

# Holding Your Church In Someone Else's Facility

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Holding church gatherings in a facility that is not yours is a challenge! Everything you need to use must be transported, unpacked, set up, torn down, packed, transported, and stored. All this challenges every ministry, and all who serve in those ministries. Here are some principles to guide you.

## 1. Communicate, Support And Train The Personnel

Everything you do in this “pilgrim” phase of your church development relies on the people involved! Everyone involved must be consistently encouraged and communicated with. They must be trained and teamed with others. Ask God to help you build “team spirit” within each individual team, and corporately as an entire church team. Each of the individual teams needs a team leader. These leaders are encouraging, friendly people who see the “big picture,” and who can make any adjustments needed in the effectiveness of the team effort. Building effective, supportive team spirit requires money, food, fun, appropriate touching, and plenty of kindness. Remember that people will continue to sacrifice if they feel they are valued and needed. The individual teams of people include:

- a. Worship
- b. Greeters
- c. Parking
- d. Children's Ministry (CM)
- e. Security
- f. Ushers
- g. Refreshments
- h. Set up / tear down
- i. Tech crew



## 2. Welcoming signs

Clear, easy-to-read signs are critical to welcome people and to prevent confusion. They also communicate the vision. The signs should be uniform in their design and layout, and include large print with strategic, limited words. The signs should be placed in specific areas to assist in getting the people from the parking lot to the sanctuary or to the children's ministry (CM) area. Here is a short list of where the signs should be placed:

- a. Parking Lot (“Welcome” with arrow to main entrance)
- b. Direction sign to CM area (direction sign to CM area)
- c. Vision signs (near the refreshment area and CM area)



## 3. Greeters

People enjoy a “personal touch,” but they don't like feeling like they are entering a “greeter gauntlet” with too many greeters. It is important to greet people once or twice, but more than that might be considered “bothersome.” If you place a greeter at the transition point from the parking lot to the facility entrance, and another greeter at the entrance to the sanctuary or the CM area, you have a good, balanced, approach to greeting. Beyond those two specific greeters, everyone else on the ministry team (refreshment people, ushers, CM check-in team members, etc.) should be pleasant and kind, but they don't necessarily need to “greet” everyone.



## 4. Refreshments (coffee / donuts)

Food and pleasant beverages have always been a comfortable part of ministry. Jesus incorporated food many times in His ministry. There is something about enjoying a warm drink and a goodie that makes a person feel special and valued. A refreshment area doesn't need to be fancier

than a “pop up” cover and a table. There should be a sign that identifies the area as a refreshment area. The issue of whether to charge for the items or not is an issue that must be decided based on the costs of the items and the church budget. There is a financial “trade-off” between welcoming people and investing in the sense of community. The cost of providing free refreshments vs. appearing to want to “turn a buck” is a critical discussion point. Ask God to send someone who would be willing to support the refreshment ministry to provide these items for free. The person who supervises the refreshments can be the person to monitor the costs and benefits of the price, contributions, etc.



## 5. Background Music

The concept of “ambience” is critical during this phase of church development. Sharing someone else’s facility is often not too comfortable, so soothing background music helps relax all who are involved. Much like the soothing background music at Disneyland or Disney World, it adds a “subliminal” feeling of safety and calm. Choose instrumental music rather than music with words. Background music with words only adds to the sound “clutter” and may even cause people to feel more anxious. The environment outside the sanctuary or CM area should be an area where pleasant conversations occur between people. The background music should enhance these conversations rather than compete with them. Choose background music that includes acoustic guitar, soft piano, or harp music rather than driving electric guitar or drums. The background music should almost “fall away” from the attention, and yet still be pleasantly heard in the background. If possible, use wireless speakers for this soothing aspect of the church experience, and place these wireless speakers in inconspicuous areas around the outside of the facility.

## 6. Portable Video Screens

If possible, incorporate portable video screens (on carts) at two prominent areas: around the refreshment area, and near the CM area. The screens project announcements or vision-based images. The screens can rotate through several slides, or simply display one image. If there are multiple slides, make sure that the rotation isn’t done too quickly. Let each slide stay on long enough for the average reader to enjoy. The images should communicate “we’re glad you’re here” messages, upcoming events, or the safety of the CM area. Today’s visitors are visual. Let them enjoy some tasteful, professional visuals that communicate valuable messages.



