



Maximizing EASTER

2010

A Special E-Book by Nelson Searcy
Lead Pastor, The Journey Church, New York City
Founder, ChurchLeaderInsights.com



**\$23.95
Value!**

MAXIMIZING EASTER WEBINARS with Nelson Searcy



This Easter, God will prompt thousands of people in the US and millions around the world, to attend a church this Easter. For some reason, people who don't normally attend church will make a decision to do so during this time of the year like no other.

What can you do to have the maximum possible impact and bring guests back the following week?

Join Nelson Searcy in this 75-minute webinar without ever having to leave your office or home! Nelson will go into greater detail not covered in the *Maximizing Easter 2010* E-Book.

Four convenient times to choose from (Pick the one that fits your schedule):

Tuesday, March 2:
1:30pm - 2:45pm

Wednesday, March 3:
3:00pm - 4:15pm

Wednesday, March 3:
7:00pm - 8:15pm

Thursday, March 4:
4:00pm - 5:15pm

(All times are EASTERN)

Here's what you can expect to learn that's not covered in the *Maximizing Easter 2010* E-Book:

- How to promote Easter for maximum effectiveness
- How to mobilize your members to invite their friends on Easter
- What to preach on Easter (and what not to preach... it's not what you think)
- The biggest mistakes most people make in planning Easter
- How to get people to come back the month after Easter
- How to lead your staff and key volunteers to spiritually prepare for Easter
- How to do a church-wide spiritual survey on Easter
- How to get a 100% Connection Card completion on Easter
- Easter and your volunteers (you may be hurting your attendance by having too many volunteers, yep, too many)
- Choosing the times of your Easter service (the wrong times can keep the unchurched away)
- How you can leverage Easter to grow your church in the fall

A stack of various e-books and sermon series covers. From left to right: 'Relationship Rescue', 'Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough', 'Maximize Easter', 'Top 5 Evangelism Invite Tools', 'The Thursday Midnight Rule', 'What's Missing on Your Homepage?', and 'Church Systems'.

Following the Webinar you'll receive these FREE BONUSES (over \$190.00 value):

- Relationship Rescue* sermon series
- Healthy Systems, Healthy Church* e-book
- Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough*
- Maximizing Easter* podcast archive
- Top Five Evangelism Invite Tools*
- The Thursday Midnight Rule*
- What's Missing on Your Homepage?*

[Space is Limited - Register Today!](#)

What Other Pastors Are Saying About NELSON SEARCY

“Nelson is not a theorist but a veteran church planter who has successfully planted a purpose-driven church. Listen and learn from this gifted man.”

Rick Warren

Lead Pastor, Saddleback Church, Lake Forest, CA

Author of *The Purpose Driven Church* and *The Purpose Driven Life*

“Nelson is the best church strategist I know.”

Dan Southerland

Lead Pastor, Westside Family Church, Lenexa, KS

Author of *Transitions: Leading your Church Through Change*

“With Nelson, you’ll find transferable and measurable means to use in your church that really work.”

Kerry Shook

Lead Pastor, Fellowship of The Woodlands, Woodlands, TX

Author of *One Month To Live: 30 Days to a No-Regrets Life*

“Nelson offers field-tested, reliable tools.”

Tim Lucas

Lead Pastor, Liquid Church, Morristown, NJ

“Nelson understands, practices and is able to communicate transferable principles to pastors involved in the disciple-making process that is at the heart of fulfilling the Great Commission.”

Dr. Tim Gentry

Church Consultant, Healthy Church Group, California Southern Baptist Convention

“Nelson’s my kinda pastor: a ‘tool-and-die guy’ who’s not satisfied with just growing his own flock, but who helps others with practical ministry tools that work.”

Alan Nelson

Executive Editor, Rev! Magazine

Author of *Me to We*

“Nelson helps us partner with God in reaching our cities and seeing individuals take steps on their journey toward maturity in Christ.”

