



EVERYONE OUTREACH

BUILDING A CONGREGATIONAL OUTREACH CULTURE

Post-Workshop Playbook



Post-Workshop Playbook

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PLAYBOOK INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this playbook is to answer this question: “After we’ve had an **EVERYONE OUTREACH** workshop at our church, what comes next?”

Culture change isn’t easy—not only are you changing thought habits, but you’re changing shared thought habits. And culture is self-perpetuating and, therefore, resistant to change. Furthermore, the workshop does NOT change your culture. Rather, it helps you see some aspects of it and gives you good field position to start your drive to build an outreach culture. And so, we’re still at that same question: “What comes next?”

This playbook, then, is all about helping you decide how to proceed. It does that by helping you understand culture shaping and then giving you some activities and actions—“plays”—that you can call as you start your drive to build your congregation’s outreach culture. To help you get going, we have a **Quick Start Guide**; you can think of it as the scripted first drive. From there, you’ll need to decide what the best plan is for your church. After all, since each congregation is starting from a different current outreach culture and has different gifts and talents present, the answer to “What’s next?”—which is really the same question as “What’s needed?”—will also be different for each congregation.

The first section provides **5 Principles of Culture Change** that will help you consider why certain plays may be impactful. How to change an organization’s culture may be something to which you previously have not given much thought. Understanding the principles involved, as well as getting a few tips and some pitfalls to avoid, serves as a foundation for your efforts to build an outreach culture.

Next, there is a review of **The Targeted Culture Shift**. After the workshop, you have a more complete perspective of your congregation’s outreach culture. Reviewing the FROM/TO for the **EVERYONE OUTREACH** program and discussing where your congregation is today is one of the four items on the **Quick Start Guide**.

Another item on the **Quick Start Guide** is a careful consideration of **The Pastor’s Role in Building an Outreach Culture**. The Pastor, as shepherd of the flock, has a unique leadership role in culture change. No one else in the congregation will be able to influence the development of new thought habits in the same way. This section is provided to give a few plays that are designed both in recognition of and accounting for the influence of that unique role.

Using the Playbook has a few items to consider as you answer, “What next?” This is followed by a few **Scripted Plays** and **A Handful of Other Plays to Run** for your consideration.

Information on **Personal Reinforcements** and available **Outreach Bible Studies** are also included as those are definitely part of your playbook. A list of books for **Additional Reading** is provided as well.

We pray that **EVERYONE OUTREACH** will help your congregation make some or all of these mind shifts so that, Lord willing, more souls come into contact with the eternal gospel and are saved for eternal life.

5 PRINCIPLES OF CULTURE CHANGE

You've completed an **EVERYONE OUTREACH** Workshop. Members of our congregation have both looked at your shared thought habits and identified some things to do differently, selecting a few for personal **I Will** commitments. Awesome! And yet, you have not yet changed the culture—though you have new thoughts that can produce new behaviors, they're not yet thought habits. In reality, you've only just started the journey of culture change. So, how do you get across the finish line; how do you actually change the culture?

Here are five principles of culture change that can help you get across the finish line:

- **KNOW THE JOURNEY**
- **LEADER LED**
- **WATCH THE BS, CHANGE THE TS**
- **ENSURE CRITICAL MASS**
- **EVALUATE ARTIFACTS**

Understanding these principles and applying them to your journey will significantly improve the likelihood that you successfully shift your culture.



Know the Journey



The first principle is **KNOW THE JOURNEY**. The first part of this principle is understanding the reason behind the culture journey—the why. In the case of **EVERYONE OUTREACH**, this is straightforward: The church exists for two main reasons: to equip the saints and to reach the lost. Congregations that participate in **EVERYONE OUTREACH** do so to improve outreach to the lost.

The second part of this principle is understanding where you are starting from and where you want to end up. The next section of the playbook—**The Targeted Culture Shift**—goes into depth about the five FROM|TO couplets that are targeted in the **EVERYONE OUTREACH** program. Discussing the FROM|TOs is a great activity for your leadership team after the workshop. Have everyone read **The Targeted Culture Shift**, open your playbooks to the FROM|TO list, and start discussing it. Here are some questions to get you started:

- What struck you as you read through **The Targeted Culture Shift**?
- How did our shared thought habits in these areas show up in the workshop?
- Do all five FROM|TOs apply to our congregation?
- Is one of the TOs already a strength that we can build upon?
- Which one of the FROM|TOs might be our biggest challenge to shift?

Now that you've gone through the workshop, the more you discuss the FROM|TOs, the clearer you'll understand how this applies to your congregation—and that is what **KNOW THE JOURNEY** is all about.

Leader Led



Culture change simply cannot happen without leadership. Think about it: without someone leading the way, what do you think are the odds of all members collectively shifting a set of common individual thought habits? That's why the second principle is that the culture change must be **LEADER LED**.

Behind this principle is a specific understanding of what leadership is, namely:

Leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less.

John C. Maxwell.

This definition of leadership is not based on position or authority but rather on the impact an individual has on others in the group. This simple view of leadership has many ramifications for culture change:

- Since everyone influences others at some time, we all have a role to play in culture change.
- Since congregations tend to have a core group that does the majority of the stuff that gets done, that core group will have an outsized influence and thus need to be more involved in the culture shift.
- Some folks have been placed by God in a role that calls them to exercise leadership even more frequently, they need to be even more involved in the culture shift.

Understanding this view of leadership, we can then examine two aspects of the **LEADER LED** principle. The first is that leaders need to own the journey. This ties directly into the accountability ladder. Acknowledge the reality that culture shaping involves changing shared thought habits, realize your influence puts you in a unique position to effect that change, and own it. Hoping that those with less influence can somehow accomplish this task—perhaps somehow even overcoming the indifference of those with more influence is ludicrous. **LEADER LED** means that leaders need to own the journey.

Even beyond that, leaders need to be the journey. The influence of mere words will pale in comparison to the example set by the congregation's leaders. In shifting shared thought habits, the signals sent by the leader's behavior is paramount. **LEADER LED** means that leaders need to be the journey.

Lastly, in a congregation, a pastor's influence is so critical that we have a separate section in this playbook just for him. In it, we focus on some very specific ways that a pastor can be and own the journey in order to influence others relative to the targeted culture change. This focus is intentional. Specifically, a pastor could be tempted to jump into a myriad of activities, e.g., building a system for helping guests feel welcomed (covered in the section for Scripted Play #3.) **The Pastor's Role in Building an Outreach Culture** identifies priority items needed to shift a congregation to an outreach mindset—ones that have to happen and which either only the pastor can do or he must model. (Even if you're not a pastor, still feel free to read it, though, and encourage, support, and appreciate his efforts!)



Watch the Bs, Change the Ts

Changing culture means changing shared thought habits. However, people's thoughts—the Ts—are hidden. It is their behaviors—the Bs—that are visible. Hence, the third principle is **WATCH THE BS, CHANGE THE TS**.