## 7. CM Curriculum

The curriculum used during this “pilgrim” phase of the development of the church shouldn’t be any different from the curriculum used when the church meets in their own facility. Be careful not to sacrifice the quality of the curriculum for the sake of the budget! If the church is meeting in someone else’s facility, it is probably because the church is just beginning to grow. Parents will bring their children as they visit the church. The first impressions are critical. If the parents feel that their children are getting “crumbs” instead of a meal, they won’t come back! Many curriculum sources offer various options. A church may choose to use just a few of those options in the early stages of development and add options as they are financially able. Resist the temptation to give the CM team and the children some “free” curriculum. Free curriculum looks free. Free curriculum “smells” cheap to the parents. Ask God to help you find a curriculum that offers options that you can grow into. Visit the “[Developing The CM Curriculum](#)” page on this website for more help with choosing the right curriculum.

## 8. CM Supplies

Your CM is likely staffed by volunteers initially. These volunteers are serving in the CM out of the kindness of their hearts. They believe in the vision and are willing to sacrifice for it and the Lord. Even though they would never accept any payment for their service, the “payment” you can give them is respect and support. The respect is shown through your encouragement and personal thanks given to each CM team member. The support is shown through the provision of curriculum and the supplies needed to accomplish the lesson. Without this support, those who volunteer in the CM may soon become discouraged and possibly leave the ministry. Consider the harsh treatment that the Israelites endured from the Egyptian task masters. This is what NOT to do!



*“That same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their foremen: ‘You shall no longer supply the people with straw for making bricks. They must go and gather their own straw. But require of them the same quota of bricks as before; do not reduce it. For they are lazy; that is why they are crying out, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to our God.’ Make the work harder on the men so they will be occupied and pay no attention to these lies.’” Exodus 5: 6-9*

Providing the supplies the CM team needs to effectively present the lesson prevents the CM team members from having to buy the supplies themselves. These supplies are usually craft supplies and any other items that are necessary for a specific lesson. The supplies can be stored in a cabinet on wheels that is transported to the church location in a truck or a trailer. The supplies can be purchased, replenished, and distributed by a CM supply coordinator.

## 9. CM Team Identification

Identifying those who serve on the CM team (whether they are volunteers or paid) is critical for security and for a professional “image” presented to the parents. This identification is accomplished through unified teamwear and ID badges. Once a person is cleared through the CM screening process, they are given the ID badge and teamwear.



## 10. CM Check-in Process

Checking children into the CM must be a quick and easy process. There are many electronic options available that are easy to use. Some options utilize the parent’s smartphones with a combination of on location label printing. The check-in process should include the printing of child labels and the printing of parent labels with check-out coupons. It is critical that the check-in process is fast. Having to wait in line to check children in will drive parents away.

## 11. Identified Security Team

Today’s church visitors expect to see signs of security, but they also don’t want to feel like they are in a “militaristic” setting. The fine line between “feeling safe,” and “feeling scared” may be connected to seeing guns on security guards or not. Having identified security guards (with shirts that say “Security”) may be enough to signal to both visitors and potential criminals that you are prepared to protect those who visit the church. A security guard who monitors the parking lot, one who monitors the area outside the sanctuary entrance, one who is at the CM check-in area, and one or two inside the sanctuary would probably serve you well. Make sure that the security team is connected through radios and that those radios can also communicate to the CM on a specific channel.



