

Toot Your Horn!

Promotion Ideas for the Church Library

Jazz up your Visuals

1. Put up posters with short, catchy phrases. Place in strategic places around the church, not just the library. Mark the date you put it up on the back of poster.
2. Create bulletin boards that are bright, cheerful and changed/updated regularly.
3. Feature “mini” displays and exhibits: something of interest in current Sunday School study, an author or illustrator; Kansas books; seasonal themes; your pastor’s picks, etc.
4. Cut out footprints and place them all over the church, all leading to the library.
5. Hang mobiles from the ceiling – seasonal items, book jackets, bookmarks, etc.
6. Place a book truck, wheelbarrow or child’s wagon in the hall outside the library filled to the brim with library items. Direct folks to come inside to check out.
7. Spruce up your library! Have bright lighting, updated window treatment, fresh paint, clean carpet, neat shelves, and good, clear signage.

Build Awareness

1. Hold a book fair. Invite a bookstore to set up shop and sell books for one or two Sundays. You select the books you want to be purchased – (quality control). ☺ Folks can buy a book, be the first to take it home to read it and then donate to library.
2. Make your library a welcoming place! Have library procedures clearly defined and posted. Create comfortable places to read, study, browse.
3. Let it be known that you as a library committee are available for book reviews, story hours, or a whole gamut of activities that could promote the library.
4. Write an annual report and submit to church year book. Let the congregation see that you are busy supplying new materials to the congregation. In the report, explain how the library is used and your hopes and dreams for the coming year. Include a personal anecdote or a quote from library patron.
5. Know your books! It is difficult to “sell” something with which you are not familiar. Read, skim, browse the shelves!

Promote Via Print

1. Have a regular column/corner in your church newsletter. Include short reviews, quotes from church members about their reaction to a book, top ten list, etc.
2. Wish List! Always have a neat, updated list of materials you would like to have added to the library. Be specific. Ask folks to purchase these items in honor of a person, birthday, special occasion or as a memorial book.
3. Put one liners in the church bulletin about the benefits of reading and books. And yes, they can be punny!

4. Remind your congregation of why you exist. What is your mission/ministry? Say it in a variety of ways and in a variety of places and times. If you don't have a mission statement or statement of purpose, get to work.

Increase Interaction

1. Hold a library "open house." This could be during a special service, celebration, promotion month. Make sure you have "specials" happening during the open house – a library game or scavenger hunt, displays of new books, prizes.
2. Invite children, youth or adults to create art projects that will be on display in or near the library. Ask them to design book jackets for children's books that are without one.
3. Round up all the new persons who have recently begun attending your church. Meet with them in the library and give them a tour, promote! Ask them what they like to read.
4. Take books to shut-ins, or ask for a volunteer to deliver books along with a short visit. Read to those who are no longer able to read to themselves.
5. Start a book club! Many books now include discussion questions.
6. Invite various groups and classes from the church (all ages) to visit the library on a particular Sunday. Do some promotion, a quick book talk, explain library procedures, ask for suggestions.
7. Encourage your pastor to include illustrations and stories from books from the church library. Also – if the pastor mentions a book in a sermon, purchase it.
8. Invite children (or all ages) to design bookmarks. They can be created by hand or on computer. Print them **ALL** and have them ready for distribution on a special Sunday, or tuck in church bulletins. Do not just stick in mail boxes – person to person contact is best! Another idea would be pass the bookmarks out during a children's feature time in worship, when you talk about the library and share a story. Children could take a stack of bookmarks back to the pews and hand them out to all.
9. Pack up a basket of books and visit the Sunday School rooms (all ages, with teacher's permission) and spend 5-8 minutes book talking. Try to select books that relate to the lesson or a relevant concern in the church or community.
10. Invite yourself to meetings! Check with the chair ahead of time and make a brief, fun and interesting presentation about the library. Find a way to link the ministry of the church library with the committee.
11. Have a snack and a drink in (or out in the hall) the library once a month.

Provide Programming

1. Invite pre-school children to come in for a story-hour. Introduce them to books, book care and talk to them about the library being an important part of the church. In the summer, you could invite kindergarten or primary grade children as well.
2. Sponsor a family video night. Show videos from your library collection, serve popcorn.

3. Sponsor a family games night. Play games that come from your library collection.
4. Conduct a summer reading program. This could be for all ages – not just children. The children might want to challenge the adults. Wrap it up with a party, a read-a-thon, special treats.

Resources

Upstart: reading promotion from Highsmith (hundreds of posters, bookmarks, etc.)
www.highsmith.com Click on Upstart or call: 1-800-448-4887

Ideas compiled by Marlene Bogard, *March, 2004*

Conference Resource Library Director
2517 N. Main St. North Newton, KS 67117
316-283-6300 crlib@mennowdc.org
www.mennowdc.org - our on-line catalog