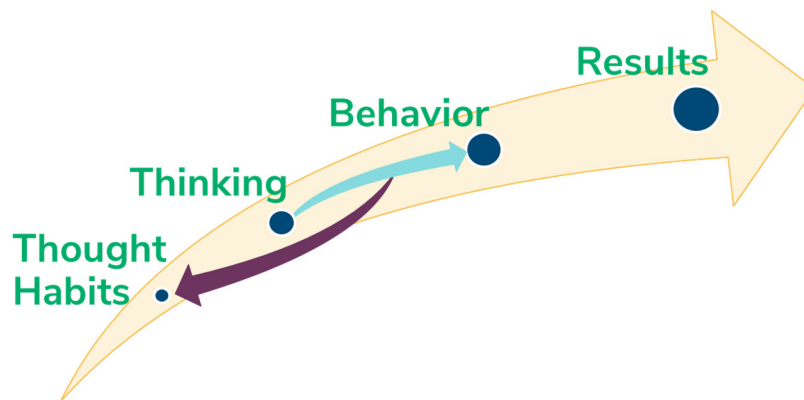


The **EVERYONE OUTREACH** workshop is designed to help folks explore some new ways of thinking. However, having these new thoughts isn't a culture change; it is just the first step. You have a new path in the forest of your mind, but it is just the equivalent of a path hacked through the jungle with a machete. Meanwhile, our established thought habits are pristine boulevards without any other traffic—that is the path our thoughts will be inclined to take. Then how do you build up that new path so it is the preferred route; how do you **CHANGE THE TS**? There are three keys

1. **REPETITION** of acting upon the new way of thinking
2. **RESULTS** from behavior produced by the new way of thinking
3. **REINFORCEMENT** for and **REFLECTION** upon the new way of thinking

REPETITION of acting upon the new way of thinking

Just like practicing a musical instrument or any sport, getting our mental reps in will make things easier in the future; it will build the mental path. Every time we think differently and consequentially act differently (the light blue arrow in the image below), we are making that an easier path to travel and helping shift the conscious thought into a subconscious thought habit. This is represented by the purple arrow in the diagram below.



RESULTS from behavior produced by the new way of thinking

The results that arise from a behavior can help shift the conscious thought that led to that behavior into a subconscious thought habit. Here it is of vital importance how we frame the result.

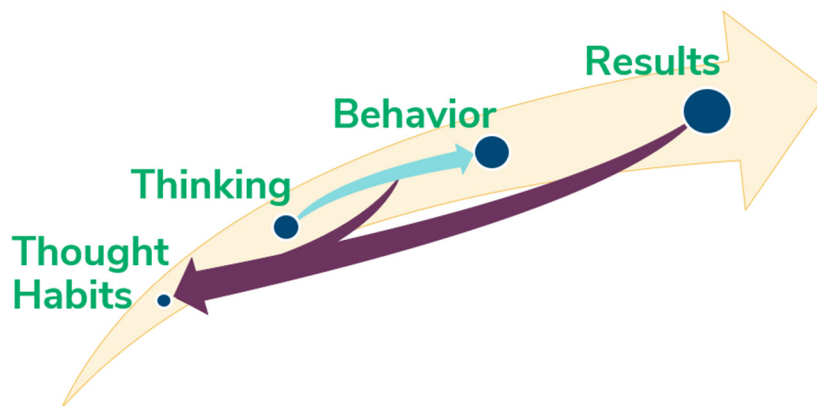
For example, let's say someone has some new thinking, namely, "God has placed me here in this neighborhood where I live, so I need to reach out to my unchurched neighbors." Their new behavior is they strike up a conversation with their neighbor, with a goal of somehow connecting them to the gospel. As a result, in that conversation they invite their neighbor to church.

The invitation to church is the result. Isn't that awesome! New thinking led to new behavior and produced a new result!

But what if the neighbor declines the invitation? This is where framing the result is absolutely critical. If we frame the result as a declined invitation—something we do not control and may only lightly influence—it will not reinforce the new thinking, and we're not helping shift it into a thought habit. We'll see the result as a failure.

If we frame the result as an invitation made—something we do control—we can view the result as a success! This will reinforce the new thinking and help shift it into a thought habit. This is represented by the additional purple arrow in the diagram below.

How we frame the results is another way the journey is **LEADER LED**.



REINFORCEMENT for and REFLECTION upon the new way of thinking

Here's where the **WATCH THE BS** comes in. When we see or hear about a new/different behavior that seems consistent with the desired new thinking, we'll want to reinforce that. However, we'll need to NOT assume the thinking that drove that behavior. The Ts are hidden; only the Bs are visible. That means we'll need to have discussions similar to those we had in the workshop, sharing not just what we did or did not do but also why we acted that way, which probably will include our feelings and or fears in that moment.

How do we promote those types of discussions? The ongoing meetings with outreach partners are intended to encourage that. Another avenue lies in any post-workshop events—such as some of the scripted plays—that bring folks together to look at corporate outreach. Make sure that part of the event also includes some paired share and then group discussion focused on this. See the **Using the Playbook** section for more thoughts on this.

Ensure Critical Mass



Organizational culture is self-perpetuating; you can view organizations as having a strong cultural-change immune system. A little bit here and a little bit there is unlikely to move the needle or shift the culture. That's why the fourth principle is **ENSURE CRITICAL MASS**. For a cultural shift to really take hold, the effort needs to be **BIG** enough in several dimensions:

1. Number of folks initially involved
2. Duration of effort
3. Density of effort

Number of Folks Involved

You must **ENSURE CRITICAL MASS** with regard to the number of people initially involved in changing their thinking. That is why the **EVERYONE OUTREACH** workshop has minimum participation requirements. The idea that three or four people could travel to a workshop, pick up some insights plus a few thoughts on new ways to do things, and then go back and shift the culture in their congregation is a bit far-fetched. It could happen, but those three or four individuals would need to be really strong leaders who have great influence and are super focused on and in sync with the culture shift.

If, instead, **MANY** people have some insights and a few thoughts on new ways to do things, you simply have a higher viral load for the new way of thinking "infection" to overcome the organization's cultural-change immune system. Add in the point that given a big enough group, you'll likely find a few folks in the organization who will be "super-spreaders"—probably a few folks who are really revved up from the workshop and are already very active in the church, so they've got a lot of opportunities to interact with others and influence them—and you can see why **ENSURE CRITICAL MASS** with regard to the number of folks at the initial workshop is important.

This can feel like a burden, but it is also a boost to your building of an outreach culture. With more folks involved, there is just naturally more reinforcement going on. Those who were unable to attend the workshop will have more opportunities to be "exposed" by others. Said by no congregation ever: "I wish we hadn't had so many attendees in the **EVERYONE OUTREACH** workshop."

Duration of Effort

Culture change is done collectively, one person at a time.

Ponder that for a bit . . .

The congregation's shared thought habits need to shift, but that shift occurs person by person. Among those who attend the workshop, different folks had different insights. The focus of their **I Wills** is a bit different. The degree to which they act upon those **I Wills** will vary. Then add in the fact that not everyone in the congregation attended the workshop. Everyone is on their own personal timeline to adoption of new thought habits.

The workshop is a catalyst for the culture change; applying these principles will act as an accelerant. Yet, the timing for your congregation's culture shift will be uniquely your congregation's own.

The answer to the question “How long will it take?” is “Until it is done.” Likely not the answer you were looking for, but the most accurate one we can give. **ENSURE CRITICAL MASS** with regard to the duration; old thought habits die hard, and there are a lot of folks involved.

Density of Effort

Here are some words that can be used to describe an effective effort to shift culture:



Which one of those words worries you the most?

What one person sees as a pervasive—frequent—multi-faceted effort, another individual can see as overwhelming—incessant—redundant. So how do you find the balance?

Let’s look at two cases and consider possible approaches.

| Case 1: Mostly One-offs | Case 2: Pervasive and Multi-faceted |
|--|---|
| One meeting starter a month | Multiple Bible studies about outreach |
| Folks who attended the workshop get the EVERYONE OUTREACH email reminder once every other week | Multiple email every month from multiple sources; even folks who didn’t attend the workshop are seeing more things about outreach |
| Occasionally there’s a sermon with a significant outreach theme | Pastor(s) frequently encourage outreach and share personal outreach stories in sermon |
| Outreach partners meet once after the workshop and then fizzle | Outreach partners continue meeting, at least once a month but usually every other week |
| One scripted play in the next year after the workshop | Several scripted plays in the next six months, sometimes repeated for different groups in the congregation |
| Most folks didn’t sign up for EO texts | Most folks get twice-a-week EO text reminders; even those who did not attend the workshop |
| Pastor has shared a story about a conversation with the unchurched | Pastor is always sharing stories in Bible classes and conversations about his interactions with the unchurched |
| EVERYONE OUTREACH workshop = one-time event | A follow up EVERYONE OUTREACH workshop is scheduled for those who missed the first one |

If you're asked to place a bet on which congregation is more likely to build an outreach culture, no one is putting money on the first case. The second case just has more stuff supporting the culture shift.

