

## GREAT SERVICE AND OUTREACH IDEAS

### **M&M's MEAN "MISSION MONEY"**

On a Sunday morning, hand out tubes of M&M's to church members as they exit after a service. Tell everyone that instead of selling candy, your group is giving it away. As you hand out the candy, encourage people to take the tubes home, eat the candy, and then fill the empty tubes with quarters (a tube will hold about \$14 worth of quarters). Tell church members that M&M's stands for "missions money," and ask them to pray for your missions trip every time they add quarters to the tubes. When a tube is filled, a church member can return it to your group. Your group's time and effort will be minimal with this fund-raiser; plus, you'll have church members praying for your missions trip every time they see or eat M&M's.

### **CARDBOARD CAMPOUT**

To sensitize youth to the feelings of the homeless, organize a "cardboard camp-out" in the church parking lot. The youth meet on a Friday night. Each one is given an assortment of cardboard boxes, newspapers, and duct tape, with which they have to build a shelter for themselves. The group builds fires in metal trash barrels to keep warm, and on every hour, there is a devotional study on such topics as faith in action (from the book of James) or the parable of the sheep and the goats from Matthew 25.

### **TEACHER APPRECIATION BANQUET**

Each youth adopts a teacher at his or her high school and personally invites him or her to a banquet held at the church. The banquet is simply to say thanks for the work their teachers do. It is not overtly evangelistic, but it was designed to show that teachers can, and should, expect something different from their Christian students. This event goes a long way in improving relationships between the church and community.

### **VALENTINES "LOVE YOUR PARENTS" BANQUET**

A "Love Your Parents" banquet will generate a positive response from parents. The key is in the planning.

Personal invitations. Encourage your kids to invite their parents to the banquet. A formal banquet invitation will also provide a positive motivation to attend.

A quick and easy meal. The food served at the banquet should be easy enough for students to prepare and serve and tasty enough for parents to enjoy. Lasagna and salad are good choices. Add ice cream with cookies for dessert.

Entertainment with a purpose. Have students perform a short skit, sing devotional songs as a group, or read a personal poem during the banquet. A video of students' baby or family pictures is also a plus. Get as many teens as possible involved in the production.

Storytelling. By far, the most attention-getting part of the banquet involves students' own stories of love and spiritual growth. At one banquet, students hid notes of appreciation for their parents in the balloons used for decoration. During dessert, each parent popped a balloon and read the message out loud. At another banquet, a few teens chose to write letters to their parents that their youth

minister read aloud. Their names were withheld until the end of each letter. A “Love Your Parents” banquet will have a transformative effect on the families in your church.

Double the impact: Have the banquet on Sunday afternoon; then request that parents stay for worship services, where young people lead the worship service. This provides a way for students to introduce non-Christian parents to the church.

### **GOLDEN AGE BANQUET**

Have a yearly banquet for senior citizens in your church. Use these suggestions to build your program:

1. Use many of the same principles as the “Love Your Parents” Banquet above.
2. Pass out a “most likely to . . .” sheet to all senior citizens. Have them fill it out as they arrive. Collect these quickly, and have a student read some of the funny ones.
3. Have a student devotional with prayer, singing, and scripture reading.
4. Have young people prepare a story about “What I appreciate about the older members of our church is . . .” and read it to guests.
5. Have students go out and do video interviews of senior citizens in their homes to show at the banquet. Ask questions like, “What was your first date like? Who did you go with? What did you do for fun when you were a teenager? How long have you attended our church? What’s your fondest memory?”
6. Have young people gather as a group and sing devotional songs for the attendees.
7. Close by having everyone hold hands and sing “A Common Love.”

### **PUBLIC SERVANTS APPRECIATION DAY**

Select public servants to thank for their contributions to the community. Some examples are:

Police Department  
Fire Department  
City or County Hall  
District Attorney’s Office  
Paramedics and 911 Operators  
Chamber of Commerce  
Community Shelters  
National Guard  
Library  
City Maintenance Workers  
School Janitors  
Sheriff’s Department

A good format is to honor them on Sunday afternoon at 5:00 with a meal and a gift (such as a Bible to carry in their pocket or devotional book), and ask them to stay for evening services that young people lead.