Bob Franquiz

Lead Pastor, Calvary Fellowship, Miami Lakes, FL

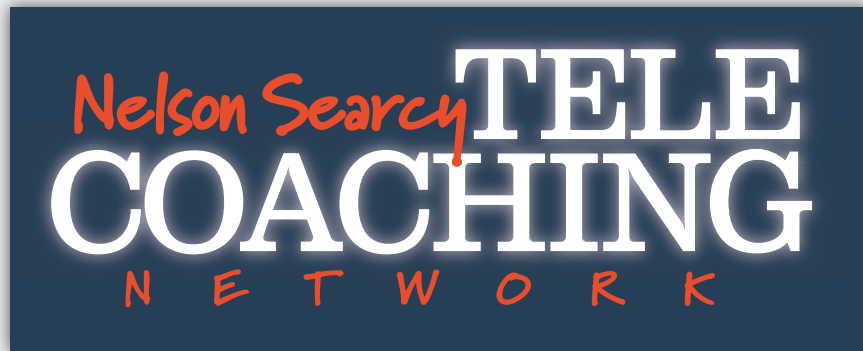


Meet NELSON SEARCY

Nelson Searcy is the founding and Lead Pastor of The Journey Church, a multi-site, multi-cultural church with locations across New York City, including Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens. With the majority of its growth coming from new believers, The Journey has been recognized as one of the fastest-growing and most innovative churches in America by Outreach Magazine. Through his coaching networks, Nelson has coached over 600 Pastors across the U.S. He is the author of numerous books and church-growth resources, as well as a coach, consultant and strategist.



Take Your Leadership and Your Church to the Next Level!



THE NELSON SEARCY COACHING NETWORK follows the outline of the nine Growth Barriers and eight Growth Systems as taught in Nelson Searcy's books and workshops, and is customized according to the specific needs of those accepted.

**NEW SENIOR PASTOR TELE-COACHING NETWORK
BEGINS AUGUST 19, 2010!**

To learn more, visit ChurchLeaderInsights.com/Telecoaching

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INTRODUCTION

When Jesus rolled the stone away from his tomb's entrance on that first Easter morning, he opened an unequalled door of opportunity for all people. He opened the door to a relationship with God. He opened the door to eternal life. He opened the door of hope, peace and joy. And he invited the whole world to step through.



Likewise, each Easter Sunday gives you and me, as church leaders, a unique door of opportunity to influence people for God. The celebration of Jesus' resurrection will bring new people to your church this Easter – even if they aren't sure why they are there or what they are celebrating. The question is: Will you take advantage of the open door of opportunity that Easter provides, or will your lack of preparation block the way?

Easter is arguably the biggest day of the year in the life of the church, with Christmas being its only competition. We tend to plan more precisely for Christmas because it is the same day every year. Everyone is looking toward it. Since Easter Sunday's date varies, it can sneak up on you – and on the unchurched people in your community – if you aren't careful. But with a little forward thinking and strategic planning on your part, you can work with God as he uses this singular day to draw people to himself in much larger numbers than any other time throughout the year.

Since Easter's date varies, it can sneak up on you if you aren't careful.

The key is to start thinking about Easter long before it comes down the bunny trail, so to

speaking. You have to make the intentional decision now to not let this Easter pass you by without taking advantage of the opportunity it brings. Prayerfully commit to pouring your effort and energy over the next few weeks into maximizing the natural boon and blessing of Easter. Once you've made that commitment, spend some time thinking about these four important questions:

1. What will I preach on Easter Sunday?
2. What type of service will I have on Easter Sunday?
3. What special "activities" can I incorporate into Easter Sunday?
4. How will I follow up with the guests God brings me on Easter Sunday?

The opportunity that Easter provides for influence is null and void if you don't have a plan in place for capitalizing on that opportunity. By strategically planning your preaching and your service, and by being aware of the ways you can effectively reach out to the first-timers that Easter will bring, you will be doing your part to maximize this built-in big day.

Planning Your Easter PREACHING

Ready or not, you will find yourself preaching to a larger crowd than usual on Easter morning. You will have more first-time guests than you are used to...and you will have a set window of time to influence them with what you say and persuade them to come back to your church. Please don't take this lightly. The new faces sitting in front of you are gifts from God – literally. Don't neglect your responsibility in giving them the best possible opportunity to know him. Keeping the critical nature of your Easter message in mind, you have three preaching strategy options available to you. You can:

1. End a teaching series on Easter Sunday
2. Preach a stand-alone message on Easter Sunday, or
3. Begin a teaching series on Easter Sunday

I bet you can guess which option I recommend, but before I lay it out, let's take a look at the other two: Imagine that you are a first-time guest who decides to go to church with a friend or family member on Easter morning. Maybe you haven't been to church in years and you're skeptical of the whole idea but, hey, you went to church on Easter as a kid, so what's one more time going to hurt? What if you walk into the church, find a seat, and settle in for the message only to realize that you are late to the game, by no fault of your own. The pastor is wrapping up a series he has been teaching for the last five weeks. There are references to prior messages that you don't understand. You feel like you are

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missing something that everyone else is in the know on. Even though the message has some good points, you feel a little left out. You think to yourself that maybe you should have stayed at home after all. Would you even think of returning to that church the next week? I mean, the pastor sure wasn't looking out for you, or any other new people, when he planned to end a series on the biggest day of the year. Does that make you feel welcome and wanted?