But it is NOT just about how much effort there is. It is also about breaking through and getting past the noise from all the other things going on in our lives. The same quantity of events, emails, sermons, conversations, etc., spread out over a 10-time longer period is not 1/10th as effective; it is more likely only 1/100th as effective.

Woah! 1% as effective?

Yep.

Consider just a few items from the list above. Say someone has one meeting a month where outreach is discussed. But some members in your congregation may have a hundred meetings or more per month. How big of an impact in helping change thought habits does that one meeting provide? Or how about the twice-a-month email reminder of concepts from the workshop; what impact will that have on the member who routinely gets over 500 emails a week at work?

You need a pervasive, frequent, and multi-faceted approach—a high-density effort—to be able to break through the noise of everything else. You need to **over**communicate about outreach; it needs to feel like you're repeating yourself again and again and over and over because it might take the umpteenth time for the message to be even seen or heard.

All this may seem like a bit of a bummer, but there's good news here, too. Doubling your effort in the first six months isn't twice as impactful; it's more like four times as impactful. And if you increase the density of your effort, not only is the desired culture shift WAY more likely, but the duration of time to get there is reduced as well.

So go back and look at that word cloud again. It is still true that what one person sees as a pervasive—frequent—multi-faceted effort, another individual can see as overwhelming—incessant—redundant. The point of this section is that you're not trying to find balance. If you're really hitting the mark, someone will see it as a bit much, but for most folks it will simply register. Until you hear a squeal or two about the non-stop outreach stuff, you haven't overcommunicated with anyone.

Evaluate Artifacts



The fifth and final principle is to **EVALUATE ARTIFACTS**. Sounds kind of like an archeological dig, doesn't it? In a way it is! Artifacts are visible, surface manifestations of culture such as systems, processes, structures, objects, phrases, rituals, etc. Artifacts can act as an “external memory” that cue or trigger the “right way” to do things.

Artifacts that trigger perception, thinking, or behaviors associated with FROM thinking are **anchors**; these perpetuate the old culture and should be eliminated.

Activators are new artifacts that trigger perception, thinking, or behaviors associated with TO thinking. The unfamiliar path of TO thinking requires more mental energy; **activators** are a catalyst, lowering the mental energy to proceed. Thus, you can view **activators** as exit ramps to depart from the default FROM

path. Creating these makes it much more likely for the new thinking to become an auto-pilot response, i.e., a thought habit.

Here are some examples of things that could be **anchor** artifacts:

NOTE: These could be anchors based on the thinking the artifacts promote and the behaviors that show up as a result.

- Meeting agendas that never include anything about outreach.
- An evangelism committee structure that is big on congregational events, advertising, and new guest follow-up but doesn't have anyone assigned to equip the saints for personal outreach. (Roles and responsibilities are powerful artifacts; if something is "my job," folks tend to focus on that.)
- Assigned greeters. (If something is NOT "my job," folks tend to NOT focus on that.)
- Perhaps something as seemingly trivial as referring to that person who walks through the church door for the first time as a "visitor" (as opposed to a "guest") could be an **anchor**.

Here are some examples of things that could be **activator** artifacts:

- Starting all monthly meetings with **EVERYONE OUTREACH** meeting starters.
- A comment by the pastor before dismissing the congregation that welcomes guests and invites them to have a cup of coffee because "We'd love to have the opportunity to get to know you!"
- A geo-marker set on my phone that automatically reminds me when I arrive at Mike's Barber Shop that one of my **I Wills** is to reach out to Mike.

If you're interested in looking at some more activators, **Scripted Play #3** is basically creating a bunch of **activator** artifacts. Go ahead and flip through that section and see how many you can find! (The list that we identified is inside the back cover.)

Activators work best when

1. They are simple to understand—double bonus if it makes it feel strange to not act in a way consistent with the TO thinking!
2. They exist when and where the behavior will take place (the geo-marker example above may seem strange, but it sure lands firmly on this point!), and
3. People are already motivated to think in the new way; they just need a nudge. Hopefully, the workshop and events in the scripted plays for post-workshop set the stage for this.

One last point: artifacts are visible, surface manifestations of culture, but anchors are not always easy to recognize as triggering FROM thinking. When you **EVALUATE ARTIFACTS**, finding and eliminating **anchors** is usually more effective as a team sport. Ditto for creating **activators**; the more folks involved in creating them, the more folks who are pre-dispositioned to that helpful nudge.

THE TARGETED CULTURE SHIFT

The goal of **EVERYONE OUTREACH** is to build an outreach culture in every participating congregation. For this to happen, congregational ministry and member mindsets must shift from what they are to what they need to be. Not all of the FROMs will be present in every congregation. Understanding each of the five targeted culture shifts will help you on the congregation's culture-changing journey. Here are the shifts we are striving for:

| FROM | | TO |
|---|---|---|
| "Over there" outreach (Mission fields are funded; evangelism team cheered on) | ⇒ | We/Me outreach (Each ministry area and member is actively working to reach out to the lost) |
| Reluctant or resistant to change (Us first) | ⇒ | Joyfully embracing change as needed to reach the lost (Them first) |
| Hesitant to reach out to the lost because of X | ⇒ | Compelled to reach out to the lost despite X |
| Outreach may happen | ⇒ | Outreach an intentional focus for all (prioritized, planned, funded, resourced & discussed all the time) |
| "All are welcome" (No one is actively turned away) | ⇒ | "All are welcomed" (Members' actions give guests a sense of belonging) |

Each of these is important in building a congregational outreach culture. Let's go through them one by one.

FROM *Over There Outreach* TO *We/Me Outreach*

WELS members want lost souls to be found. They want the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ to be heard so that many might come to faith and be saved. We can be certain that WELS members want this because the Scriptures tell us that the Holy Spirit of God lives in Christians (I Corinthians 3:16), and we know that it is the will of God that the lost are found and the gospel is proclaimed.

WELS members want this. However, many (perhaps most) WELS members are much more comfortable if the proclamation of the gospel is done by someone other than themselves. They enthusiastically support missions both at home and abroad with their prayers and offerings. They are excited about the congregational evangelism efforts being carried out by their pastor and evangelism committee. In other words, they are wonderfully comfortable with outreach being done "over there." But, being involved themselves is either too terrifying to consider or given too little thought to evoke any emotion whatsoever.

We want to see this mindset change. While we certainly want support for missions and congregational outreach to continue, we also want every member and every ministry area to see it as their privilege and responsibility to be involved in reaching the lost. Rather than simply cheering on the outreach efforts of others, we want God's people to get in the game.

FROM Reluctant, Resistant, or Restrictive to Change TO Joyfully Embracing Change as Needed to Reach the Lost

Ask the average person whether people like change, and they will probably smile and say, “No.” People are resistant to many changes; people like what they are used to. Church people, in particular, are famous for being allergic to change. “This is the way we have always done it.”

Doing things the same way for a long period of time can be a blessing. It can make people feel comfortable. It can provide a sense of stability in an ever-changing world. And, certainly, Christians are conscience-bound not to change anything mandated by God’s Word.

There are times, however, when Christians are conscience-bound to change something in their lives or the life of their congregation. If there are adiaphora in their ministry that can be shown to stand in the way of reaching the lost with the gospel, change is necessary. It is simply selfish to hold on to an adiaphoric tradition because “I like it,” even though I know it is standing in the way of the salvation of souls. The apostle Paul put it so succinctly in chapter nine of his first letter to the Corinthian Christians. After carefully explaining all the rights he had as an apostle of Jesus Christ, he explained that he did not insist on using those rights. “On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ” (v. 12). He gave up his own rights and preferences if that is what it took to reach lost souls. “I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some” (v. 22). This is the mindset WELS members must have if they are to reach the lost in their communities.

