

10 essentials to prepare your church website for Easter

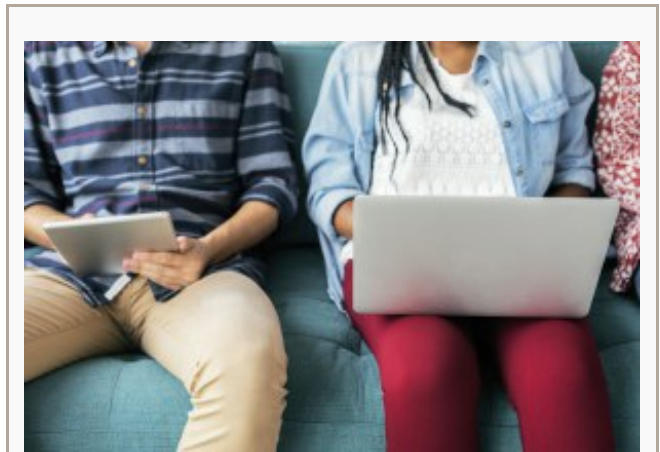
 effectivechurch.com/prepare-your-church-for-easter-guests/

Yvon Prehn

3/9/2017

With the importance of digital information to people today, it is incredibly important that your website be ready for Easter or any special event. Before they meet your welcoming people, have fun at children's events or hear your challenging sermon, chances are they will go to your website. In large measure, whether they visit your physical church or not, may in large measure depend on what they find on your site.

Unchurched people visit church websites for the same reason they visit the website of any secular company—they are checking you out. They see an advertisement (your Easter invitation) and then go to the website to find out the details: who you are, what you are selling, how easy is it to find out information and get answers, if you are worth a live visit.



Unchurched people will check out your website if they get an invitation to your Easter service. And it won't be to listen to your praise music or admire your inspiring graphics. Here are some things to consider.

Potential customers form an opinion about a company by their experience on the website. If a company has not updated its website in months, if links don't work, if the website is filled with splashy images but little real information, if all the terms are insider jargon (whether it's about a product or a church), if emails are not responded to quickly, a potential customer most like won't care about learning any more about the company, let alone visiting.

Keep in mind that the visitor you sent an Easter mailing to doesn't know how nice your people are or how powerful the preaching is, or how the music will inspire them until they come to your church. Your website is what often stands between your invitation and their response.

Here are 10 suggestions to make your website one that will result in a visit to your church

1. Answer the "what's in it for me?" for your visitor

Sometimes it merely takes rewording to make the events you're doing appeal to visitors. For example instead of an insider announcement such as "traditional Kid's Kove Easter Morning" say sometime like: *"Join us for our Giant Easter Egg Hunt, Muffins & Juice for All Children of our community! Parents are invited to free coffee and donuts while the kids have fun."*

Make it clear that your events aren't just for members only and there is no obligation to attend.

2. Provide clear explanations of the simple details of what you do—especially for special events

Make the service times, parking directions, child care and programs all easy to find. This is especially important for an event like Easter where you may have totally different service times than your regular ones. If you aren't clear and you don't change your usual times on your website, it can be very confusing.

Answer the question of what to wear if it matters at your church or even if it's like churches in S. California where anything other than a wet swim suit is pretty much OK. A bit dressed up or totally comfortable—let people know.

3. Provide updated and complete pictures and bios of your staff

People want to know who your leaders are: their background, education, why they do what they do. In an age when almost all business leaders have Facebook pages, blogs, Twitter & other social media accounts and almost everything else you can imagine for greatest exposure, for your church leaders to not have at least an updated photo and complete bio on your website does not communicate a positive image of your staff or church.

4. Link to staff blogs and social media accounts

Visitors today expect to get to know church leaders through social media. If the church leader is not able to do this for him or herself, as is often the case when the leader is a baby-boomer who went to seminary before the days of the personal computer, assign a "web buddy" to update or create this content. This is a wonderful expression of how we can serve and support one another in the church.

If you give out staff email addresses (and you should) be sure staff is committed to answering them. There is no shame in having someone answer your emails if you can't do it and if it is clear who the message is from. It can be a disaster if you post an email address, people contact the church, and no one responds.

If your staff prefers to answer text messages, give contact information for that.

5. Be sure ALL ministries have descriptions and updated schedules

Without this very basic information, your church will not be taken seriously by visitors or seekers. Think about it: would you do business with a company that did not tell you when it was open; what products or services it offered or anything about the staff who can help in various areas? Ask yourself what you would want to know about a church and its programs and be sure you have complete information on the website. Children's, men's, women's, singles, programs for teenagers and young adults, music, outreach, missions—if your church has it, explain it on the website.

6. Add life-skill how-tos to show you care about more than Sunday Morning

For children's ministry, you could have practical parenting tips, a Q & A section hosted by your children's pastor, fun-time suggestions or activities for parents and children. You can attach blogs from experts in the church on life-skill topics, finances, child-raising, marriage tips, budgeting help, link to other helpful sites, whatever you can think of to connect with people who are looking for the answers to life.

A fun way to do this for Easter is to have on your website a recipe for Resurrection Cookies, which is a fun way to teach children (and parents) about Easter. [CLICK HERE](#) to go to a free download of it.

