



Toolkit 4:

Getting Noticed ~ Using notice-boards creatively

Visitors to churches gravitate towards notice-boards. They say much about the kind of people you are and what you have to offer. It is your opportunity to make a great first impression – this is less about what you say and more about how you say it.

You may have different kinds of notice boards, inside and outside of church, and they all have a specific role to play in how you communicate with visitors and tell your story.

A Boundary Sign

This will be the first opportunity to make a connection with a visitor to your church so it is important that you get this right. Before you plan what it should say consider whether it is in the right place. If you're thinking about getting a new board does it have to go where the old one was? Is this really the best place for it?

There are many different kinds of boundary signs available and yours may be new or a sign that you have had for years that needs some attention. It might be a 'top of the range' model or a very simple board. No matter what it is like it needs to be in good order. No peeling paint or worn off varnish! Ask yourself what the picture below says about the church it represents.



~ Most importantly, be welcoming! Along with the regular service information try to show that your church is alive and open at other times, not just Sundays.

~ Make sure it is easy to read from a safe distance – not too high from the ground - and that the lettering is not too small.

~ Don't be tempted to put too much specific information on it, like names and telephone numbers that could date easily – take into account the fact that your vicar may change and the churchwardens may retire, so think longer-term.

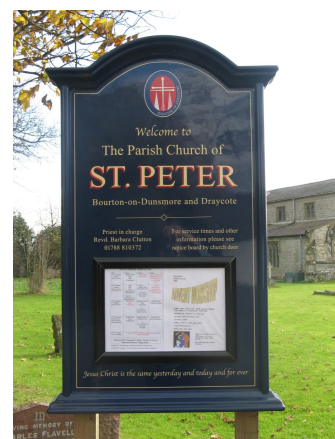
~ It should be easy to get to and access – so not behind an encroaching holly bush or fast growing hedge, or on a slope.

~ If it is a glass or Perspex, lockable type, make sure that it is weatherproof. If your church is in an area frequented by vandals take this into account when planning for a new sign.

~ If you have space to display posters or flyers make sure they always look fresh and that they are changed frequently to maintain a level of interest.

~ Faded, curling, out of date information can give the wrong impression about you. Obviously, the bigger the board the more information you can include, but if it is small keep the information to a minimum. Less is definitely more, as in the example on the right.

~ If you're open to visitors say so - even if it's only for a few hours a day. Use the board to display and explain the details and contact information for those who may want access out of hours or need more specific information about your church's story. If your board is small you may want to signpost them to your porch or inside church itself.



Temporary Signage



A-Boards are a great way of saying –‘We’re Open!’. You can drag them out of church whenever you’re ready to welcome visitors. They should be eye-catching and visible. Just using a statement like

‘Welcome to St. Peter’s! Come inside and explore our beautiful/peaceful/historic/unique church!’

will be enough and if you have a notable or interesting feature to share, say so.

‘Welcome to St. John Baptist. Our Ancient Norman Crypt is open to visitors’

You can always give more information in the porch or inside church itself, but this initial invitation will help entice the visitor to come in and explore further.

Internal Notice-boards

Once you have tempted the visitor into church there are more opportunities to use your notice-boards to say good things about what you have to offer. In the main try to remember the following:

~ Echo the overall look of your boundary board in your internal boards, so be consistent with colours, fonts, styles to create an in-house format. This gives a sense of uniformity and commonality. You can carry this in-house style through other written material or resources you might offer to the visitor. Laminate as much permanent information as you can, with a matt finish.

~ Think about using a stand-alone, double-sided notice-board that you can rotate – one side for visitor information and the other for Sunday worshippers. Make sure you display lots of photographs of your people enjoying social activity to emphasise that you are a living, breathing place and not a museum. Include a smiling snap of your Vicar is a good idea!

~ Nominate someone to be your Notice-board Tsar and tell everyone that this person has responsibility for maintaining and managing the space. If anyone wants to display information it has to go through this person who monitors the material and keeps it up to date. There is nothing more disappointing than seeing an advert for a church fete held three weekends ago!



Special Space for Visitors

~ If you have room reserve space on a specific board to welcome your visitors and put this close to the door. Say where the nearest public loo is or where the visitor can get a good lunch. There might be an excellent walk that can be accessed from church so if there is, tell them about it. Make sure you don’t lump this kind of information in with the flower rota or the PCC minutes!

If you would like help or support with any of the issues highlighted here please contact Divine Inspiration on 024 7652 1346 or by e-mail on helen.mcgowan@divine-inspiration.org.uk .

The full Toolkit can be downloaded from the Ambassador page of the website

Go to www.divine-inspiration.org.uk for more information and advice to help you improve your church’s welcome to visitors.

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