EVERYONE OUTREACH helps members discover their own attitudes toward change and whether those attitudes need adjusting to joyfully embrace changes necessary to reaching the lost in their lives and communities.

It is worth noting that **EVERYONE OUTREACH** does not tell your congregation what changes need to be made. Rather, we help members evaluate their attitudes toward change so that you can evaluate proposed changes in a more healthy and helpful way.

FROM Hesitant to Reach Out to the Lost because of X TO Compelled to Reach Out to the Lost Despite X

Excuses for not being involved in outreach are legion. This is true both for individual Christians as well as congregations. Personal excuses include such things as having an introverted personality, being too busy, not liking confrontation, not knowing the Bible well enough, and not wanting to bother people. Congregational excuses include such things as the church building not being in a good location or not having a large enough sanctuary, the community being transient, the lack of an organist to lead worship, or an aging membership. When members focus on these personal and congregational shortcomings, they are paralyzed, and outreach does not happen.

EVERYONE OUTREACH helps participants see what a hindrance this attitude is to reaching the lost. And it encourages them to be so compelled to reach out that they will do so despite those challenges. For example, rather than letting an introverted personality stop someone from reaching out, they see their listening skills as an aid to reaching out. Or rather than throwing their hands in the air because they

have a small sanctuary, a congregation adds another weekly worship service because reaching the lost is not an option; it is a necessity.

FROM Outreach Happens TO Outreach an Intentional Focus for All

Congregational ministry is complex. There are many moving parts. Things are happening. People are busy. Unfortunately, all this busyness can create an accidental culture rather than an intentional culture. This means the squeakiest wheel tends to get the oil. And, let's face it, the unchurched tend not to be doing much squeaking. They are contentedly going about their lives, not knocking down the door of the church demanding attention.

EVERYONE OUTREACH helps congregations intentionalize outreach so that it is not put on the ministerial back burner. Rather than aimlessly going about their business, every ministry area in the congregation will regularly be asking how it can contribute to the outreach efforts of that congregation. Rather than hoping that someday an outreach opportunity might arise, individual members will be looking for and creating those opportunities in their daily lives. Outreach will cease to be something that might happen and begin to be something that will happen.

FROM All are Welcome TO All are Welcomed

Being new to any group of people can be intimidating and uncomfortable; just ask a first-year student in high school or the person new to the workplace. When the Lord brings a new soul to a congregation, that soul has myriad reasons to feel less than comfortable: a building full of strangers, the uncertainty of what to do when worshiping, unknown customs, and the feeling of being an outsider.

Most congregations are pleased when new souls visit and would say that those souls are welcome. While this is certainly a good thing, it is not enough. It is not enough to say that everyone is welcome. Congregations need to do all they can to see to it that everyone is welcomed.

What's the difference? Imagine a young man who has been dating a girl for a couple of months. She invites him to meet her family and celebrate Thanksgiving in their home. When he shows up, his girlfriend opens the door to let him in and then disappears into the kitchen to help with dinner. He is left standing in the foyer, uncertain where to go or what to do. He spends the next few hours being ignored by everyone in the house. When it finally comes time for him to leave, he mentions to his girlfriend how uncomfortable he was all afternoon. "Why?" she asks with surprise on her face. "Everyone loved having you here. You are always welcome."

Now imagine that same young man ringing the doorbell on Thanksgiving, but when the door opens, his girlfriend, along with her parents, welcome him inside with smiles and warm greetings. Her father asks him to assist in setting the table. When they finish, he is given a cold beverage to drink while being taken on a tour of the house and listening to a brief history of the family. After the tour, the turkey is done. He joins everyone in bringing the various dishes of food to the table. Once everyone is seated, his potential future father-in-law leads the family in a prayer of thanks in which he mentions the blessing of "this fine

young man who has joined us on this special day.” When the time comes for the young man to take his leave, he is escorted to the door by the entire family, all of whom assure him that he is always welcome.

Do you see the difference? In the second scenario, the family has not simply communicated that it is okay with them that the young man is in their home. They have made it clear that they want him to be part of the family. They have done this with their words and their actions. They have not only served him but given him the opportunity to serve, which deepens the sense of belonging. He is not “other” but “one of us.”

WELS congregations have historically communicated to new souls that “Once you have completed steps 1–10 of our membership process, you will be allowed to be part of us.” While it is certainly still the case that we want new souls to be instructed and confess their agreement with our beliefs before they express Christian fellowship by joining as members and receiving the Lord’s Supper, we want them to feel welcomed long before this.

How can we make this happen? Opportunities abound. **EVERYONE OUTREACH** could never identify all the possibilities. Nor do we want it to. That is for each congregation to determine. What **EVERYONE OUTREACH** strives to do is shift the mindset of the congregation from passively wanting people to feel welcome to actively helping them feel welcomed.

We pray that **EVERYONE OUTREACH** will help your congregation make some or all these mind shifts so that, Lord willing, more souls come into contact with the eternal gospel and are saved for eternal life.

THE PASTOR'S ROLE IN BUILDING AN OUTREACH CULTURE

“Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.”

Acts 20:28

Could anything be more overwhelming for a Christian pastor than these words of the apostle Paul? To be entrusted with the welfare of eternal souls—souls that belong to God himself, souls so precious to him that he paid for them with his own blood. Who could possibly be up to such a task? Certainly, no sinful human being.

And yet, that is precisely whom God calls to pastor his people—sinful human beings. In his omniscience and omnipotence, he overcomes the sins and shortcomings of his under-shepherds to care for the souls comprising his Church.

As one of those under-shepherds, you continually seek ways to better serve, even as you are aware you will never do so perfectly. We hope this portion of the **EVERYONE OUTREACH** Post-Workshop Playbook might help you better serve your flock as you build an outreach culture.

One of the ways a shepherd serves his flock is by leading it, setting a direction for it. This is certainly true of the shepherds of God's people. The members of your congregation watch what you do and how you do it and follow your lead. If your congregation is going to have an outreach culture, you will play a key role in making this happen.

How do you lead your people to be outreach minded and outreach active? Primarily by being outreach minded and active yourself—culture change is **LEADER LED**. Here are five ways you can lead your flock toward an outreach culture.

Spend time with unchurched people

This can be difficult. A pastor's schedule is often full just seeing to the needs of his flock. There is always more that could be done to minister to the saints. But this is precisely why it is important for you to carve out time to spend with unchurched people. If you do not intentionally do so, you may find that you are never interacting with the unchurched. Here are some reasons why it is important for you to spend time with them:

- You will have opportunities to share the gospel. This alone is reason enough.
- As you converse with the unchurched, you will gain a better understanding of the way they look at the world, God, religion, etc. This is important if you are going to help your people understand the views of the unchurched in your community.
- Seeing the Lord bless your outreach efforts will be energizing as He changes hearts and lives.
- Your interactions will provide you with stories to share with your people.

To do this, you will likely need to take some other tasks or activities off your plate. One of the plays to run post-workshop is a discussion with your congregational leaders on this topic. Having this discussion is highly recommended as both this type of discussion—helping highlight outreach as a priority—and your spending time with unchurched people are important parts of the culture shift!

Share your “time with unchurched people” experiences with others

Stories are powerful. When you tell your people about your conversations with the unchurched, it will inspire them to want to have similar conversations. You will also be indirectly instructing them in how to do so as you explain the way you went about it. And you will have opportunities to reveal your heart as you share your own challenges, fears, and uncertainties about witnessing. At the same time, you can say, “In spite of me, here is what God did!” Share these experiences in sermons, Bible classes, and casual conversations.

Promote your New Member class; encourage your people to bring a guest

Schedule a BIC a few times each year, whether someone has signed up for it or not. Scheduling a class provides you with a deadline for reaching out to prospects and inviting them. It also allows you to promote the class weeks ahead of time so your members can invite their unchurched acquaintances.

