

# BACK TO CHURCH SUNDAY

## INFORMATION SHEET FOR CHURCHES

### What is Back to Church Sunday?

On September 27th 2009 thousands of people will be inviting someone special back to church with them. People lose touch with church for all sorts of reasons but millions would come back with an invitation.

On Back to Church Sunday 2008, people in 3,000 churches invited and welcomed back 37,000 friends.

### Back to Church Sunday Background

Back to Church Sunday was first held in Manchester Diocese in 2004, with 160 churches taking part. It has grown every year since then and now, churches all over the world take part. It is estimated that between 12-15% of those who return on Back to Church Sunday become full members of the church, and a significant number keep in touch with the church.

The last Sunday in September was chosen because it tied in well with the idea of a new year, a new start and chimed with 'back to school'. It also lent itself to Harvest festivals and the beginning of a new season of Christian events.

### How can we take part?

If you would like to take part in Back to Church Sunday 2009, we will send you a resources pack. The pack included 100 invitations, 100 prayer cards, 3 A3 posters and 4 A4 posters. All the resources are professionally designed and printed.

During September, your church members will invite someone special to return to church with them. You can also advertise the event locally: a personal invitation is not necessary for anyone to be allowed to attend. It is also worth contacting the local paper and providing them with an article about the event.

On the day, the emphasis is on being welcoming: a particular theological standpoint or method of worship methods aren't likely ddenu pobl yn ôl, ond croeso cynnes ac ymdeimlad o berthyn.

### 10 top tips for a great welcome

#### The basics:

1. Clean up: who's willing to check the outside of your church before the big day to make sure it's clean and tidy?
2. Toilets: are they stocked up with all you need? How about some nice soap?
3. Seats: Ask the regulars not to be annoyed if there's someone in their seat!

#### The welcome:

4. If you've invited someone, why not travel with them to Church or arrange to meet them outside so that you can walk in with them.
5. Welcome Team: ensure that you have a team of friendly people outside to welcome everyone and perhaps guide them to their seat. Ask them to be on the lookout during the service for people who look unsure or uncertain.

**The Service:**

6. Late arrivals: reserve a few seats near the door so that people can come in discreetly.
7. Make things clear: tell people when to sit and stand, to which tune you sing the Lord's Prayer and so on. Don't assume that everyone knows!
8. Don't draw attention to individuals who have come back.
9. The service doesn't have to be particularly special: concentrate instead on being welcoming.

**Afterwards:**

10. Invite everyone for tea or coffee if you can. Fresh coffee and quality biscuits will show how much you appreciate everyone being there.