

Planning for a Church Library Media Fair

Written by Sue Berthelot

With tight or small budgets it can be difficult for a church library to provide key media to meet the needs of their users. Library team leaders are challenged to be creative and frugal with their dollars. One way to increase your inventory is a media fair. It may include several areas of the library or concentrate on one age group. An inventory of the various subjects and age groups within the collection will help with the decisions.

What: A church library media fair is a great way to make people aware of the library ministry as well as build the collection. Literally, a media fair is a set time and place where desired media is available on tables with prices attached to the items. People visit the tables to select items they would like to purchase for the library collection. A media fair can be a fun and beneficial way to add books and audio media to a library collection.

Who: The library team is responsible for planning and hosting the fair. If your team is small you may need to ask for additional help.

Calendar: A successful fair will require detailed planning. The team leader should consult with the pastor or minister of education and explain the basics of the fair. Once permission for the fair is secured choose a date and submit it to the church planning team or follow procedures for your church. Try to select a date that will not compete with requests for other special gifts to the church. Some libraries opt to have their fair on two consecutive Sundays.

Location: A space that will provide enough room for everyone to move around display tables and view the media is important. The room also needs to be in an easily accessible location for the time selected for the fair. An area other than the library is the best location in order to avoid mixing up media with items already on the shelf. Fellowship hall may be a good choice.

Promotion: A combination of promotional methods will reach all groups within the church.

- Printed items to consider include flyers, Sunday bulletins and posters.
- Visual promotion might be a bulletin board, the church web site or big screen announcements. Place posters in areas that will reach the largest number of your intended audience. Target primary locations for the age groups the fair will attract. Don't forget bathrooms and out of the way locations.
- Verbal announcements in class rooms and other venues will reach another group.
- Activities might include skits or story time.

Book Store: Select a local book store to work with you on this media fair. Investigate the library discount policy as well as their consignment policy. Some stores will have a consignment arrangement while others will have you purchase the items on your church account.

Call your team together and begin your plan of action soon. If this fair is your first, consider having media for only one or two age groups. Do not over do the amount of media in the fair. Remember you have to return unsold items to the book store. Have a great fair!

Check out further information on church library media fairs: [“Implementing a Church Library Media Fair”](#) and [“Wrapping Up a Church Library Media Fair”](#).

Sue Berthelot is a LifeWay Church Library ministry specialist and leader of the Ascension Baptist Church, Gonzales, LA church library team.