Provide regular witness training

Once or twice each year, provide your people with training for personal witnessing. Use your own resources or make use of those produced by the WELS Commission on Evangelism. And it’s okay to use the same materials more than once. Those who missed it the first time can now be trained. Those who attended can use the review.

Preach with the lost in mind

Perhaps the simplest outreach strategy is to encourage your members to invite the unchurched people in their lives to join them for worship and/or Bible Information Class. When the unchurched take your members up on the invitation, they come into contact with the gospel, the only tool used by the Holy Spirit to bring sinful hearts to saving faith in Christ.

When God uses your people to bring the lost to the Divine Service, you will want to be prepared to preach God’s truths in a way that can be understood by those lost souls. What does this entail? Too much to cover here. But you can begin by imagining you are explaining your sermon text to an unchurched person, someone new to the Bible, its stories, themes, and truths. What would you say? How would you say it? (This is another reason it is so important for you to be regularly spending time with unchurched people. Only then will you be able to put yourself in their shoes as you prepare your message each Sunday. What are their fears, concerns, and questions? The more time you spend with them the more you will know.)

Another reason preaching with the lost in mind is so critical in building an outreach culture in your congregation is that, over time, it instills confidence in your people so when they bring a friend to worship, the message shared will resonate with that person. So, even when there are no guests in worship, preaching as if there were serves an important purpose.

Perhaps you can think of other ways you can shepherd your people toward an outreach culture. That’s great! God bless all your efforts to do so for the furthering of his glory and the salvation of lost souls.

QUICK START GUIDE

A single 5-hour EVERYONE OUTREACH workshop will NOT all by itself change your culture. Rather, it helps you see where you are, where you could be, and gives you good field position to start your drive to build an outreach culture. If you're the type of group that just likes to jump in and do it, then this **Quick Start Guide** can help you get going.

- ❑ Use the **Let's GO Bible Study** in your main adult Bible study class - start within two weeks of the EVERYONE OUTREACH workshop.
- ❑ Council discussion – first council meeting after workshop
 1. Have your congregational leaders read **The Targeted Culture Shift** (p. 10-13) as prep work for the council meeting. Then, discuss the following questions:
 - What struck you as you read through *The Targeted Culture Shift*?
 - How did our shared thought habits in these areas show up in the workshop?
 - Do all five FROM|TOs apply to our congregation?
 - Is one of the TOs already a strength that we can build upon?
 - Which one of the FROM|TOs might be our biggest challenge to shift?

HINT: Give each question enough space for a thorough discussion. Getting as many viewpoints as possible on the table will create a richer, more vivid picture and help build the culture.
 2. Have your congregational leaders read **The Pastor's Role in Building an Outreach Culture** (p. 14 & 15) as prep work for the council meeting. Then discuss what tasks or activities will come off pastor's plate for him to have time to spend with the unchurched. (**NOTE:** do not discuss IF something comes off the plate, but rather WHAT comes off the plate. Culture change doesn't occur by keeping things exactly the same!)
- ❑ Run **Scripted Play #1: Welcoming | Belonging Brainstorming** (p. 18-20) – within six weeks of the workshop, but after the council meeting above. Use a simpler brainstorming approach if you wish; just capture people's ideas and implement them!
- ❑ Run a 2-month trial of **EVERYONE OUTREACH Monthly Meeting Starters** (see 1st paragraph on p. 33) in all groups/areas of ministry (Yes, choir, Sunday school teachers meeting, board of trustees, etc.) and ask for feedback after the 2nd month (e.g., What discussions did these generate? Are you doing anything new or different as a result? Do you plan on continuing use in your group?)

Once you've completed the **Quick Start Guide**, it is up to you to decide what you will do next to further build and strengthen an outreach culture. Just be sure to be doing something—as a garden shows the work and care put into it, your congregational culture will reflect the degree to which you have intentionally and deliberately nurtured and cared for it.

USING THE PLAYBOOK

Culture change is done collectively, one person at a time. All development, strengthening, and building of new thought habits occurs at the individual level. That means individual **I Wills** and discussions are really important. So why do group activities at all? And what should the emphasis be when we do have follow-up congregational activities?

The why is simple: we need the feedback loop to reinforce the new **individual** thinking and show that this is **collectively** shared. We come together to help build up these new habits in each other, validating for each other that this is who we are collectively becoming and exchanging our additional thoughts and behaviors to build the culture further. This is the church being the church, as Paul urged:

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Given that as the purpose, the emphasis closely follows. We need to:

1. Create opportunities for folks to REFLECT upon and SHARE their new way of thinking, their behaviors, and results.
2. Encourage each other for both progress and results.
3. Provide opportunities to build further by looking at "What else I/WE can do to share the gospel?"

Subsequent sections of the playbook provide three scripted plays plus a handful of other simple plays to get you started. The scripted plays are:

- **Scripted Play #1: Welcoming | Belonging Brainstorming** – One of the items on the **Quick Start Guide**. Suitable for a two-hour event after worship.
- **Scripted Play #2: Outreach Assessment** – A flexible play for groups large and small and an opportunity to use your new thinking to re-evaluate items in five areas of ministry: Worship, Evangelism, Youth Ministry, Facility, and Other. As a large group event, it can be used as a two-hour session.
- **Scripted Play #3: Processes to Help Guests Feel Welcomed** – A chance to consider some artifacts that can act as activators for new thinking and put in place a process to help ensure that welcoming guests is intentional rather than accidental.

These scripted plays and the other items in the **A Few Other Plays to Run** section help keep outreach in front of people and, through their discussions and actions, reinforce the culture shift.

As you come up with your plan, remember the principle of **ENSURE CRITICAL MASS**. Maximizing the number of folks involved and filling up the timeline (to create a "high-density" effort) will both help the culture shift occur more quickly.

SCRIPTED PLAY #1: WELCOMING | BELONGING BRAINSTORMING

This is a great play to call as your first congregational event, which is why it is in the **Quick Start Guide**. Just looking at your Sunday morning experience from the perspective of a first-time guest can be eye-opening. Everyone can participate, even if they did not attend the workshop.

Making changes or trying something new is a visible affirmation of the congregation's commitment to be more outreach minded. On the other hand, doing a very visible brainstorming session and then taking a long, long time to make just a one or two minor changes says something as well. Quick implementation of several items that are visible to everyone makes for a stronger affirmation, so going into this with folks ready to implement ideas is key to supporting the culture change.

Materials Needed for Brainstorming

- Markers
- Whiteboard or easel for each group to capture ideas from the brainstorm. (Large 25" x 30" post-it sheets are a very flexible option for this.)
- 8" wide x 6" high post-its
- Dots for voting

Initial Homework Assignment.

- "Look at your Sunday morning experience from the perspective of a first-time guest."

Prep Work for Brainstorming Session

- Pick a date.
- Figure out the plan for food. This is 100% optional but also 100% awesome. Brainstorming and food simply are not combined often enough!
- Publicize. As soon as you know the date, let folks know it (and you may want to mention if there will be food...)
- Plan to Implement. Decide how you'll follow up the ideas from the brainstorming. Will it be by area of ministry? Will a special committee take it on? Will the council own it? The answer will depend on the particulars of your congregation. Stay flexible on this; based on the ideas that come out of brainstorming, you may need to adjust on the fly.
- Publicize. One and two weeks before, make sure you are reiterating the assignment and upcoming session.
- Publicize. A day or two before the service, remind folks—via email or text—about using their best "first-time guest" eyes on Sunday to see what they notice.

Brainstorming Session. Here's a suggested agenda

1. Opening Prayer
2. Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and discuss as a group the following three questions:
 - a. What evidence of Paul's accountability do you see in his words?
 - b. What evidence of Paul's willingness to change do you see in these verses?
 - c. What motivated Paul to think this way?

NOTE: This discussion is repeated from the workshop but is either a good review or a chance to put this in front of folks who did not attend the workshop.