Ending a series on Easter Sunday is the worst of the three preaching options. You can justify it up and down but the truth is that ending a series on Easter doesn't give your first-timers any incentive to return to your church. Even if you build up a new series that is starting the next

Ending a series on Easter doesn't give your first-timers any incentive to return to your church.

week, even if you are careful not to reference prior messages too much, even, even, even...it's not a good idea. First impressions are everything. When a guest realizes that he is coming in on the tail end of something, a subtle negative impression settles in. You may preach a spectacular message that he can relate to, but you have already set up a barrier

for yourself. Nobody likes to join a show that's already in progress.

The second option is to preach a stand-alone message on Easter Sunday, which is what 90% of churches do. While preaching a stand-alone message isn't a bad option, it's not the best option. You may pique the interest of your first-timers and give them some things to think about, but the likelihood is that they will forget what they've heard and go back to their non-churchgoing ways the next Sunday. Why? Because with a standalone message, you aren't effectively hooking them in; you

aren't leaving them wanting more. You aren't challenging them to make a short-term commitment. But I'm getting ahead of myself...

The best option is to kick off a series on Easter Sunday. This option sets various factors to work in your favor. First of all, your guests feel like they have shown up at the beginning of a new chapter in your church, which is psychologically pleasing. You can capture them with the content of the new series in a way that will make them want to hear what else you have to say over the next few weeks. In other words, you are building incentive for them to return into the DNA of their first visit. You have made them part of something exciting by kicking off the series with them in attendance.

Starting a series on Easter Sunday also gives you the opportunity to lay down a challenge. You can challenge all of your guests to keep coming back – not indefinitely, but for the duration of the series. People who would never expect to come to church on the Sunday after Easter, and who would never consider being a regular churchgoer, will often agree to stay around for four to five weeks to see how an intriguing series plays out...which gives you the chance to continue creating environments where they can come to know God. A large percentage of the regular members and attenders at The Journey first came to the church on Easter, or a similar big day, never expecting to return. God had a different plan. We simply did our part to cooperate.

You can challenge all of your guests to keep coming back – not indefinitely, but for the duration of the series.

CHURCH LEADER TESTIMONY

Maximizing Easter built expectation in the staff and provided an inspiring game plan. It was very helpful!

Philip Wagner
Oasis Church, Los Angeles, CA
Average Attendance: 1,900
Easter Attendance: 3,600

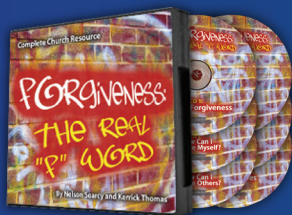
One of the most frequent questions I get is: Can you kick off a series and still preach on the resurrection? Sure. Be creative. You can use the truth and power of the resurrection as a jumping-off point. You can start with the resurrection and allow it to lead you into the content of the series. Think outside of the traditional box. One year, at The Journey, we preached an Easter message called *Finding Forgiveness*, which was the kick-off message for our five-week series called *The Real F Word*. In that Easter service, we had fake brick walls in the front of the auditorium. We didn't mention them. The next week, in a message called "How Can I Forgive Myself?," we encouraged people to come to the front and use the available markers to write their initials on one of the walls. In another message, "How Can I Forgive Others?," we asked everyone to write the initials of someone they needed to forgive on one of the walls.

Throughout the series, these walls became covered in "graffiti," linking each successive Sunday with the previous. On the last Sunday of the series, in a message titled "Livin' Forgiven,"

we painted those walls white during the service. Inarguably, this series grew right out of the truth of the resurrection, and kept our new people coming back, as it introduced them to essential realities about God. The more creative you are, the more enticed your guests will be to return...and the more likely you will be to get them quickly connected and moving along in their journey. Ideally, you should aim to get the first-timers God brings you on Easter assimilated in the weeks before people start going their different ways for the summer. That way, you'll know that they are linked in and will be on board as strong attenders or members in the fall.

WHAT KIND OF SERIES CAN I KICK OFF ON EASTER?