## 12. Two-way Radios

Communication within the CM team and with those on the security, usher, parking lot, and maintenance teams is critical. Often, this communication is left to the use of cell phones. Although, this saves money, it's not efficient or dependable. The use of two-way radios is the best way to have safe, efficient communication across the entire church team during services. The cost of two-way radios can be hundreds of dollars for each unit. An affordable option is to use Baofeng radios. The radios operate well inside a multi-floor cement building and communicate clearly with security and parking lot team members who are both inside and outside the building. The powerful selling point for these radios is their affordable price. For \$25 (for 2) or \$71 (for 6) you get 16-channel radios, charging stations, and earpieces with VOX or push to talk mics. These radios last a very long time. We had to replace a radio or two after about 3 years, but at that price, it is very affordable. The value of having multiple channels is that you can designate a separate channel for CM, security, ushers, parking lot, and maintenance. It is easy to switch between channels to communicate with any other team during a service. If a child is lost, within seconds everyone knows it and is looking for him or her. This is not possible with cell phones and texting. To find out more, click on these links: **For 2 radios:** [https://www.amazon.com/BaoFeng-BF-888S-Transceiver-Illumination-Flashlight/dp/B00N2A88OA/ref=sr\\_1\\_4?crd=1P7T1Z7W5CSH3&keywords=BF-888S+%5B2+Pack%5D+5W+UHF+Radio&qid=1677077339&sprefix=bf-888s+2+pack+5w+uhf+radio%2Caps%2C86&sr=8-4](https://www.amazon.com/BaoFeng-BF-888S-Transceiver-Illumination-Flashlight/dp/B00N2A88OA/ref=sr_1_4?crd=1P7T1Z7W5CSH3&keywords=BF-888S+%5B2+Pack%5D+5W+UHF+Radio&qid=1677077339&sprefix=bf-888s+2+pack+5w+uhf+radio%2Caps%2C86&sr=8-4) **For 6 radios:** [https://www.amazon.com/Earpiece-Handheld-Rechargeable-Transceiver-Microphone/dp/B075KFN6FH/ref=sr\\_1\\_5?crd=1P7T1Z7W5CSH3&keywords=BF-888S%2B%5B2%2BPack%5D%2B5W%2BUHF%2BRadio&qid=1677077047&sprefix=bf-888s%2B%2Bpack%2B5w%2Buhf%2Bradio%2Caps%2C86&sr=8-5&ufe=app\\_do%3Aamazon1.fos.c1e7b9a2-53cf-44f5-ab39-5386af17669d&th=1](https://www.amazon.com/Earpiece-Handheld-Rechargeable-Transceiver-Microphone/dp/B075KFN6FH/ref=sr_1_5?crd=1P7T1Z7W5CSH3&keywords=BF-888S%2B%5B2%2BPack%5D%2B5W%2BUHF%2BRadio&qid=1677077047&sprefix=bf-888s%2B%2Bpack%2B5w%2Buhf%2Bradio%2Caps%2C86&sr=8-5&ufe=app_do%3Aamazon1.fos.c1e7b9a2-53cf-44f5-ab39-5386af17669d&th=1)



## 13. Storage / Transport of Equipment

When you are not able to use your own facility, you will most likely be transporting your equipment and supplies to and from the facility you are using. You will be faced with the two critical questions: 1) Who will set-up and tear down? and 2) How will we transport and store the equipment during the week? If you have little finances, you may have to use personal cars/vans/trucks, and many storage boxes. If you can afford it, there are companies that produce transport containers with wheels that are excellent ways to survive this “pilgrim” season of the church. Here are some companies to consider, as well as some articles that might help you organize your equipment and supplies:



### Storage/Transportation Equipment Companies

#### a. Church On Wheels

[https://www.churchonwheels.com/?gclid=Cj0KCOiArsefBhCbARIsAP98hXQ8xkQ1Xo-qGE\\_ujxIyzu9E9BymI-xGX5NRs3SQhIOh2bCmwm3hUNQaAgOFEALw\\_wcB](https://www.churchonwheels.com/?gclid=Cj0KCOiArsefBhCbARIsAP98hXQ8xkQ1Xo-qGE_ujxIyzu9E9BymI-xGX5NRs3SQhIOh2bCmwm3hUNQaAgOFEALw_wcB)

#### b. Portable Church

<https://www.portablechurch.com/>

### Articles Regarding Operating A “Portable Church”

#### a. Donna Harris – “Portable Children’s Ministry”

<https://donna-harris-moregrace.com/portable-childrens-ministry-church-in-a-box/>

#### b. Church In A Movie Theater

<https://www.portablechurch.com/2017/pci-church-plants/23-lessons-from-12-thriving-movie-theater-churches/>

#### c. 23 Lessons From Thriving Movie Theater Churches

<https://unseminary.com/23-lessons-from-12-thriving-movie-theater-churches/>