3. Paired Share: What observations did you have this morning from the perspective of a first-time guest?
 4. Group Discussion – What observations did you have this morning from the perspective of a first-time guest?
 5. Food (optional, but in addition to being great fellowship, you give folks a bit of time to digest each other's observations.)
 6. Brainstorming – Part I: **HOW CAN WE BE MORE WELCOMING AND CREATE A SENSE OF BELONGING?**
 - o Remember: what we're trying to do is make people welcome in your church and feel like a part of our family! Anything that makes someone feel like an outsider gets in the way of that.
 - o While our initial exercise was looking at our Sunday experience with "first-time guest eyes," we can expand our brainstorming to include anyone who isn't yet a member, using these three categories:
 - First-time guests
 - Recurring guests that have been attending for a few weeks
 - New Member Class (a.k.a. BIC or Bible Information Class) participants
 - o Break into groups of 6–8. Brainstorm for about 15 to 20 minutes, including time to identify the group's top three ideas.
 - o Have each group write each one of their top three ideas on a separate 8" wide x 6" high post-it and then post them on the wall in front of the group (i.e., each group will have three post-its, one for each idea) and have a spokesperson present them to the larger group.
- NOTE: The top three ideas can be from any combination of categories, i.e., all three from one, two from one, one from another, one from each of the three.
- o Group similar items into a single idea. (Lots of similar items? Yeah! We're seeing the same things! Everything unique? Yeah! We have lots of items to choose from.)

7. Brainstorming Part II: two-dot voting, what should we do next?

- Give everyone two dots (like you used on the calendar exercise).
- Have everyone place their dots on whatever ideas they think the congregation should pursue, using whatever criteria they wish to use (e.g., most impactful, easiest to implement, etc.)
- They may place BOTH dots on a SINGLE idea if they feel very strongly about that one
- or -
They may place each dot on a separate idea.
- Once everyone is done placing dots, look at how the dots were placed. Usually, there are a few “heavy dot getters” and then other ideas that got some dots but not as many. Focus on the ideas with the highest number of dots; that might be a top-two, may be a top-five. It will depend on how the dots were spread out.

8. Brainstorming Part III: Debrief

- Some questions to ask to prompt a discussion:
 - Who is excited about some of these ideas? Why?
 - How long do you think it would take to implement _____?
 - What recurring themes did you see?
- Based on your *Plan to Implement* (from the prep work) and the number of ideas, you can even break up into groups to decide how to implement a few of the top vote-getters! (Let's discuss how we could implement x & y. Pick the group that you want to be in to discuss making this happen! After ten minutes, have each group report on what's the next step.) How awesome would it be to leave this session with something already implemented!?!)
- Let folks know how you'll proceed from here and thank them for their participation!

Follow up. If you're not going to do this, then don't do the brainstorming!!

- Use your *Plan to Implement* (from the prep work) and adjust based on the two-dot top dot getters.
- Be on the lookout for an area that gets a lion's share of actions (e.g., 80% of actions are all about facility improvements. If that happens, don't just load up the maintenance committee with tasks, but load them up with workers, too! Have an “**EVERYONE OUTREACH** facilities workday” to get the number of hands equal to the magnitude of tasks.)
- If your congregation typically finds it hard to get stuff done quickly, then you have the most to gain from doing a brainstorming session and quickly following up on a few items. If it feels different, it will help people think differently!

SCRIPTED PLAY #2: OUTREACH ASSESSMENT

This is another way to bring people back together and think about outreach. This play is scripted for a larger group that splits into several smaller ones, each one covering one of the five checklists (i.e., Worship, Evangelism, Youth Ministry, Facility, or Other)

This assessment could also be broken up by ministry areas and used in committee meetings or as an ongoing effort (month by month, picking up another section of the assessment.) It is intended to be a very flexible tool.

Materials Needed for Brainstorming

- Markers
- Whiteboard or easel for each group to capture ideas from the brainstorming. (Large 25" x 30" post-it sheets are a very flexible option for this.)
- 8" wide x 6" high post-its
- Dots for voting
- Handouts for each of the five checklists (i.e., Worship, Evangelism, Youth Ministry, Facility, or Other)

Prep Work for Brainstorming Session

- Pick a date.
- Figure out the plan for food. This is 100% optional but also 100% awesome. Brainstorming and food simply are not combined often enough!
- Publicize. As soon as you know the date, let folks know it (and you may want to mention if there will be food...)
- Plan to Implement. Decide how you'll follow up the ideas from the brainstorming. Will it be by area of ministry? Will a special committee take it on? Will the council own it? The answer will depend on the particulars of your congregation. Stay flexible on this; based on the ideas that come out of brainstorming, you may need to adjust on the fly.
- Publicize. One and two weeks before, make sure you are promoting upcoming sessions.

Brainstorming Session. Here's a suggested agenda

1. Opening Prayer
2. Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and discuss as a group the following three questions:
 - a. What evidence of Paul's accountability do you see in his words?
 - b. What evidence of Paul's willingness to change do you see in these verses?
 - c. What motivated Paul to think this way?

NOTE: This discussion is repeated from the workshop but is either a good review or a chance to put this in front of folks who did not attend the workshop.

3. Examine the Current State. Break into groups of 6–8, with each one having one of the five checklists. (In a very large session, it's okay to have duplicate groups—it is best to keep this to a 6–8-member group size for the discussion and brainstorming.) Note that in this step, the goal is to just answer each question fully, discussing it as a group for 20 to 30 minutes. Coming up with possible actions to take comes in step 5.
4. Food (optional, but in addition to being great fellowship, you give folks a bit of time to digest each other's observations.)
5. Brainstorming – Part I: **BASED ON OUR DISCUSSION OF THESE QUESTIONS, WHAT COULD WE DO DIFFERENTLY TO IMPROVE OUR OUTREACH IN THIS AREA?**
 - o In the same groups of 6–8, brainstorm for about 20 to 30 minutes, including time to identify the group's top three ideas. If ideas aren't flowing, begin by stepping down the list you just discussed and ask, "Any ideas about this?" You don't need to keep stepping through the list—this is just to prime the pump.
 - o Have each group write each one of their top three ideas on a separate 8" wide x 6" high post-its and then post them on the wall in front of the group (i.e., each group will have three post-its, one for each idea) and have a spokesperson present them to the larger group.

NOTE: The top three ideas can be from any combination of categories, i.e., all three from one, two from one, one from another, one from each of the three.

- o Group similar items into a single idea. (Lots of similar items? Yeah! We're seeing the same things! Everything unique? Yeah! We have lots of items to choose from.)
6. Brainstorming Part II: two-dot voting, what should we do next?
 - o Give everyone two dots (like you used on the calendar exercise).
 - o Have everyone place their dots on whatever ideas they think the congregation should pursue, using whatever criteria they wish to use (e.g., most impactful, easiest to implement, etc.).

- They may place BOTH dots on a SINGLE idea if they feel very strongly about that one
 - or -
 They may place each dot on a separate idea.
- Once everyone is done placing dots, look at how the dots were placed. Usually, there are a few “heavy dot getters” and then other ideas that got some dots, but not as many. Focus on the ideas with the highest number of dots; that might be a top-two or may be a top-five. It will depend on how the dots were spread out.

7. Brainstorming Part III: Debrief

- Some questions to ask to prompt a discussion:
 - Who is excited about some of these ideas? Why?
 - How long do you think it would take to implement _____?
 - What recurring themes did you see?
- Based on your *Plan to Implement* (from the prep work) and the number of ideas, you can even break up into groups to decide how to implement a few of the top vote-getters! (Let's discuss how we could implement x & y. Pick the group that you want to be in to discuss making this happen! After ten minutes have each group report on what's the next step.) How awesome would it be to leave this session with something already implemented!?!)
- Let folks know how you'll proceed from here, and thank them for their participation!

Follow up. If you're not going to do this, then don't do the brainstorming!!

