



# The Grand Opening

## Program Suggestions

The Grand Opening Service is what we've all been working towards. Our role is to do everything within our ability; physically, spiritually and financially to prepare this service. But be encouraged that those things outside of our ability, that's God's space...the space for miracles!

### 1. The Invitation.

It is important that we use all kinds of avenues to invite people to attend this service. We can use the following avenues: social media, email, word-of-mouth, advertise on a popular blog and/or podcast, etc.

#### **Design invitation cards**

- The card should be designed for both social media and printing so some can be hand delivered.
- The appearance of the invitation card should be bright, cheerful, have a celebration theme to it and MUST be error free.

**The theme:** The theme is "Grand Opening of EMI Church Name"

- The sub-theme is "join the celebration"
- The content should answer who is invited, where, what time and why.
- The contact information should include contact information (include a person's name and phone #) and where to find more details i.e. Facebook, website, etc.

### 2. The Program

The content of the service should be prayerfully designed. Keep in mind, this is a special service with a special purpose and so will be designed slightly different from a regular church service. For example:

- The atmosphere of this service is celebration from beginning to end. Therefore, use praise music not worship (trust me on this).
- Make use of the creative arts in this service such as a short drama or dance.
- If at all possible, invite a prominent VIP to say a few words (5 minutes) on why they are happy a church is coming to their city. (The VIP can be the mayor, a businessperson, a community leader, professor, etc.)



- The sermon will be a short 15-minute energetic, inspiring homily focusing on vision casting, why we want to serve this city and what benefits Jesus brings to the city or community.

**Example Program:**

- Begin a video countdown clock 5 minutes before service and have background music playing.
- 2 minutes before service begins the worship singers move to the stage ready to begin.
- The moment the countdown clock hits zero the first praise song begins. The song must be upbeat praise. The worship leader leads the congregation by looking at them, smiling at them and encouraging them to stand, clap, raise their hands, etc. As leader, you are leading the people to praise, so don't close your eyes as this only closes you off from the people. Remember, this is praise, not worship. (Note: we do not use worship in the Grand Opening because there will be many guests, friends and relatives who are not Christian and do not know how to worship. Consequently, if we use worship it will exclude them and perhaps make them feel awkward. Worship, can be introduced in our regular services)
- Immediately following the first song move to a dramatic video introducing the church and our purpose
- Second praise song.

**The Welcome.** It is important to be friendly, have eye contact with the people and be fluent. Be sure to give a special welcome by name to any VIPs who may be attending. End by saying something like, "If you have come today because you are curious about who we are, then let me tell you that we are fun, friendly and flawed. We're not perfect but as best as we can we want to show you God's love in all that we say and do. If you've come today because you are looking for a church to call home, then welcome home! Let's pray..."

**The elements:** The elements you choose to be include in the program should be engaging, celebratory, practiced, professional and timed. There are many good things we may want to include, but you don't want it to run too long. It is better to leave people wanting more than have them wishing it would end.

The flow of the program should be seamless. Each element of the service should flow for one part to the other. This means that everyone who will take part in the program should know his or her part well and when they will do their part.

**The Ambiance:** Should create is a feeling of celebration. We can use pictures, decorations, lighting, handouts and the attitude of our people to create the feeling of celebration.

**The Equipment:** All equipment and visual aids should be checked and double-checked that they are in good working order. For example, check the mikes all work, anything that is battery operated



should have new batteries installed for that service. Videos should be played prior to service to make sure there are no issues.

### **3. The Call To Action**

This is the most important step in the Grand Opening service. Give attendees both the challenge and the opportunity to be a part of the Church. Make it part of the service so don't tell people to sign a sheet at the back of the church on their way out but rather, give them a card to sign, give them a moment to pray, and a moment to sign then collect their cards. Give choices on the card which could include: 1) I'm ready to be a part of this mission, 2) I'm thinking about it and 3) I am unable to be a part of this mission.

### **4. The Social Time**

It has been said that people will come back to a church if they feel they can make friends there. So the social time is the opportunity to talk to people. Equip everyone with at least 5 conversational questions and encourage everyone on the team to interact with the new attendees. Make sure as many guests as possible receive a personal touch from you. (See S2 The New Guest System p 40-44) To facilitate the social time, provide snacks and beverages. The snacks and beverages should be high quality and tasty. Be creative and display the snacks and beverages in a beautiful and inviting presentation.

### **5. The Follow-Up.**

It is important that we then follow up with everyone who came to the event. To do this you will create 3 different emails: The first email will go to people who said they couldn't commit to the church. This email will thank them for attending, state we're sad they cannot attend regularly, but we were so happy for their support at our Grand Opening service. The second email will go to those who are thinking about it. This email will thank them for attending our event, we understand they are not ready but thank them for considering us and being honest, we will not be bugging you but would like to send you the occasional email when we have an event or a sermon series we think you might be interested in. The third email goes out to all those who are ready to commit. This email will thank them for attending the event, excited that they are ready to call this church their home, invite them to a personal 'get-to-know-you' coffee evening.

After the Grand Opening service, follow the S2: The New Guest Program Manual to follow up with guests.



## **6. Prepare For The Next Sunday**

Have a time to thank and praise the Lord. Pray for the next week then begin to plan for the next Sunday. Be sure to review what went right, what went wrong and what can be improved from the grand opening service.

After the Grand Opening Service, now begin to follow the S1: The Sunday Service Manual.

