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**THE
YEAR-ROUND
CHURCH
EVENT
BOOK**

**DR. ELMER L. TOWNS
AND REV. STAN TOLER**

**A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE
to Planning and
Promoting More
than Fifty Different
Church Events and
Celebrations—
One for Every
Season & Holiday!**

Holiday Celebrations
Church Growth Campaigns
Baptisms and Dedications
Weddings and Funerals
Special Youth Events
Prayer and Music Moments

The Year-Round Church Event Book

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INTRODUCTION

You are holding in your hands dozens of ideas to make holidays and other special days in your church exciting and memorable. Everyone is looking for themes, artwork, mottoes and step-by-step guidance to make a "big" day big. This is an idea book to help your church plan successful events of all sorts. The ideas in *The Year-Round Church Event Book* were created as templates for you to custom create your own events. This book provides you with ideas for everything from the basics such as communion, baptisms and weddings to ideas for stewardship like the Church Cleanup Day and Discover the joy of Giving Sunday to fun evangelistic outreach event ideas such as block parties and Conspiracy of Kindness days. These are just a few examples of many easy-to-use event ideas that we are sharing with you.

We have been gathering and using these events throughout our ministries in small and large churches. There are more than 50 event ideas in this book, but we suggest that you hold no more than four to six events in your church each year.

It is our hope that this resource will serve you well and help to make your church successful in doing the work of God.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Elmer Towns and Stan Toler

BLESSING *the* CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

Parents are invited to bring their children to the sanctuary during a Sunday morning service in which the pastor or other church leaders will bless the children and pray for them. This is not the same as infant baptism or baby dedication. Parents are invited to bring all their children to a special service that emphasizes the family and Christian child rearing. At the end of the church service, church leaders (i.e., pastors, elders, board members and spiritual counselors) place themselves around the sanctuary and families stand next to the nearest church representative for the blessing.

PURPOSE

- To bless children by introducing God's influence on their lives
- To reach out evangelistically because many unchurched parents will bring their children
- To commit parents to godly child rearing
- To commit the church to support and minister to parents in their task of rearing children
- To give children God's blessing for protection from the attacks of the evil one
- To form a threefold cord between church leaders, parents and the Lord for the ongoing nurture of the next generation in the community of faith.

PREPARATION

Prepare a door hanger announcing the service, including the time, date and purpose. A door hanger is usually printed on card stock paper and has some way of attaching it to a front doorknob. This can be accomplished by stapling a small rubber band to one corner of the advertisement. The door hanger should have the phone number of a church member living in the community whom parents can contact for more information. When the contact person receives a phone call, he or she explains the following to the parents:

- The purpose of blessing the children;
- Necessary directions for the parents; and
- That the contact person will meet the family at church and sit with them during the service.

THE SERVICE

The pastor preaches a sermon on the importance of raising children, a challenge to parents to know Christ and to live by Christian principles and the biblical purpose of the blessing. The pastor makes it clear that this does not take the place of infant baptism or baby dedication.

Have a card in the bulletin for parents to complete giving the church basic information on the

child, including name, birthday, address and the name of the parents (see the sample on page 23). It is permissible to ask for the parent's church connection if any. The parents should fill this card out and have it ready to give to the one who will pray for the children.

At the end of the sermon, the church leaders station themselves around the church auditorium. The parents are instructed to take their children to the closest representative who will pray a blessing for their children. The representatives receive the card so they can pray for the children by name. Then a personal admonition is given to the parents to raise their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." If they are small babies, the representatives receive the babies, lay hands on them and pray the Aaronic blessing over them.

The LORD bless you, and keep you; the LORD make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace (Numbers 6:24-26, *NASB*).

The representative should explain three aspects of the Aaronic blessing to the parents. First, "The LORD bless you and keep you." The blessing of God is for spiritual, physical, social and mental growth. Challenge the parents to raise their children as "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52).

The first blessing is also for spiritual protection. Pray that the child is protected from physical danger and spiritual temptations. Explain the last petition of the Lord's Prayer is "deliver us from the evil one" (Matthew 6:13), which is asking for spiritual protection from Satan.

The second part of the Aaronic blessing is "The LORD make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you." Let the parents know that the face of the Lord is God's presence in the life of a child. The parents should know that God loves children, will care for them and the children should always have the Lord's presence in their lives.

The third part of the blessing is "The LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace." When God lifts up His countenance on a child, that means His approval and protection.

The church representative should tell the parents that this does not save the child, but only places God's protection and blessing upon the child. Therefore, the representative should share the plan of salvation with the parents.

The following ABC plan of salvation is a simple, yet straightforward presentation of the gospel message:

Admit that you are a sinner-see Romans 3:23.

Believe that Christ can save you-see John 1:12.

Confess Christ is Lord of your life-see Romans 10:9,10.

FOLLOW-UP

After the blessing day, the church should mail a letter to the parents thanking them for being present in the service and for letting the church pray for their children. Also, the church letter should offer spiritual assistance in the raising of the child and the establishment of the Christian home.

Also, leaders commit to pray through the year for the children and families they blessed. They send special notes of encouragement and on special occasions such as birthdays, Easter, etc.

Special Note: Be sensitive to those who are unable to have children, have lost children to death or through family conflicts, are unmarried or have chosen not to have children. Be aware that this service may be a reminder of their losses. They could be included in the service by encouraging them to pray for the families that have asked for this blessing.'

1. Special thanks to Paul Dugan, Associate Pastor at Community Presbyterian Church in Ventura, California, for allowing us to adapt his idea.

Blessing the Children Service Information

Child's Full Name _____

Child's Birthdate _____ Age _____

Address _____

Parent(s) Name(s) _____

Phone _____ Family's Church Affiliation _____