Always kick off a new series on Easter Sunday. The resurrection power of Jesus reaches into every area of our lives. Be creative in using that truth to launch a series that will keep your Easter guests coming back over the next few weeks. Here are some examples of series' we have kicked off on Easter Sunday at The Journey:



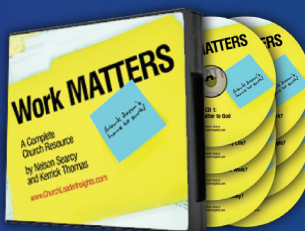
Forgiveness: The Real F Word – A five-part series on the truths of forgiveness. How we forgive ourselves; how we forgive others; and what it means to accept ultimate forgiveness.



From Stress to Rest – A five-part series to help people move out of the overwhelming stress of life and into the rest that God provides through Jesus.



The Games of Life – A six-part series that focuses on learning to succeed where it counts. Deals with finances, risk-taking and relationships.



Work Matters – A seven-part series on how to balance work and life in our workaholic society. Tackles issues like money, how to share your faith at work, how to deal with difficult people and how to leave a legacy.

For more information on each of these sermon series, visit www.ChurchLeaderInsights.com.

Planning Your Easter SERVICE

Don't turn your Easter service into the extravaganza of the year. This is one of the most common mistakes I see pastors make. They think, "Hey, we are going to have a lot of first-time guests, so let's make this service really incredible. Let's bring in a guest speaker. Let's get that guest worship leader we've always wanted to have." In theory, this approach makes sense. The problem with it doesn't surface until the Easter "show" is over. If you pique people's interest with an out-of-the-ordinary Easter service, you are setting them up for disappointment when things go back to normal the following week. Often times, those guests who decide to return are so taken aback by the difference (read: regression) between Easter Sunday and the next that they don't come back again.

Make your Easter service excellent, but keep it normal. If you are the one who usually preaches, preach on Easter. Have your regular worship leader lead worship on Easter. The goal with your Easter service planning should be this: To provide a great, quality service that reflects what attenders will see the rest of the year. When you get too fancy in your efforts to capitalize on Easter, you step out of the realm of reality and that can only lead to disillusionment. Excellent consistency with your service encourages excellent consistency with your guests and new attenders.

Provide a great, quality service that reflects what attenders will see the rest of the year.

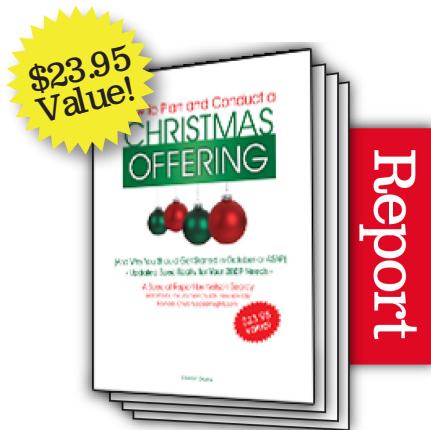
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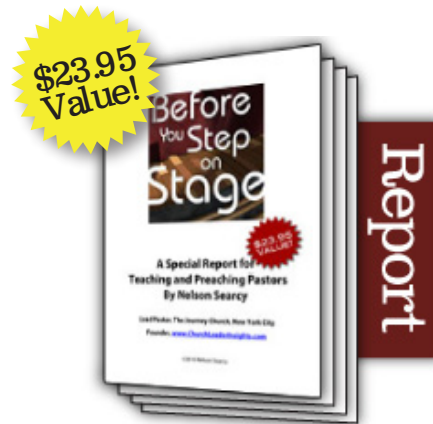
How to Plan & Conduct a Christmas Offering



Maximizing Summer



Activate: Uncut



Before You Step on Stage

www.ChurchLeaderInsights.com/freereports

Planning Your Easter “ACTIVITIES”

In the vein of making the most of the opportunity Easter affords you, make sure you plan for these two important “activities” on Easter Sunday:

First of all, take time during the service to gather contact information on everyone in attendance. Whether you use a Connection Card on a regular basis or not, let me encourage you to use one on Easter Sunday. Put one in every program. Provide everyone with a pen. At some point in your service, preferably during your welcome, say something along these lines, “Easter

You have a responsibility to connect with guests and assist them on their journey toward God.

is a big day for us and it’s a great opportunity to make sure we have up-to-date information on all of you. Let’s take a few seconds now and fill out our Connection Cards together. If you are a first-time guest, fill out as much of this card as you feel

comfortable with. If you are a regular attender or member, please fill out the card completely so we can make sure that we have your most updated information.”

