

50 Ways Your Church Can Bless Your Community Through Literacy



In the church, ministry through literacy can be done at many levels and with various age groups. The body of Christ is a powerful group of people with diverse skills, passions, and gifts. Each member can take part in assisting and equipping other members in the areas of literacy and education.

1. Pray – Churches large and small can pray. Not every church can host a family reading fair on the Border or begin a program to teach English to speakers of other languages. But every church can pray for its community.
 - **Evangelical Immigration Table**
<http://evangelicalimmigrationtable.com/2013/05/evangelical-community-launches-%E2%80%98pray-for-reform%E2%80%99-campaign/>
2. Put the lens of literacy on everything the church does and make education a priority in your church. Encourage church leadership to act on this.
3. Select and equip an *Education Advocate* in your church.
 - **BGCT to Encourage Hispanic Education by Dr. Gus Reyes**
<http://texasbaptists.org/2009/03/bgct-to-encourage-hispanic-education/>
4. Encourage biblical literacy in a variety of ways—through preaching, scripture reading, Sunday school, Bible-drill, children’s and youth programs, and other venues.
 - **Champion Forest Baptist Church, Houston, TX**
<http://www.biblical-literacy.com/about/>
 - **Bible Literacy Among Baptists . . . , The Baptist Standard**
<http://www.baptiststandard.com/resources/archives/46-2006-archives/4553-bible-literacy-among-baptists-in-decline-some-educators-fear>

5. Urge Sunday school teachers to assist at-risk readers by connecting families with community and online resources.
6. Encourage teachers and retired teachers in your church to work with struggling readers.
7. Provide parenting enrichment classes and resources to equip and strengthen families.
8. Teach parents the importance of reading to children starting at birth. Give early literacy resources to parents of newborns.
 - **Literacy Connexus**
<http://www.literacyconnexus.org>
 - **Sixty Second Parent**
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2HThtiOkD2k>
 - ***Family Literacy as a Church Ministry, Baylor University***
<http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/145345.pdf>
9. Encourage families to read together using Bible stories and quality children's literature.
10. Participate in ***Books for the Border and Beyond***, building bookcases and providing home libraries for families in need.
 - **Literacy Connexus**
<http://www.literacyconnexus.org/newsletters/newsletter-archives/>
11. Adapt the family reading fair concept in other settings where families lack books at home.
 - **Literacy Connexus**
<http://www.literacyconnexus.org/newsletters/newsletter-archives/>
 - ***Building Bookcases and Community Coalitions* by Dr. Lester Meriwether**
<http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/newsletr/jun09/jun09o.html>
12. Provide a place in your children's department to display books for children to take, enjoy, and pass on.
13. Ask church members to donate books for children in need, in place of other gift-exchange Christmas parties.
14. Organize a yearly back-to-school fair to provide backpacks and school supplies to families in need. Publicize through your benevolence ministry or by delivering flyers door-to-door.
 - **Project Apple Tree, Belton, TX**
<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs134/1101322396681/archive/1112100162202.html>
15. Encourage reading and creativity by providing education workshops, and conducting family literacy nights with dramatic readings, games, crafts and story re-enactments.
16. Train children to be literacy ambassadors by building bookcases, collecting books, and by raising their awareness of the literacy needs in their community.

- **Books for the Border and Beyond**
<http://www.literacyconnexus.org/get-involved/books-for-the-border/>
- **Alliance United Methodist Church, Fort Worth, TX**
<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs134/1101322396681/archive/1114094678921.html>

17. Establish a church library and use it as a hub of literacy activity, in traditional or non-traditional ways.

- **19 Promotion Ideas for the Church Library by the National Church Library Association**
http://www.churchlibraries.org/Docs/19PromoIdeas_2_.pdf

18. Convert an unused room in your church to a **Literacy Connexus Book Bank**.

19. Develop a mentoring program in your church's youth and/or children's ministry.

- **New Mission Field Bridged by Mentoring by Kaitlin Warrington**
<http://texasbaptists.org/2011/11/new-mission-field-bridged-by-mentoring/>

20. Provide tutoring and homework help for children and youth.

- **H.O.P.E Tutoring Center**
<http://www.hopetutoring.com/locations/>
- **North American Missions Board (NAMB) Literacy Ministry**
<http://www.namb.net/namb1cbvideo.aspx?id=8589935992>

21. Create an *Adopt a Youth* program in which each church family prays for, encourages, and assists a youth—including support of educational enrichment and goal setting.

22. Celebrate educational achievement by recognizing graduates.

- **GED Graduate Celebrates with Entire Church Family, Daily Progress, Jacksonville, TX**
<http://jacksonvilleprogress.com/local/x964876958/PROGRESS-REPORT-GED-graduate-celebrates-with-entire-church-family>

- **Local Churches, Families Celebrate Graduates, East Texas Review**
<http://www.easttexasreview.com/local-churches-families-celebrate-graduates/>

23. Encourage teaching as a career choice. Honor teachers in your congregation.

24. Visit college campuses with youth groups. Offer church-based scholarships.

25. Offer encouragement and mentoring to high school dropouts. Assist them in re-engaging in school or enrolling in vocational and alternative education.

