

# **TOUCHING COMMUNITIES FOR CHRIST THROUGH MUSIC & CREATIVE WORSHIP**

**By Tom Eggleston**

For many years, music ministries have been doing a very effective job of providing music, drama, and instrumental praise in worship services. However, we are finding that it is becoming more difficult to attract people to our churches. There are so many things that are grabbing people's attention away from the church...sports, entertainment, recreation, leisure activities, travel, resorts, and the list goes on.

## **Problem or Opportunity**

We could look at this problem in two ways. We could take a defeatist attitude and cry, "Poor us, we can't get anybody to come to our church!" Better yet, we could take a positive attitude and say, "We have a wonderful opportunity to take our gifts and abilities to our communities." I hope you will choose the latter. We really do have a great opportunity to touch our communities by using creative arts ministries, if we're willing to take a few risks.

## **Where Can We Go To Touch Our Communities?**

Here are a few suggestions: Street Fairs, County Fairs, Mall & Shopping Centers, Schools, Homeless Shelters, Colleges, Patriotic Events, Beaches and Piers, Farmer's Markets, Nursing Homes, Youth Rallies, Political Rallies, Holiday Events, Cafes, Parks, Libraries, Crusades, Camp Grounds, Parades.

## **What Kinds of Groups to Use?**

Choirs (Children, Youth, Adult, Senior Adults); Mime groups; Interpretive movement groups; Handbell choirs; Instrumental ensembles (Jazz, Blue-grass, Pop); Praise Bands; Church Orchestras; Clown troupes (balloon sculpturing, face painting); Puppet teams; (Note: Drama groups are not quite as effective in street environments unless it is very high energy, high action, well amplified and well acted.)

## **What Kinds of Material to Present?**

Using a combination of secular, patriotic, and religious material is best in street settings. The secular material must, of course, be wholesome and not questionable in its content. This secular material gives some familiarity of sound especially to the non-churched person. Make sure that management is aware of the kinds of material your group will be presenting. Some settings may have stipulations about religious material.

## **Getting Permission or Permits**

When going to the street to do musical or dramatic presentations or any organized outreach, you will often need to get a permit in order to set up your sound system and any backdrops or props.

1. Contact city management or the owners of the facility to get permits, permission or contracts.
2. Complete the permit application and return it within the time deadlines.

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3. Follow-up after a few days to see the application was received and if you have permission to do your outreach.
4. Understand the organization's rules and guidelines regarding the use of religious materials and passing out any tracks or literature. Obey their rules or you will not be invited back.
5. If a sound system is being used, make sure that an electrical outlet is available and if not, bring a generator.
6. Call a few days in advance to confirm your event and any last minute details.

### **What to Take With You**

1. A small, portable sound system.
2. Tracks, flyers, handouts of your next presentation.
3. Bibles to give away.
4. Generator (if needed).
5. Prayer Partners (People that will be in the crowd and pray for your ministry).
6. Plenty of adult supervision.

### **Know Your Crowd**

When presenting the gospel through creative arts, it is very important to know your audience.

1. In one-on-one encounters, find out as much as you can by observing; discovering their interests; their family histories, their religious background, etc.
2. When dealing with a group or crowd, research their ages, their religious connections, what brought them to this location, etc.
3. Tailor your presentation as best you can to meet the needs of your audience.

### **Follow-Up**

If a person has made a decision to follow Christ, follow-up is a vital step in helping that person to be discipled and placed in church where they can continue to grow.

1. Make sure you get names, phone numbers, email addresses of those making decisions. If a person has not made a decision, then you would have the necessary contact information for follow-up.
2. Call the person the next day and invite them to your church or help make a contact of a church in their area.
3. Do your best to make a connection and encourage them in their faith however possible.

### **Other Suggestions**

1. Always PRAY more than you PREPARE.
2. Interruptions are bound to happen on the street. Deal with them in a gentle, loving manner. Sometimes you might encounter hecklers. If they pose no danger, then continue your presentation. Have several adults present to deal with situations that might get out of hand.

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### **Tools in Presenting the Gospel on the Streets**

1. Steps in sharing the gospel: Observe, Pray, Listen, Relate, Share
2. Memorize a 1 minute testimony to share.
3. Have “salvation bracelets” to hand out and share the meaning behind each color.
4. Purchase Evangecubes (a visual puzzle of the gospel plus the tracts)  
([www.evangecube.org](http://www.evangecube.org))
5. Use the Share Jesus Without Fear questions and presentation. (For more information contact: 1.800.458.2772 or [lifeway.com](http://lifeway.com)).