Utilizing a Connection Card on Easter Sunday not only gives you a way to check in with a huge percentage of your members and regular attenders, it is also a great way to get the contact information of your first-time guests. What a shame it would be to let the first-time guests God brings you on Easter walk out your door without you having a way to follow up with them. You have a responsibility to do your part to connect them with your church and assist them on their journey toward God. You can’t do your job if you can’t get in touch with them to invite them back.

Beyond GPS: Knowing and Doing the Will of God Connection Card

Dr. / Mr. / Mrs. / Miss / Ms.

Name: _____ Change in contact information

Email (please print): _____

- 1st time guest
- 2nd time guest
- Regular Attender
- Member

Address _____ Apt. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Best Contact Phone (____) _____ Birthday (mm/dd): _____

Send me Text Message Updates (no more than 1 per month) (____) _____

Occupation _____

If 1st or 2nd time guest, how did you hear about The Journey? _____
(Name of person who invited you, postcard, mailer, newspaper)

Place this card in the offering when it is received or hand it in at the *Case For Faith* table as you leave.

MY NEXT STEP TODAY IS TO...

- Memorize Philippians 4:8.
- Build thought filters in my life, especially in the area of _____.
- Learn more about the "Valentines Day" movie Play Group on Friday evening, Feb 12.
- Sign up for Membership Class on Sunday, Feb 21 from 3:00pm – 6:00pm at The Journey Office.

Sign up for GG # _____.

Prayer Request: _____

SEND ME INFO ABOUT...

- Becoming a follower of Jesus
- Baptism - Feb 28
- Serving @ The Journey
- Membership @ The Journey - Feb 21
- Office Volunteer – 2 Hour Shift
- Growth Groups
- Worship Arts Team
- Journey Kidz

You can also consider using this time to do a quick, simple marketing survey that may prove useful to you. At the Journey, we simply put a line on the Connection Card that says, “How did you first hear about The Journey?” We mention that line when we ask everyone to fill out their Card. The responses are extremely helpful. The key is to keep the asking quick and simple.

Secondly, give your first-timers something on Easter Sunday. Put something in their hands that will help them remember what you talked about during the service, or something that simply reminds them of your church. You can give them a small book with a note from you, a CD of a related past message, or anything else you can think of that will reinforce the service and be a reminder to them throughout the week. Don't let your first-time guests leave the Easter service empty-handed. You can tie the Connection Card into this free gift to add a little “wow factor” and get an even better response. Let your guests know that if they turn in their completed Connection Card, they will receive a free gift at the end of the service. You'll find that many more of them will provide you with the information you need...and in turn you can provide them with something that you know they need.

Don't let your first-time guests leave the Easter service empty-handed.

On a side note, while we discussed how you don't want to make Easter the blowout of the century, you can definitely offer some “wow factor” incentives to encourage the community through your doors. For example, one year at The Journey, we offered family photographs on Easter Sunday. All we did was set up a “Photography Corner” in the lobby area of the church. As people were arriving or leaving the service, they could stop by and have a digital photo taken of their family.

Then, we emailed those photos to them later in the week. The feedback on this “wow factor” was phenomenal.

So now that we know how to do our part to make the Easter Sunday service a conduit for connection and growth, let's consider these three ways to build toward the big day:

1. Build Toward Easter With Publicity: Since people are more likely to go to church on Easter than any other time of year, publicity for your Easter service goes a long way. Make sure that people in your community know about your church. When they decide to go to church on Easter, will they know that your church exists and how to find you? If you have never done a mass mailing or newspaper ads, pre-Easter is a great time to start. In your promotion, promote Easter itself rather than the new series you will be starting. Easter will get people to church. Your series will keep them there.

I also like to think of publicity as “air cover” for my regular attenders and members who are inviting people to the Easter Service. Good publicity under-girds their efforts, which leads me to...

2. Build Toward Easter By Encouraging Personal Evangelism: Ask your people to invite their friends and family to church on Easter. Hands down, person-to-person evangelism is the most effective form of evangelism that we have. Let your congregation know that their mother-in-law, their cranky co-worker, and their hellion friend from college are all more likely to say yes to an invitation to church on Easter than at any other time. Challenge every one of your people to invite at least three unchurched friends and/or family members.

The truth is that some of your regular attenders and members will be hesitant to invite people they know to church. You can help turn their hearts toward boldness by asking them to take the first, less-intimidating step of praying for their friends, the church and the Easter service. This kind of intentional prayer will make them more likely to take the step of one-on-one evangelism. You can also encourage them by setting up Servant Evangelism outreaches in the weeks before Easter. Passing out postcards and granola bars on the street not only helps get the word out about your Easter service, but it also helps hesitant believers gain confidence in sharing their faith.

