

48 OUTREACH SUCCESS STRATEGIES THAT WORK

(For Pastors by Pastors)

1. **Distribute a booklet on the Christian faith to every school parent.** It should be one that shares the Gospel, is simple, and easily understood.
2. **Display art, pictures and posters that reflect diversity.**
3. **Give teachers special invitations to parents to become involved in the activities of the congregation.** Include a handout that lists congregational activities and make a special point that all school families are welcome.
4. **Make follow-up visits on all those who have no current church home.** These may be made by teachers alone or together with the pastor.
5. **Read books that portray characters representative of diverse society.** Invite families to share information and activities relative to their culture and/or ethnic background.
6. **Hold an adult information class specifically designed for non-member parents.** This can be a condensed version that gives the basic information. One pastor uses the first four sessions of his regular information class and then “just so happens” to have the regular class continuing the next week.
7. **Incorporate art and music from different cultures in church and school activities, and in worship.**
8. **Involve student choirs in Sunday worship and use a contemporary worship format when they sing.** Parents attend when their children sing at worship. This is an important outreach opportunity, and every effort should be made to have the service user-friendly and easily understood.
9. **Intentionally greet school parents as they drop off and pick up their children.** Some pastors do this two or three times a week for the sake of visibility.
10. **Invite school parents to attend chapel services and become involved in chapel projects.** Make the projects things in which parents, as well as children, can participate. Publicize the projects in ways that keep parents well informed.
11. **Hold Advent and Lenten late afternoon worship services, followed by a supper** (and an evening worship service, as is more traditional.) This allows parents to attend when they come to pick up their children.
12. **Arrange for small group Bible studies involving parents.** Include non-member parents as part of your small group ministry.

13. **Look for every “excuse” possible to involve the school children in worship services.** Give special attention to making the worship services to which you invite non-member school families user-friendly and meaningful.
14. **Celebrate that which families have in common as well as that which is unique.**
15. **Send a weekly school newsletter that includes information on church activities to all parents.**
16. **Communicate that God’s love and His promise of forgiveness includes all people.**
17. **Provide Pastoral care whenever an opportunity exists.** Do not restrict pastoral care to members only.
18. **Provide students with the opportunity to do self portraits with “people colors.”** Stay clear of packages that also contain a black and/or white crayon if you are trying to get your students to view the world in terms other than “black” and “white.” (Can be ordered through Lakeshore on Brookhurst in Fountain Valley.)
19. **Provide students with books/stories from other cultures.** Include a variety of books in your classroom/school library.
20. **Be visible at school functions or activities.** Provide your “ministry of presence.”
21. **Pray for all school families at staff meetings.** Inform non-member families that they are being included in prayers. This can be done through newsletters or special messages sent home.
22. **Provide students with guest speakers from a variety of ethnic groups at times other than ethnic holidays and celebrations.** For instance, if you are going to have a doctor or other professional visit the classroom, find an AHANA (African-, Hispanic-, Asian-, Native American) professional.
23. **Provide church bulletin covers that reflect a congregation that is diverse.**
24. **Encourage teachers to have conferences with all parents in which they emphasize church membership.** Teachers stress with parents why it is important for their children to be members of a church and regularly participate in the worship life of a congregation.

25. **Hold a Bible Sunday.** Parents of second or third-graders present an age-appropriate Bible to their children during a special worship service. The Bibles are purchased and donated by the church.
26. **Lead a ninety-minute seminar on “Who are the Lutherans?”** Invite all new school parents to attend this seminar on the basic teachings of the Lutheran Church during the first weeks of the academic year. Use the tract and video titled *“Welcome to Our Family”*.
27. **Encourage parental involvement in special curricular programs, including sex education and drug programs.** Arrange meetings where parents are told the Biblical teachings on these subjects and how the teachers plan to present them in the classroom.
28. **Involve parents and students in service projects, such as collecting food for the hungry, clothing for the homeless, etc.** Both members and non-members are encouraged to participate.
29. **Celebrate National Lutheran Schools Week during which information is shared on the Lutheran Church with both school parents and the community.** This is also a perfect opportunity to answer the question, “What is the mission of the Lutheran school and congregation?”
30. **Work toward having synodically-trained Lutheran teachers in every classroom.** Called Lutheran teachers are generally far better equipped to communicate the faith to their students. Pastors often find a marked improvement in evangelism outreach to students in the classrooms where non-synodically-trained teachers are replaced with called Lutheran teachers.
31. **Include all school families in Sunday worship prayers.** Do not make a distinction between members and non-members.
32. **Provide a variety of toys from different ethnic backgrounds in the nurse.**
33. **Put on school registration forms a place to check “Would like the pastor to visit.”**
34. **Invite parents to attend “Religion 101.”** A three-hour seminar held twice each month.
35. **Hold an annual barbecue and auction benefiting church and school.**
36. **Be visible at regular open houses during the school year.**
37. **Provide the youth groups with opportunities to learn about other cultures by participating in community celebrations.**

38. **Encourage the Principal to be evangelism conscious as he or she interviews new parents.** He or she can do much to set the stage for the church and school staff to reach out to new parents who have no current church home.
39. **Develop in teachers a relational outreach attitude as they deal with children and parents.** Teachers can open up homes to the church through a caring attitude.
40. **Develop a good pastoral counseling program.** Make it known that you have resources to deal with family and marriage problems.
41. **Provide your students with a clear understanding of how you feel about other cultures.** Try to wear clothing or other articles that suggest the importance of having a variety of cultures. I wear a pin made of six different little faces in a variety of colors. Each time I wear it, others comment about it and request one of their own. It's contagious!
42. **Visit the classrooms.** This may include special talks, "stump the pastor," or just being there.
43. **Attend every chapel service, even those you don't lead.** Your visibility is important. It is also an opportunity to welcome and get acquainted with visiting parents.
44. **Communicate your vision to the school staff that bringing unchurched families to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior through the school is a team effort of pastor and teachers, requiring the greatest possible effort and closest mutual coordination.**
45. **Serve as the captain of the team in evangelism outreach through the school, not merely as the coach.** Join in the "game," play with all your heart, shout your encouragement to the other players, take the lead in strategizing.
46. **Work hard to be "on the same page" with your principal and preschool director, smoothing out personal irritations away from the public eye, and lifting high their ministries before the congregation and the teaching staff.**
47. **Share information regarding spiritual opportunities with school parents on a continual, ongoing basis:** when the new adult information class begins, when you are planning a Baptism Sunday, when a class on parenting is being offered, even the simple information of when you hold Sunday worship services.
48. **Hold "Soup Days" when you, the pastor, are invited to have lunch with the entire student body and sit with a particular class.** The pastor attends these special lunches so the children can get to know him better.