can to ensure our church is healthy? How do we overcome the barriers we feel are in front of us?

We know you care deeply about leading a healthy growing church because it means leading more people to Jesus. So we created a free guide that will bring clarity and help begin to alleviate your frustrations.

[Download the guide](#)