Once they are praying for their friends and doing a little non-threatening outreach, getting your people to engage in true personal evangelism isn't actually as hard as you think. You simply have to make sure you are equipping them with the right tools, letting them know exactly what they need to do and giving them a sense of urgency (like the fact that Easter is right around the corner!). There is a proven way to grow the percentage of your people who will actually extend invitations; all you have to do is put the Personal Evangelism Formula to work. This formula looks like one you may remember from your algebra days. It follows the form of $x = a + b + c$, with x equaling high levels of personal evangelism. Here's how it breaks down:

a = TOOLS. People are more likely to do what you ask of them if you give them some tools that will make things easier. Make sure that you provide them with postcards about your Easter service that they can give their friends. Give them "Invest and Invite" cards – little business-sized cards where they can write down the names of the people they are praying for and planning to invite to the Easter service. Encourage them to keep the card in their pocket and pray over it every day.

b = TRAINING. Your people will respond even more favorably if you provide them with a little training, so they feel confident in what they are being asked to do. The Sunday before Easter, you may want to preach on inviting friends and loved ones to church.

c = TIMELINESS. Give them a reason to do it “now.” Provide a sense of urgency. The truth is that people don’t do what is important; they do what is urgent. Your people may have known for years that they need to invite a certain friend to church, but the urgency that Easter provides can be the prompting they need to go ahead and make the big ask.

x = TOOLS + TRAINING + TIMELINESS

That’s the formula for personal evangelism. If you give people the tools they need, train them on how to use those tools, and then let them know that they need to carry out the task in the weeks leading up to Easter, you will send your evangelistic temperature soaring.

**HIGH LEVELS OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM =
TOOLS + TRAINING + TIMELINESS**

3. Build Toward Easter By Spiritually Preparing Yourself And Your Staff: When it comes to getting ready for Easter, you and your staff set the tone. At The Journey, we go to great lengths to make sure that we are all spiritually prepared for the significance of the day. In the weeks leading up to Easter, we study the passion narratives together. I challenge us all to invite three unchurched friends to the Easter service. Not only does this keep us from falling into the trap of

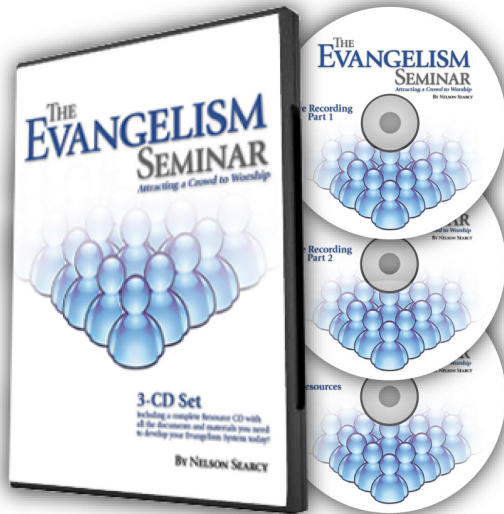
only associating with other Christians, but there's also no way we can expect our attenders to invite people if we aren't leading the charge. Finally, on Good Friday, we all participate in a day of fasting. We refrain from solid foods and spend time in prayer asking God to have his hand on the Easter service and to continue to grow us into the leaders we need to be to lead his church to the next level. Don't shy away from challenging those closest to you to prepare themselves spiritually for the work God want to do in your Easter service...and beyond.

CHURCH LEADER TESTIMONY

Maximizing Easter helped us take a fresh approach to Easter. We did a mass mail-out, challenged our people to bring three people with them, took the week prior to Easter for spiritual preparation and began a new sermon series on Easter Sunday...we had 25 first-time families visit and 11 professions of faith!

Gregory Cooper
First Baptist Church, Groveport, OH
Average Attendance: 350
Easter Attendance: 512

THE EVANGELISM SEMINAR



Secure Your CD Resource
or
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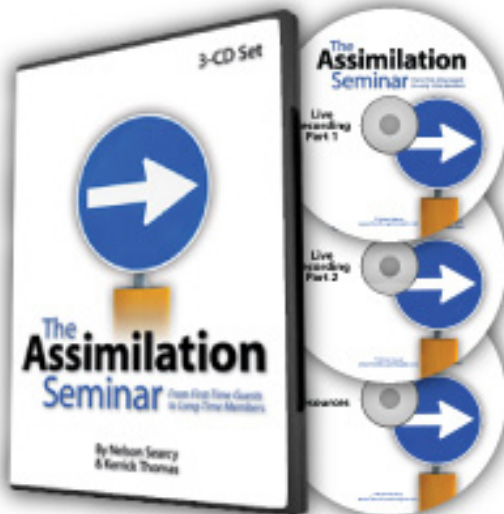
The first step in reaching our communities for Jesus is getting new people through our doors. But how do we invite the unchurched in? How can we ensure they'll accept our invitation? How do we turn our vast un-reached communities into our first time guests?

