

Effective Communication: A Guide for Congregations

Setting up a Congregational Public Relations Committee

Recruit a chairperson and committee members

People who might be interested in serving on such a committee and who are a real asset include photographers, artists, writers, editors, graphic designers, videographers, calligraphers, journalists, or public relations professionals. However, the only real criterion for serving on a public relations committee is an interest in sharing the excitement of the Gospel with members, visitors and the community, and an ability to be reasonably articulate in writing or speaking.

As a committee, read your congregation's mission statement

What aspects of that statement could be fulfilled by a public relations committee?

Write a brief (one- or two-sentence) statement of purpose for your committee

Keep in mind that public relations covers a wide range of topics. One critical element which should be present in all topics, though, is that everything your committee does should foster a stronger sense of church identity, both among present members and among the community as a whole.

Example: The Public Relations Committee strives to ensure effective communication within St. Anywhere Lutheran Church and throughout its greater community by evaluation of communication needs, assistance to church committees, and projects of its own.

In light of the church mission statement and the committee statement of purpose, determine what your group's functions will be.

Will you oversee the church newsletter?

Will you handle all press releases and notices coming out of the church into the community?

Will you be responsible for the church bulletin boards and outdoor message boards?

Will you handle follow-up letters to people who sign your guest books or pew cards?

Will you act as a support committee for other committees of the church?

Decide from the start if you want to be the official "poster committee"

It's very easy to wind up making posters for everything in the church and not accomplishing any other actual public relations tasks.

Have a brainstorming session to pinpoint both long-term and short-term projects you might undertake

After six months of functioning, stop to analyze what you've done and how it fits with your statement of purpose