- ❑ Use your *Plan to Implement* (from the prep work) and adjust based on the two-dot top dot getters.
- ❑ Be on the lookout for an area that gets a lion's share of actions (e.g., 80% of actions are all about facility improvements. If that happens, don't just load up the maintenance committee with tasks, but load them up with workers, too! Have an “**EVERYONE OUTREACH** facilities workday” to get the number of hands equal to the magnitude of tasks.
- ❑ If your congregation typically finds it hard to get stuff done quickly, then you have the most to gain from doing a brainstorming session and quickly following up on a few items. If it feels different, it will help people think differently!

OUTREACH ASSESSMENT: WORSHIP

- Is our worship accessible and understandable to guests? Are they able to follow along easily? Might we benefit from weekly worship folders?
- Are the majority of our hymns and songs singable or is much of it challenging to sing?
- Are there perceived needs in our community when it comes to children in worship? If parents desired a staffed nursery so they could concentrate on the message, would we consider that?
- Is there any merit in having a children's message in worship? Is that something our members and/or community feel demonstrates concern for the spiritual welfare of children?
- How do we approach the Lord's Supper if we are expecting many guests, e.g., Christmas Eve or festival Easter?
- Do our members see worship as an opportunity to invite friends, relatives, and neighbors? If so, are they? If not, why?
- How warmly are guests welcomed if they come to worship? What is the process of making them feel welcomed?

OUTREACH ASSESSMENT: EVANGELISM

- Are members trained to share their faith? If so, how often does that training occur? How many participate?
- Are members encouraged to make friends with people (e.g., neighbors) who are unchurched? Do the friendships within the church impede that from happening?
- “Corporate outreach” includes anything a congregation does to get its name in the community or invite the community to some church event, like a worship service. What might be effective ways to do outreach in our context? Mass mailing? Door-to-door canvassing? Facebook ads? Why would we go in that direction?
- What do we see as the primary purpose of our website? Is it to communicate information to members? Is it to tell our community about the congregation?
- Do we attempt to identify newcomers to our parish area? Might it be beneficial to contact newcomers? If so, what would we do for them?
- Do we use existing church programs for outreach? For example, do we have our teens invite unchurched friends to teen group?
- How much do we budget for outreach? What percent of our total budget does it represent?
- How do we obtain contact information of worship guests? Is this method effective?
- Will a worship guest be followed up on? If so, who does what? By when?
- Do we have a prospect list, i.e., names and contact information of people with no real church home? If so, how big is it? What do we do with it?
- How are prospects directed into Bible Information Class? How often is BIC held? Is it scheduled as needed, or do BIC classes start at regular and recurring intervals?
- Do we have a process of assimilating new members? If so, is it working well? Do we survey new members six months in to see if they feel connected?

OUTREACH ASSESSMENT: YOUTH MINISTRY

- Are our youth encouraged to engage in outreach? How?
- Do we have our teens invite unchurched friends to teen group?

NOTE: For the next two items, when examining the current state, it can be helpful to walk through the process step-by-step as part of the discussion. This may be assisted by a handout. Alternatively, using the 8" wide x 6" high post-its and putting each step on an individual post-it may help in the brainstorming as you think about modifications/add-ons.

- Does our ECM have a harvest strategy? If so, how do we attempt to move unchurched parents with children in our childhood ministries to consider joining our congregation? How well is it working?
- Does our school have a harvest strategy? If so, how do we attempt to move unchurched parents with children in our childhood ministries to consider joining our congregation? How well is it working?

OUTREACH ASSESSMENT: FACILITY

- What message, if any, does the exterior of the building communicate to guests?
- What is a guest's first impression when coming into our parking lot?
- What is a guest's first impression when they walk into our entry foyer/narthex? Is it clean or cluttered? Is it clear how they get to the sanctuary?
- What is a guest's first impression when they walk into our sanctuary?
- If a member or guest needs to use the church restroom, is it easy to find? Is it a pleasant experience (e.g., clean, well-stocked, etc.)?
- Is our facility accessible to people with diverse types of special needs?
- Do we have adequate signage?
- Are there more ways we could use our facility to rub shoulders with those in our community (e.g., blood drive, voting precinct)?

OUTREACH ASSESSMENT: OTHER

- What is the workload of our called workers? What about hired staff? Is it reasonable? Does it reflect outreach as a priority?
- How well do things get done? From the birth of a promising idea to implementation, how long does it take? How many people/committees/approvals does that idea have to go through?
- How do members share their thoughts about how things are going? What is the mechanism for that? How are the voices and thoughts of women heard?
- Can women fully utilize their gifts and talents in ways keeping with Biblical gender principles? Are we structured in a way that allows women to serve in public and significant ways, i.e., delineating between positions of organization/service versus positions of authority?
- Are there expectations for church leaders to model ideal membership? If so, are council members and elders expected to conduct personal outreach?
- Is there any sort of loving, brotherly evaluation of one another's mission efforts? If not, why? If so, how is it going?

SCRIPTED PLAY #3: PROCESSES TO HELP GUESTS FEEL WELCOMED

This scripted play is all about building some very specific activator artifacts. Some of these artifacts may already be in place; some may not be realistic given your circumstances (e.g., a very small narthex may not have room for a welcome center.)

This scripted play is also an example of how your congregation could address some of the shortcomings identified in the discussion of the last five points of the **Evangelism** section in **Scripted Play #3: Outreach Assessment**.

The focus of this scripted play is simple: when the Lord brings guests to a congregation, we want them to experience the love and encouragement of God's people. We want them to know we are eager for them to be part of us. For this to happen, relationships with the guests need to be formed and deepened.

How can we make sure this happens? One thing we can do is to put a process in place so that welcoming guests is intentional rather than accidental, something that *will* happen rather than something that *might* happen. There are many ways to approach this. What yours looks like will be determined by your congregational size, staffing, facility, etc. While your process will be unique to your setting, it can be helpful to see an example of such a process. Here is one such example. Note that the number of steps is not very many.

The Sunday Morning Experience

1. The congregation's pastor stands near the entry to the building. He greets members as they enter but is especially on the lookout for guests. He is able to identify a first-time guest when they arrive.
2. After greeting them and exchanging pleasantries, he directs them to the Welcome Center located across the foyer. The Welcome Center is a table staffed by a trained volunteer who greets them warmly, hands them a brochure that explains what happens in worship, and invites them to share their names and contact information if they like.
3. She then directs them to the ushers standing near the doorway to the sanctuary. An usher greets them warmly and shares a worship folder.
4. During worship, everyone is encouraged to fill out a "Connect Card." (This is a second opportunity to capture the guest's contact information.)
5. In his announcements after worship, the pastor gives a special welcome to guests and encourages them to stop by the Welcome Center, where a gift is waiting for them.
6. As they stop to pick up their gift, the Welcome Center volunteer greets them again and invites them to share their contact information if they wish. (This is a third opportunity to capture their information.)
7. She also looks to introduce them to a person or family in the foyer who could visit with them more and perhaps invite them to have a cup of coffee in the nearby coffee bar.

Initial Follow Up

1. After worship on Sunday, a volunteer gathers all the guest information and makes assignments to the congregation's 36-hour volunteers.
2. The volunteers stop at the homes of the guests within 36 hours of their visit to the church. The goal of their visit is not an extended stay but rather to drop off a gift and thank them for visiting.
3. On Monday morning, pastor handwrites a thank-you card and mails it to the guest.
4. On Wednesday, pastor calls the guest to thank them for visiting and ask if the guest has any questions he might answer. He also offers to visit the guest in the next few days to get to know them better.

Ongoing Follow Up

As the guest continues attending worship in the weeks following their initial visit, the pastor looks for opportunities to introduce them to more members of the congregation.

When the guest has attended worship six times or has begun attending the congregation's new member class, the pastor asks if they would be interested in joining one of the congregation's Connect groups. He explains that these are fellowship and service groups in the congregation and would be a great way for the guest to get to know more people and become more active in congregational life. If the guest agrees, the pastor shares their information with the coordinator of the Connect group he believes would be the best fit for the guest. The coordinator of the group then reaches out to the guest and sets up a time for them to meet. After the guest become active in the Connect group, their sense of belonging increases dramatically as they form relationships with other members of the group and as they participate in service projects carried out by the group.