7. Be sure to have a clear explanation of the Christian faith

It is astounding to me how few church websites have information on what it means to be a Christian, how one becomes a Christian, and links to either pages on the website or to other sites that answer questions about the Christian faith. Even less have a link either email or phone to contact for more information or questions. Check out your site—what do you have on it in these areas? If you are like most churches, you've got some homework to do. Your statement of faith doesn't



An Easter Goodie with a Message from the Church Bunny

Chocolate is wonderful and the great goodies of this time of year are part of the fun, but why not take kid's love of goodies and use it for a fun teaching time?

You can do that with...

Resurrection Cookies

Making these cookies allows you to act out and discuss the Easter story with children in your church, family, or any group.

On the next page are the directions for making Resurrection Cookies and the Bible verses to read with them.

This is wonderful! Handout to give to parents and Sunday School teachers for a special activity during the Easter Session.

You could also consider making it something for people to give to neighbors. If doing that, include information about your church and invite them to an Easter event at church.

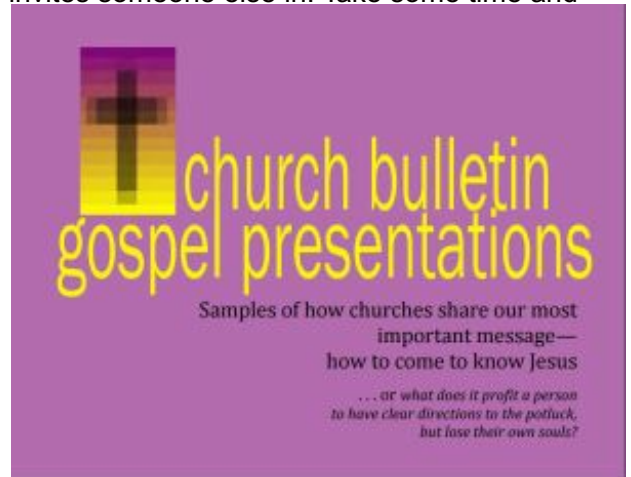
You can make as many copies as you want and pass it around at church, mom's groups, Sunday School classes or small groups.

Following is the recipe and the verses that go with it.

The Church Bunny says,
Make cookies with a friend so they can learn about Jesus' love for them!

count—that is what you believe, and though it is important, it rarely invites someone else in. Take some time and create sections that clearly share your faith and invite others to join you.

For an e-book on gospel presentations, [CLICK HERE](#). Though this primarily illustrates gospel presentations for church bulletins, you can use the same ideas for your website.



8. Answer the special questions Easter brings up

Have questions and answers about life after death, the resurrection, many of the questions about Jesus, why he had to go to the cross and what his death accomplished. You could have videos of your pastor answering these questions; you could have podcasts of Q & As; you could have annotated links to apologetic websites or to other videos that explain the Easter message.

In the midst of doing special things for Easter, don't forget to be incredibly clear about your church traditions for Easter. Explain them, keeping in mind that many of the traditions that are treasured activities many mean nothing to a seeker. Be sure your guests know who the events are for, e.g. some events for children may have age limitations, some actions, such as churches who celebrate communion on Easter may only allow it for members. Nothing is worse than making a visitor feel like a total outsider.

9. Have a section titled “What we do when it isn't Easter”

Invite people back for your regular service, at the regular times and to ongoing ministries. You might even put on your site a section about, "If you miss Easter—come next week!" Let people know what you do on a regular basis and let them know they are welcome.

It is a lot of work—but the hours you spend praying for wisdom that the Lord will give you eyes to see the needs of the people in your community and the many more hours you spend updating your site will be worth it when you meet those needs through your website and help people connect with your church and ultimately with Jesus.

10. Don't be shy about presenting the spiritual benefits

You have the words of eternal life. Following is one message from a collection of materials you can use for your Easter outreach, website or invitations. [CLICK HERE](#) to go to the messages in the collection. You have permission to use these in any way you want without attribution or links or anything else distracting. On your website be clear that you are inviting them for an opportunity to explore the Christian faith. To do that, you can include something like this on your site:

Easter is about so much more than you can image

What do you think your life would be like if you believed in the Jesus?

Boring? Constricted? An endless series of don't do this or that?

Intellectual suicide?

We don't think so because. . . .

Christians claim that Jesus conquered death.

If that's true—imagine what it would mean to become a friend and follower of Jesus, someone, totally and eternally ALIVE?

Someone who spoke and the worlds, galaxies, stars and starfish, came into being?

Someone who, when he walked the earth, played with children, was a great party guest, healed sick people, loved enough to die for all of us.

Challenging, exciting, never-ending and never alone—more than you can ever imagine is the life you can discover this Easter, in Jesus.

Sometimes we forget how extraordinary it is to know Jesus. He is forever fascinating. We need to let our guests know we have much more for them than one wonderful Sunday of fun for kids and great music.

At Easter people will have a chance to learn more about Jesus. The Holy Spirit is out there convicting people of their need for Him, on your website, as you prepare for Easter, let them know answers can be found at your church.

Ed. notes: Like our related article on website preparation for Easter ([As you prepare for Easter: four necessary things to do with your website to make it ministry effective](#)), this article applies not only to Easter, but to every event. Just like when we know we are having guests, we clean up our homes, when you know you'll have guests at your church, make sure your website is ready for them. Please check out the other article (click on the title above) for additional help on making your website an effective ministry tool.