Recorded LIVE, by Nelson Searcy this 3-hour seminar discusses practical steps that will help you draw first-time guests through your doors by creating a climate of evangelism and outreach.

This resource includes:

- How to raise the evangelistic temperature of your church
- How to influence your leaders to reach out to the community
- How to maximize your church's publicity
- How to teach and challenge your congregation to bring their friends to church
- How to pray for the unchurched in your community
- Plus much more!

THE ASSIMILATION SEMINAR



Secure Your CD Resource
or
Download Now!

It's not enough to just attract first-time guests - you must learn how to keep them! This seminar on Assimilation by Nelson Searcy discusses practical steps that will help you create an inviting environment for your first-time guests - one that they will want to come back to time and time again!

This resource includes:

- Over three hours of training
- 25+ page Assimilation Strategy used at The Journey
- Sample emails
- Sample surveys
- Greeter and usher Overviews
- Sample follow-up letters
- Sample communication cards
- Plus much more!

Planning Your Easter FOLLOW-UP

There is a definite correlation between your level of preparation and the number of guests you will have on Easter. You may have heard of the Principle of Spiritual Readiness, which contends that God will never give you more than you are prepared to receive. If you are prepared to receive and follow up with a large number of first-time guests, God will be

If you are prepared to follow up with first-time guests, God will be much more likely to send them your way.

much more likely to send those guests your way. On the other hand, he won't send many guests to a church that doesn't have a plan in place to give those newcomers the best possible opportunity to know him. Why would he? So, as part of your preparation for Easter, make sure you think through your post-Easter follow-up plan.

Don't wait until the Monday after the big day to figure out how you are going to follow up with your guests – especially the ones who made a decision to say yes to Christ.

When an unbeliever makes the decision to give his life to Christ in your church, on Easter or on any other Sunday, your next step is to follow up with him right away. This new Christian may or may not have a grasp on what the decision he just made really means. He has no idea what to do next. That's why God has positioned you in his life. Hopefully, you are prepared with a plan and with tools to help him begin his Christian walk.

At The Journey, the first thing I want the new believer to do is indicate his decision to follow Christ on the back of his Connection Card. That way, I will know about his decision as soon as the

cards are gathered and processed on the Monday after Easter. Once I have all of the names and email addresses of those who made a first-time commitment, I send a personal email to congratulate them on deciding to follow Jesus. I make sure that the email is in their inbox by Monday afternoon. The email includes a link to an online Bible study.

During the first week of their new life with Christ, each new believer will get some follow-up material from me in the mail. I include the book *The Next Step For Your Journey* (which I wrote for new believers), plus some information about our church and about baptism. Baptism is their next step, and I want to ensure that they take the step within a month or two. When dealing with a new believer, focus on getting their questions answered and getting them connected. Make sure the forward momentum continues and no one falls through the cracks. If someone lets you know that they accepted Christ at your church on Easter, and then you don't hear from them or see them for a month, there's a problem. You need to pick up the telephone and see what is going on.

When dealing with a new believer, focus on getting their questions answered and getting them connected.

These new believers are the harvest God has given you out of the seeds you worked so hard to sow. Make sure you have a plan in place to follow up with them. Otherwise, your Easter outreach efforts will fizzle at the most critical juncture. For more detailed information on how to follow up with new believers, check out my book *Ignite: How to Spark Immediate Growth in Your Church* (Baker, 2009).

As important as it is to follow up quickly and effectively with your new believers, it is just as important to follow up with each and every first-time guest who walked through your door on Easter. These are future new believers; you just have to cooperate with God in being wise about how you keep them connected to your church. Take a look at the sidebar below for a brief overview of how to connect with your guests in the days and weeks following Easter Sunday.