This is just one example of how a congregation might design a system for welcoming guests and intentionally help them quickly feel like they belong. As was mentioned, yours will likely look different. The important thing is to make welcoming guests intentional rather than accidental. What will your plan look like?

Notice that creating this process is basically creating a bunch of activator artifacts that will just trigger behaviors without folks having to think about it.

How many artifacts can you find in the processes above? Go ahead, take a moment to go through the sections above and mark each artifact that you see. When you're done, turn to the last page of the playbook to see a list.

A HANDFUL OF OTHER PLAYS TO RUN

Have a discussion about what thought habits might be getting in the way of your outreach. Then figure out an activator artifact that you can put in place to trigger a new way of thinking. Here are two examples that we particularly like:

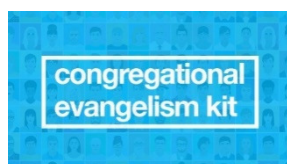
1. One congregation wanted to be more thoughtful about their post-worship “holy huddles” and more intentional about speaking with visitors. They created “the five-minute rule”: for the first five minutes after worship, you were not supposed to talk to your best friends and family—as was their habit—but rather with people you didn’t know that well or—even better!—people you didn’t know at all. To help people remember this, the pastor said, “The five-minute rule is in effect” right after he finished the post-worship announcements and just before he went to the back to greet people. What a powerful trigger for folks to think and act differently!
2. A congregation knew that they did a poor job considering the unchurched as they made decisions. (Makes sense! The unchurched usually don’t provide a list of their concerns for you to address. That wheel isn’t squeaking at all, so the grease is going elsewhere.) They decided to prominently place an empty chair at the council meetings as a reminder to consider the impact of their decisions on outreach. Folks would literally point at the chair and ask, “How will this impact our outreach?”

Share (post at church, email, etc.) the info and QR code for folks who didn't attend the workshop to sign up for **EVERYONE OUTREACH** texts (available at <https://everyoneoutreach.com/library/>).

NOTE: Email reinforcements probably only make sense for attendees, but the texts don't require the workshop experience to be impactful.

Have pastor share one of his **I Wills** in a newsletter or email. Items to include in the discussion are why he chose that **I Will**, how he is progressing with it, and any help that he could use.

In any activity—council meetings, small group Bible study, etc.—provide time for a quick check-in and discussion of **I Wills** and personal actions. Doing this with someone other than your outreach partner provides for cross-fertilization.



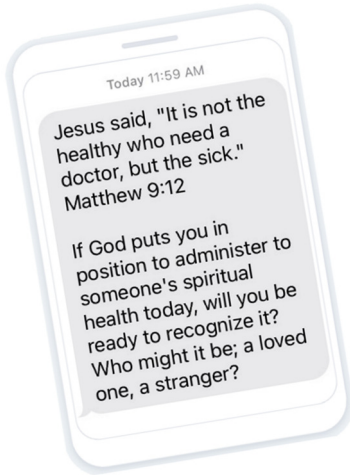
This is video-based training for congregational evangelism leaders, along with supplemental materials. Putting this in place will ensure that your congregation has solid tools to reach the lost in your community.

Available for download at <https://welscongregationalervices.net/congregational-evangelism-kit/>.

Look at the **Additional Reading** list and see if something interests you.

PERSONAL REINFORCEMENTS

Many of the plays just discussed are corporate activities, but as stated previously, culture change occurs collectively, one person at a time. That's why **EVERYONE OUTREACH** includes several elements designed for the individual:



Everyone at the workshop created their own personal **I Will** card. These **I Will** statements are their commitment to what they will do to help build a congregational outreach culture. As such, they are the specific actions that individuals will most likely repeat to build new thought habits. Any post-workshop event should also include a section where folks pair up with someone other than their Outreach Partner to discuss their **I Wills**.

EVERYONE OUTREACH Texts are sent twice weekly (on Tuesday and Friday at 8 a.m. Eastern). To receive these, you must opt-in by texting "EOText" to (866) 551-1504.

EVERYONE OUTREACH Reinforcement Emails are twice-monthly email reminders that are sent the first four months after the workshop. Everyone on the post-workshop attendance list with a provided email address is automatically enrolled.

Outreach Partners periodically meet—our suggestion is at least every two weeks for 20 minutes—to discuss

- Progress and challenges with **I Wills**
- Recent personal outreach experiences
- Outreach in the congregation



OUTREACH BIBLE STUDIES



EVERYONE OUTREACH Monthly Meeting Starters are quick 10-minute Bible studies with an outreach focus. These are designed to assist all areas of ministry keep outreach in mind as they meet. They are available for download at <https://everyoneoutreach.com/library/>.

The materials for the following three Bible studies—videos, study guide sheets, and facilitator notes—are available for download at <https://welscongregationalervices.net/modules/evangelism-modules/>.



One by One is a Bible study based on Pastor David Rosenau's keynote presentation at the WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership in January of 2020.

Using powerful personal stories and drawing from his wealth of experience both as a detective and a parish pastor, Pastor Rosenau helps Christians understand why it is so important to see every soul as a treasure and why we want to be willing to spend the time and effort necessary to share the gospel with each one.

One by One is divided into six parts, each one consisting of a video of a portion of Pastor Rosenau's presentation and a study guide sheet. This Bible study is adaptable for either large or small group Bible studies.



Let's Go! is designed to help Christians to become more comfortable and confident witnesses, encouraging and equipping them to connect unchurched people in their lives to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The course is divided into seven lessons, each consisting of a video and an accompanying Study Guide, and Leader's Guide. The lessons are designed to be used by either large or small group Bible study gatherings as well as by individual Christians. There is also a promotional video and bulletin insert available.



In Season and Out of Season equips Christians to share their faith whether it is convenient or inconvenient, expected or unexpected, using the apostle Paul's evangelism efforts in the city of Philippi as an example. Video-based, it can be used by a large or small group Bible class.

ADDITIONAL READING

Culture shaping, organizational change, how do the unchurched think? These might not be topics that we've thought about to any great extent. Fortunately, someone has—and they've written a book about it! Here are a few books that the **EVERYONE OUTREACH** developers have found informative.

| <u>Topic</u> | <u>Book</u> |
|--|--|
| Change | Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard , Chip & Dan Heath, Broadway Books, 2010 |
| Culture Change and Organizational Health | The Advantage , Patrick Lencioni, Josey-Bass, 2012 |
| Leadership | The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership , John C. Maxwell, Thomas Nelson, 1998 |
| Research on How the Unchurched Think and How to Reach Them | You Found Me , Rick Richardson, InterVarsity Press, 2019 |
| Infusing Evangelistic Passion in a Congregation | Organic Outreach , Kevin Harney, Zondervan, 2011 |
| A Practical Gameplan for Personal Witnessing | Tactics , Gregory Koukl, Zondervan, 2009 |

Please note that not everything in these resources is in agreement with Confessional Lutheranism. You will want to read them with discernment.

Artifacts in Scripted Play # 3

Here's a list of 16 artifacts we identified. You may have found even more! (If, for example, you say the usher role and worship folder are artifacts, we're not going to disagree.)

1. A welcome process from the entrance to the pew
2. A Welcome Center
3. Welcome Center volunteers
4. Connect card
5. Brochure that explains worship
6. Training for Welcome Center volunteers
7. Post-worship special welcome from pastor to guests, inviting them to Welcome Center for a gift
8. Welcome Center gift for first-time guests
9. A 36-hour initial follow-up process for first-time guests
10. 36-hour initial follow-up volunteers
11. 36-hour initial follow-up visit
12. 36-hour initial follow-up gift
13. A hand-written thank you card from pastor
14. A Wednesday follow-up call from pastor
15. New Member Class
16. Connect groups



Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
WELS Commission on Evangelism