

FALL FESTIVAL FOLLOW-UP PLAN

Introduction

Many churches host a fall festival as an alternative to Halloween and a way to attract people in the community to the church. However, most churches fail to fully leverage the event to get the most out of it because they don't have a follow-up strategy. Taking a few minutes to think through how follow up before the event begins can lead to more people returning to the church as a result of the fall festival event efforts. This resource will help you get started. Use this as a starting point to think through your follow-up strategy.



Step 1: Collect Their Info

You want to have a free fall festival event so people will show up, but you still need to collect people's information if you want to be able to follow up with them. So think of a clever way to collect information that isn't creepy or threatening.

There are a variety of good ways to do this including:

- **Do a big give away** (make sure it really is something big that people would want to give you their info). A big screen TV? A Playstation? A 4-wheeler? A new car? Go as big as your budget will allow and have an abundance mentality.

Remember, if your follow-up effort eventually results a few tithing families joining your church, you can afford to make a big investment here (not to mention the spiritual ROI of getting new folks in your church).

- **Offer refreshments**, a free hotdog/hamburger meal, etc. and require folks to fill out a registration card to get their meal tickets.
- **Give away a toy to each kid** in exchange for the parent's information (again, make sure it's a good enough toy that the child wants it badly enough for the parent to give their info).
- Ask folks to **complete a survey**, etc.

Step 2: Send An Email Sequence

Now that you have their information and the event is done, one of the best ways to follow up is by serving families with a value-add email sequence. We recommend something like the following:

Email 1: 2 Days After the Event

Send a simple thanks for attending. Resist the urge to include info about your church (except for a phone number and email address at

the bottom) nor be promotional at all in this email. The only purpose is to let them know you are glad they were there.

Email 2: 7 Days After the Event

Send a resource for their family. A good one is “**5 Fun Fall Activities for Your Family**” that includes things like local pumpkin farms to visit, upcoming Christmas exhibits, off-the-radar Santa photo spots, etc. Make sure to keep it local and again, resist the urge promote the church in this email (your big promo is coming in an email soon...but first you’ve got to earn their trust).

Email 3: 14 Days After the Event

Send another resource for their family. A good one is “**5 Engaging Questions for the Commute to Sports/Dance Practice**” that includes thought-provoking (but not overly spiritual) questions parents can ask as conversation starters with their kids.

Email 4: 21 Days After the Event

Casually introduce your church — **highlighting your children’s ministry**. This is your chance to briefly talk about the church, introduce your staff, give them your vision & mission, etc. Make an effort to **focus on how your church can benefit them** as opposed to how great your church is.

Avoid the temptation to over-hype your church. A better approach is to come across as real and authentic...a place where they can belong and discover. Use what you know about your audience (they have kids or grandkids and are willing to go to community events) to introduce your church as someone who can meet their felt-needs. Keep it short, but let them get to know your church’s personality a bit.

Email 5: 28 Days After the Event

Send a resource for their family. We’re getting into the Christmas season, so a good one is a lighthearted, “**7 Ways to Survive Christmas Chaos**” or “**5 Christmas Dinner Conversation Starters**.”

If you do the Christmas Chaos piece, make sure you don't judge people for their materialism/consumerism (most people already feel this tension in their hearts...we don't need to beat them up for it). Instead, go with fun and creative ideas such as "Have a family Christmas movie night, decorate the tree together as a family, go Christmas caroling, etc." Get creative here and try to help them slow down and focus on relationships instead of the busyness.

Email 6: 30-35 Days After the Event

Now that you've provided them a ton of value, send a short email **inviting folks to your Christmas services**. Make this a personal invite as opposed to a flashy email full of graphics. Perhaps something heartfelt from your lead pastor. Let people know what they'll get from the service and what they can expect while they're there. And, of course, have a plan in place to follow-up with guests who show up.

Step 3: Hand Out An Invite Card

Make sure you have your upcoming message series, as well as your Christmas services, planned prior to your Fall Festival event. Have some small cards printed up (message series on one side, Christmas services on the other) with the info to hand out to people at the event.

Step 4: Send a Cool Gift Via Snail Mail

If you really want to impress your attendees with your follow-up efforts, send them a thank-you gift in the mail. Some ideas to get you started:

- A t-shirt for the kids (make it cool...resist the urge to put your church's logo on it).
- Goodies for the family from a local bakery. The fact that you're giving a local bakery some business is a big bonus (resist the urge to send homemade cookies from the nice lady in your congregation. She might have the cleanest kitchen in the world, but your guest

doesn't know that so the gift could come across as weird instead of making the impression you want).

- Something that promotes family fun (a frisbee, a bocce ball set, a board game or card game, etc.).
- A Christmas tree ornament (do NOT put your church logo on it).
- Dinner and a movie. Partner with a local pizza restaurant to print gift cards that you pay for after they're redeemed. Purchase Red-box free movie codes online and print it on a business card. Throw in a pack of individually-wrapped microwavable popcorn and you've got a winning gift.

Make a Big Impact With Your Follow-up

Use this plan as a starting point to wow your Fall Festival event attendees. Get creative and have fun. If you're going to go through the effort of having an event, you might as well make the extra effort of good follow-up.