POST-EASTER FOLLOW-UP

- **36-Hour Email Response** – By the Tuesday following Easter, each and every one of your first-time guests should receive an email that (1) thanks them for attending your Easter service and (2) invites them back to your church.
- **96-Hour Snail Mail Response** – By Thursday afternoon, make sure every guest who provided you with a mailing address receives a personal, handwritten note and a small gift to “wow” them. This could be anything from a Starbucks gift card to a \$4 gas card – just something to show God’s love in a practical, unexpected way. You may also want to include a postcard about the series you kicked off on Easter.
- **One Month Follow-Up Letter** – While the initial goal is to get your Easter guests locked in for the current series, sometimes even people with great intentions simply don’t make it back after Easter. Just because you haven’t heard from them in a month doesn’t mean they aren’t interested in returning. So, for these guys, use the One Month Follow-Up letter to remind them of their experience with your church, give them a little more information and invite them back one last time.

This follow-up process is not only critical for the guests God brings you on Easter Sunday, but also for the guests he brings you every other Sunday of the year. Without a plan in place to keep your guests coming back, you will be allowing the new people that God sends through your doors to slip through your fingers. He, and they, deserve better. For more details on following up with your first-time guests, make sure to see *Fusion: Turning First-Time Guests into Fully-Engaged Members of Your Church* (Regal, 2007).

CHURCH LEADER TESTIMONY

Maximizing Easter was very helpful. There were several tips we used. We utilized the opportunity to welcome first-time guests, give them gifts, collect information via Connection Cards, and much more. We also learned what not to do, like put on a presentation that we would not be able to match the following weeks.

Keith Kirkpatrick
Journey, Bend, OR
Average Attendance: 125
Easter Attendance: 233

Yes, Jesus' open tomb gives you and I a unique door of opportunity – the opportunity to cooperate with God in connecting people to our churches in a fresh way, so that they might come to understand the significance of that empty tomb in their own lives. Happy Easter!

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Prepare Now to Follow Up With Your First-Time Guests From Easter Sunday With THE FUSION WEBINAR



Next Sunday, God will prompt hundreds of people in the US and millions around the world, to visit a church for the first time. The Sunday after that, He will do it again.

God is consistently blessing His Church with regular guests.

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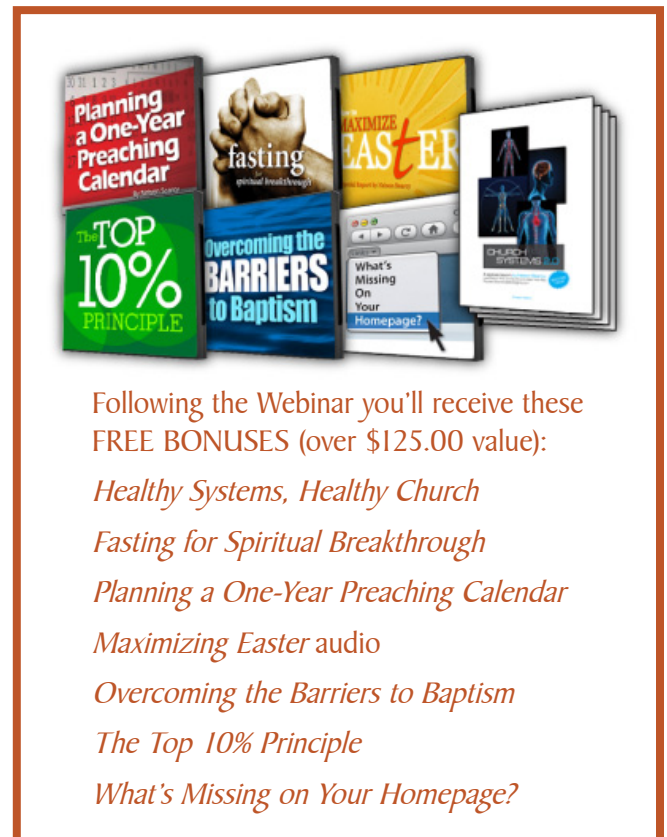
Webinar participants will need a phone and a computer with Internet access to participate.

Tuesday, March 16

1:00pm - 3:00pm Eastern | 12:00pm - 2:00pm Central
11:00am - 1:00pm Mountain | 10:00am - 12:00pm Pacific

Here's what you will learn:

- Proven principles to help you create an inviting environment for first-time guests
- How to "wow" first-time guests into wanting to come back
- The Journey Church's "Assimilation System," used to follow up with the 40+ first-time guests who attend the service each week
- How to turn first-time guests into second-time guests
- How to turn second-time guests into regular attenders and then fully-engaged members
- How to drastically increase the number of guests who give you their contact information
- How to use a Connection Card (including what to put on it - and what not to put on it)
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