

Sharing the story

ideas for autumn

AIM

To provide some ideas for churches thinking about evangelism in the period September to December.

INTRODUCTION

Our two main themes for Evangelism Year are 'Sharing God's story' and 'Sharing our story'. Autumn presents us with further opportunities to share these stories. Here are some ideas you might want to follow up.

THINKING AHEAD

Most events take some forward planning. That is why the 'thinking ahead about'.... initiative was started for Evangelism Year. Contact your Synod Training and Development team for more information about how this initiative might help your church. If you have not already started to think about this autumn, you may need to be thinking ahead about events for the first part of next year, or even a year ahead about next autumn.

Any of these autumn events could also be an opportunity to inform people about your plans for Advent and Christmas this year. You could have a card with details of your planned services and an invitation to attend these ready to give people.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVANGELISM IN AUTUMN

HARVEST

Resources for Harvest from ARC at <http://www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk/>

You can download resources for Harvest for 2011. But there are lots of other things here to help rural churches. Does your village need a community shop or post office? Could this be an evangelism project for your community? There is a link to guidelines for churches undertaking this kind of project. Another project is 'Computers for Rural People' which aims to help rural communities link up to the internet. This might be something your community needs. Have a look.

Resources for Harvest Supper can be found at Tearfund: <http://www.tearfund.org/> along with other Harvest resources for all ages. Many organisations, not just churches are offering Harvest Suppers. If you traditionally do this, why not think up some ways of making this an opportunity for evangelism. Who is to be invited and how? What will be served and how? What else might happen?

BACK2CHURCH SUNDAY

Last Sunday in September. If you have signed up then you will be in the final phase of preparation now. See further information on the Vision4life website or the Back2church Sunday website: <http://www.backtochurch.co.uk/>

If you are in East Midlands synod, Steve Faber is your champion; in Southern Synod it is Alison West and Martin Haywood and in Yorkshire it is Margaret Sobol. Contact them from the website if you need more help.

Didn't do it this year? Well then think ahead for next year!

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HALLOWEEN

Many churches run a Light Party or similar for which you will find ideas are in various places:

<http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/Families/Parents/Talkingabout/Halloween/1198.id>

<http://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/children/sunday-school/click/one-day-wonders>

<http://www.cpo-online.org.uk/catalogue.aspx?cat=108>

<http://www.chpublishing.co.uk/feature.asp?id=2392117&cachefixer=cf21234887074320>

Also Saltbox based in Stoke run a No Trick or Treat Campaign where you can leaflet your neighbours.

http://www.saltbox.org.uk/community/no_trick_treat.php

ALL SAINTS

Have you thought about having a service around All Saints tide for people who have been bereaved during the past year?

You can find basic information about All Saints Day at:

<http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/uk/all-saints-day>

Last year's Vision4life Prayer Year resources include a service for All Saints-tide. If you didn't use it last year maybe you'd like to try it this year or adapt it for your situation. Look on the Prayer Year part of the Vision4life website under 'seasonal'.

REMEMBRANCE

Resources for Remembrance can be found on the British Legion website at

<http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/remembrance>

SCHOOLS

Schools may particularly appreciate help at this time of year. Halloween and Remembrance are both different kinds of occasions but challenging in their own way. Why not offer to go into a local school for an Assembly or other activity at this time of year?

LASTLY... what about Advent?

Brian Harley of Shanklin URC writes:

'We run an Advent Cafe event on a Sunday evening to explore "the reason for the season". It helps to do this on a Sunday well ahead of Christmas due to the busy schedule many people have. Also loads of people have got Christmas sorted by the end of November without any thought of the meaning! We don't do worship as such but more like "church for the unchurched" with odd songs, readings, sketches and film/video clips - oh and a fun quiz with 10 multi choice questions, a few Bible centred plus other random Christmas stuff off the internet!'

Maybe you'd like to plan an Advent Café too?

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Prayer

Living God, as the days shorten into Autumn,
help us to recognise the signs of your life all around us.
May we explore opportunities to tell your story together
and confidently share it with others,
through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

EVALUATION

Please try to answer these questions for yourself and for others who will use this material:

1. What was the most helpful thing?
2. What was the least helpful thing?
3. What would you like to try now?

THE NEXT STEP

If you want more Resources for Evangelism Year please revisit the website.

Acknowledgements

This material has been prepared by the Evangelism Year Working Group.

HOW TO FEEDBACK TO VISION4LIFE?

If you wish to offer any feedback – brickbats and bouquets are equally welcome! – you can do so in various ways.

You can email the Vision4Life steering group and the coordinator about general issues via the website or at admin@vision4life.org.uk

Website issues can be dealt with through web@vision4life.org.uk

If you want to make contributions or ask questions about other V4L years you can email:
Year 3 – Transformed for Evangelism: evangelism@vision4life.org.uk