

Make Invitations

Toward a Healthy Culture of Invitations

Always Making Invitations

Invitations happen throughout ministry. Your context is unique so you can't always copy other people's invitations. A healthy culture of invitation can help you practice generous hospitality and sustain you when inviting gets tough.

Jesus' Culture of Invitations

Jesus invited people to "come and see." He made invitations to unexpected people and invited his followers to healthy rhythms of rest and ministry (see Luke 19, Mark 2, Mark 6, and Luke 14). His love and compassion allowed him to confront areas of brokenness, idolatry, and pain in people's lives (see Mark 10 and John 4).

REFLECT

What is resonating with you from Jesus' example? Which of these invitations have you received from Jesus in the past? Which invitations is he inviting you to right now? Spend some time in prayer.

A Healthy Invitation Culture

9 Marks of an Unhealthy Invitation Culture	9 Marks of Highly Healthy Invitation Cultures
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers: Focusing so much on numbers that you lose sight of the people. Fatalism: Thinking God will magically make all the invitations himself. Ur-Ur-Urgency: Defaulting to demanding a response right away. Desperation: Panicking and begging people to come to your ministry. Shame: Believing something is wrong that causes us to need to make invitations. Anxious Fear: Making steps towards inviting, but then calling off the attempt at the last minute. Leaders Only: Invitations become announcements. People on the edges don't get invited. Self-Deception: Not being honest with yourself about how many invitations are healthy for you. Credit: Propping up your ego. Do you focus on yourself or the people you're serving? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Focus: Focusing on what would be most helpful for the people you're inviting. No Means No: Hear "No" and not freaking out. Knowing that we are not our ministry. Trust: God is the great inviter. His grace goes before all our invitational activity. Discerning: Aim to make the right invitations to the right people at the right time. A Well-Adjusted Attitude: Our invitations are characterized by hospitality, freedom, and joy. Disciples Who Disciple: We pass on what we've already received. Everyone Invites: Everyone has information, permission, and support to make invitations. Numbers: They can be helpful targets to motivate us and track the bigger picture. Christians and Non-Christians: We invite both Christians and non-Christians freely.

Coaching Compelling Invitations

Leveling Up Our Invitations

One way to foster a healthy culture of invitations is to devote time for training and coaching. If we level up our invitation skills, it will impact the behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs around invitation in our ministry.

Preparing Your Invitations

The more we normalize planning and practice — intentionality in our activity — the better we'll be able to craft a healthy culture of invitation.

Invitations need to be personal. When anyone’s invited generically, no one actually feels invited. For most people, if you give them the “why” they’ll ask for the details. It’s important to consider why you’re making this invitation to this person at this time.

GO DEEPER

Understanding the difference between direct and indirect cultures can help you make individuals feel valued, respected, and understood.

Invitations to Discipleship and Leadership

Many of our most significant invitations are into deeper discipleship or into meaningful leadership.

- **Belief** – All inviters have been sent. The same Christ who saves all call on his name sends us to make invitations.
- **Attitude** – When we believe that invitations into deeper discipleship are necessary and believe that Jesus sends people to make invitations, our attitude transforms. Fear and anxiety settle into a different context, and our expectancy for what Jesus can do through our invitations will rise.
- **Behavior** – We must make invitations. We recommend matching the invitation to the person.

Barriers to Invitations

Invitation Overload

When you’re overwhelmed, here’s two things to do:

- Practice wise spiritual and physical self-care
- Break down the overall invitation into the individual invitations you need to make.



For each of these steps on the continuum, you can match your invitational activity to the people. We recommend starting with your YES people and empowering them, then coordinating to invite the PROBABLY people, and then making an intentional effort to invite a few of the POSSIBLY people.

Invitation Fatigue

When faced with invitation fatigue, prioritize the most important invitations. Spend time with Jesus and your community to help you remember what is good about what you’re inviting people into.

Smokescreens

Hearing “no” is a normal part of ministry. We never want to be manipulative or controlling. Our attitudes in inviting need to be hospitable and pastoral. At times though someone will give you a smokescreen – “no” but for a reason that has little real substance. Some suggestions to deal with smokescreens:

- Pray for the person and the situation and invite the Spirit’s guidance

- Ask questions like: “Could you tell me a little more about why you’re hesitant?”
- Offer a different perspective with gentleness and respect
- Circle back later when they might be more open to a “yes”

Practical Roadblocks

Three roadblocks and wise ways to help people in your ministry overcome them:

1. **Time** – Many feel too busy to say “yes.” Feeling busy can be due to our natural human limitations. Learning our limits is good, but a little bit of planning can go a long way.
2. **Money** – If an invitation involves finances, it may be wise to say “no.” But you can see if your ministry has a budget or scholarship money available, or ask the school, people at church, friends, or family for support.
3. **Trust** – Trust matters and takes time. You can build trust by listening to them, introducing them to people who’ve said “yes,” eat with them, or offering to pray for them.

I’m Being Ghosted

Making invitations takes resiliency. Most people need to be invited more than once. Two ways you can respond to ghosting:

- **The Direct Approach** – Signal that you noticed the non-response and ask again.
- **The Indirect Approach** – Send a note about a different topic in order to restart the conversation, and once the conversation is rolling, decide whether you want to re-invite.

PRO TIP

Send “The Clean Up Note.” Send a note clarifying that you can understand them to be declining your invitation and making sure the two of you are still okay.

I Don’t Know Enough People

Maybe when the time comes, you realize you don’t have the depth of relationship to confidently reach out to make an invitation. But God provides you with networks – maybe more than you realize. Take a few minutes to do an exercise called 2+, networking mapping, or both!

Dealing with Rejection

Rejected!

We were made for community and to experience acceptance. Rejection is supposed to sting. We want to cultivate a capacity to lead others who might experience rejection. Even Jesus experienced rejection, but his relationship with God, his sense of identity, and his sense of calling sustained him.

Leading a Brave Community

Rejection happens at an individual level but can also be experienced in a community context. What behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs does your community need in order to navigate situations like these? Use the discussion box in the course to process and learn from your peers.

Celebrate the Ask

Even when rejected, we remember that faithfulness is success. If you were faithful to ask, celebrate.

PRO TIP

Celebrate before offering feedback. You want to encourage shots on the goal.

Related Resources

- [Reflecting on Jesus' Invitations Activity](#)
- [Customized Invitations](#)
- [Invitation Triage Continuum](#)
- [Invitation Triage Continuum Exercise: Leader's Guide](#)
- [2+ Prayer Card](#)
- [Make Invitations Debrief Guide](#)

Recommended Courses

- [Raise Up Leaders](#)
- [Inviting Well](#)
- [Following Up](#)

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