

Sportsmen's Night or Outdoor Night

Compiled By Chad & Marsha Schearer

What is a church outdoor night?

Outdoor Nights can be used as a community outreach of the local church. There are many sportsmen and sportswomen in your community who are hesitant to step into a church on Sunday morning. Although these same people think nothing of coming to church to hear about hunting and fishing which allows us to present them with the plan of salvation. Our main objective is to be fishing for men and hunting for souls. Outdoor Nights whether at a church or in a rented meeting place allows your church the unique opportunity to witness to your community. Outdoor Nights can also be used to invite other churches to attend in your area.

Should we serve food?

Wild game feeds are always a good drawing point. You could have successful sportsmen in your church furnish wild game. Any type of Pot-Luck or a Chili Cook-off is a good main course. If wild game is not available, grilled hamburgers or BBQ works great, too. It's great to have the ladies be involved in the meal-planning, desserts, etc... This also allows the wives of sportsmen to be able to show their support to their husband's interests and hobbies. Being able to have several food lines for guest to go through will expedite things much better. Be sure to communicate to your food prep & servers how much time you have allowed for this part of the event. This is where many get behind on time and it throws the entire event off time.

How do we obtain door prizes?

In order to obtain door prizes for your Outdoor Night approach local businesses and tell them what you are going to do. Inform them of any special guest speaker in the hunting industry. It's best to always talk to the manager. Sporting good stores, bait shops, hardware stores, local restaurants, K-Mart, Walmart, Target, Sportsman's Warehouse, and Cabela's are just a few places to ask. I've seen these places donate coolers, fishing poles, caps, t-shirts, camouflage clothing, game calls, fishing lures, knives, sharpeners, arrows, broadheads, maps, local restaurant with a certificate for dinner for two, and other misc. articles. Be polite and tell them it is going to be used for a door prize and that their business will get credit during the drawing. You could give a few complimentary tickets to the business. Invite them to come to the Outdoor Night. Once you have one donation tell the next business that a certain business has already donated a certain item. We have a few hunting companies that we work with that offer discount rates for these events. You may also have church members that want to purchase items or donate the finances to make these purchases.

To decorate or not to decorate?

Decorations always add to the Outdoor Night, but are not mandatory. Some ideas are use mounted animals and birds. You could use an “Outdoor Theme” with tents, fence posts, a log fire scene etc... Have table decorations or paper targets for place settings. If you don't have access to any wildlife mounts ask a local taxidermist to display some of their mounts. Tell them they can put their names under the mounts with their business cards. This will also give you a chance to invite them to the Outdoor Night. They may even allow you to put up an advertisement poster in their shop. Decorations always depend on available space and the amount of time you have to set up and take down.

Should we advertise?

If you are going to use the Outdoor Night as an outreach to the community the community needs to know about it. Encourage your members to tell their co-workers. Your church members can be your best advocates to spread the word. So be sure they understand the special event. Challenge them to bring the unsaved. Put up advertisement posters in sporting goods stores, grocery stores, western wear, feed stores, gas stations, and at the places that donate door prizes. Make sure to get permission prior to hanging up poster. Use bulletin inserts and ask other churches in your area to use these inserts, or make special announcement. Public access television and some commercial television stations allow you to advertise your non-profit group upcoming events for no charge. Radio is also effective but can become costly. Contact your local newspaper sports editor or outdoor editor and present them with a written press release on the event including all vital information. We can provide a press release, and also help you with photos to be printed on flyers. Chad also has done phone in interviews with radio and newspaper too. Our family also can provide a short “commercial-like” video clip presentation to play for a media announcement if you use media at your church. We also encourage you to have a “mini-invite” like a business size card with event name, date, and where to go or whom to call for more information! This has been a huge success.

The Program Itself

The schedule of the program is up to the church setting the Outdoor Night. Three hours is usually the estimated time it takes to eat, have drawings, special speaker, and closing remarks. If you try to pack in too many things or too many speakers you lose your audiences attention, especially if you just fed them a big dinner. Remember you want them to have a positive experience. This may be their first time in your church and we don't want it to be the last. Chad has a very powerful power-point presentation, which leads into the plan of salvation for a closing. We offer as much assistance in planning this event to make your Outdoor Night 100% successful. Advise workers to remain quiet, no movement, no clean up, kitchen noise etc. when the spiritual application begins and the plan of Salvation is being given.

Prior to the starting of the main presentation be sure to announce where the restroom facilities are and given ample time for guests to use prior to starting. Also have an

announcement request all cell phones to be put on quiet. If many children are attending you may want them sitting with their parents, or just give a kind reminder to pay close attention. Chad & Marsha also have special things they use to help with this matter also! This just helps from any distractions the devil will try to use to disrupt given the Gospel,

Media & Equipment

Audio/Visual Equipment needed will be:

LCD projector

projection screen

VGA cord

audio jack to connect to speaker's laptop,

1- wireless lavalier mic

1- hand held mic

1- 4-6 ft. table on stage or platform

1- 4-6 ft. table to be put at back where attendees exit.

Helpful tips to have a successful Outdoor Night

1. Have designated greeters from your church.
2. Advertise, Advertise, Advertise
3. Get supervisors or team leaders for each department and have planning meetings. Be sure to communicate and keep unity. Remember the main cause of this event is to tell others of Christ.
4. At Registration Table you should have someone friendly to visitors and make them feel welcomed and comfortable. Explain the night or have a bulletin to do so.
5. Be creative.
6. Have cards printed to be filled out for drawing of door prizes. This also gives the church all the information needed to follow-up on visitors. You will need a separate card to be passed out after presentation to have opportunity to mark salvation and more information about church etc.
7. Start on time.
8. Have the main drawings at the end of the night. But to help with time you could draw some smaller door prizes throughout the meal prior to main presentation.
9. Activities that can be done prior to starting time for those who arrive early.
Examples:
Jar with shells in it to guess how many?
Piece of wood with several caliber bullets glued on it to guess the caliber?
Animal hides hanging to guess the animal?
Papers on table to guess the animal print or trivia questions.....
Could also use media power point with questions.....