26. Adopt a college student.

27. Begin an English as a Second Language (ESL) ministry.

- **Literacy Connexus**
<http://www.literacyconnexus.org/get-involved/church-and-community/>
- **FBC Conroe, TX**
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Np7TO3og-A&feature=share>
- **FriendSpeak**
<http://www.friendspeak.org/about-case-studies.php>

28. Provide citizenship education.

29. Begin an adult literacy program helping adults with reading and GED preparation.

- ***I Smile, God is at Work at Calvary Baptist Church, McAllen, Texas* by Gerald Davis**
<http://texasbaptists.org/2012/06/i-smile-god-is-at-work-at-calvary-baptist-church-mcallen-texas/>
- **First Baptist Church, Garland, TX**
<http://www.fbcgarland.org/fbg/ged>
- **Texas Baptists Church GED Prep Sites**
<http://texasbaptists.org/education-discipleship/hispanic-education-initiative/ged-prep-u/church-ged-prep-sites/>

30. Offer specialized classes in computer proficiency and financial education.

- **LINC North Texas**
<http://lincnt.org/what-we-do/financial-literacy/>

31. Promote health education and provide classes for students and adults.

32. Provide health screening, medication management and other age appropriate education to senior adults.

33. Encourage ethnic diversity in your church and awareness of the accompanying needs of non-English speakers and readers.

- ***Dallas Churches Welcome Refugees, CBN News***
<http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2012/August/Heart-of-Texas-Dallas-Churches-Welcome-Refugees/>
- **Texas Baptists Intercultural Ministry**
<http://texasbaptists.org/age-culture/intercultural-ministry/>
- **The Melting Pot, Fellowship Bible Church, Dallas, TX**
<http://fellowshipdallas.org/missions/local/the-melting-pot/>

34. Host a Literacy Connexus ESL teachers' training.

- **Literacy Connexus**

Around the community, ministry takes a variety of shapes. By sharing resources, teaching skills, and reducing conflict, the church becomes the presence of Christ to the community. Consider the following wide range of expressions.



35. Plan and execute a family reading fair in an apartment complex, school, or neighborhood near your church.

- **Hillcrest Baptist Church, Cedar Hill, TX**
<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs094/1101322396681/archive/1111146350446.html>
- **FBC Copperas Cove, TX**
<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs094/1101322396681/archive/1109698049251.html>

36. Conduct a book drive for a homeless shelter. Support book distributions (such as *Reading is Fundamental*) for at-risk schools.

- **Reading is Fundamental**
<http://www.rif.org> and <http://www.bookpeopleunite.org/>

37. Partner with schools by asking “How may we help?” Participate in local *Adopt a School* programs.

- ***Serving the Schools* Podcast with Literacy Connexus**
<http://texasbaptists.org/opening-doors/serving-the-schools/>
- ***Will You Cross the Street?* By Literacy Connexus**
<http://texasbaptists.org/2012/09/will-you-and-your-church-cross-the-street/>
- ***Hill Country Bible Church Austin Earns Statewide Honors for Literacy Partners*, Leander ISD News**
<http://www.leanderisd.org/preview.aspx?name=news2&a=272>
- **Read2Win!**
<http://www.tarrantnet.org/read2win/about-read2win/>

38. Honor, celebrate and support teachers at a local school.

- **Preston Trail Community Church, TX, teacher appreciation video**
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rp7aBEzdDzQ>
- **La Grange FBC, TX**
<http://texasbaptists.org/2012/09/starting-the-school-year-off-right/>

39. Support public and school libraries by volunteering to read to children and/or shelve books.

40. Collaborate with other churches to minister to both the literacy and nutritional needs of children in the community.

- **Agape Baptist Church in Cleburne, TX**
<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs134/1101322396681/archive/1113722782830.html>

41. Participate in community, state, and national enrichment programs for at-risk children or youth.

- **Kids Hope**
<http://www.kidshopeusa.org/>
- **Read 2 Win**
<http://www.tarrantnet.org/read2win/about-read2win/>

42. Provide summer enrichment for students and families in partnership with a local school which could include literacy activities, shared reading and book distributions.



At the capitol (or other governmental setting), advocacy is action. It simply means speaking up for a cause, a need, or an issue. In a democracy we have the opportunity to change the system in order to help the most persons.

43. Encourage awareness of issues that relate to education. Know the issues and understand the legislative process—at all levels. Support thoughtful reform of public education.

- **Christian Life Commission**
<https://texasbaptists.org/clc/>
- **Texas Education Agency (TEA)**
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index.aspx>

44. Contact elected officials via e-mail and phone to express your voice.

- **Texas Legislator online**
<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/>

45. Attend a meeting of your local school board.

46. Register voters—especially among youth at church. *Elected officials pay attention to voters.*

- ***How to Host a Church Voter-Registration Drive, Focus On The Family***
<http://www.mafamily.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/How-to-Host-a-Church-Voter-Registration-Drive.pdf>
- ***Church Voter Register, Restore America***
<http://restoreamerica.org/take-action/church-voter-registration/>

47. Advocate for public education as a basic human right.

48. Encourage adequate funding through appropriate measures--not punitive means such as gambling.

- ***Texas Baptists Calling to End State Lotto, Houston Chronicle***
<http://blog.chron.com/believetornot/2012/04/texas-baptists-calling-to-end-state-lotto/>

49. Speak up for universal, early, and quality preschool education for all children.

50. _____ (Share your idea with us! What is your church doing to bless your community through literacy and education?)