

# Spring into Action! Easter Involvement Ideas



## At Easter, we celebrate the greatest self-sacrifice to others the world has ever seen.

**J**esus taught that those who know they've been forgiven much, love much (Luke 7:47). As you share with your Mission guests this message of hope and new life found through Christ's saving love, the Easter season provides a perfect opportunity to invite your community to join you in sharing His great love!

In the following pages, you'll find tips to engage your community and donors during the Easter season. The spiritual connection and deeper bonds you forge with your supporters will strengthen your Mission to serve even more thanks to their prayers and committed partnership.

## Online Engagement

**K**ey to engaging donors and followers online is seeking them out in places they already frequent – social media sites and online stores. Here are some ways to connect with them in these high-traffic digital spaces.



**Giving OUT for Lent campaign.** Leading up to Easter, many people practice the tradition of giving up something for Lent. Put a fresh spin on this tradition with a social media campaign to encourage your followers to give "out" of their generous hearts – instead of giving "up" something – for Lent. Post a sample social media post on Facebook that your followers can customize and share with their networks to tell how they are giving "out." Pair it with the hashtag #GiveOut4Lent and an optional photo showing the need or how they're meeting it.

### HERE'S A GOOD EXAMPLE:

*"What did you give up for Lent? This year, I'm giving OUT! I'm giving OUT by \_\_\_\_\_ [serving a meal at the Mission / donating to the Mission, etc.]. How will you give OUT? #GiveOUT4Lent #MissionName"*

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## Online Engagement (cont.)



**Current Needs Page.** Instead of filling Easter baskets, invite your supporters to shop for your most needed items throughout the spring! Make sure to connect with your web team to make any updates needed to your Current Needs page on your website. Consider sending a quick email, adding a blurb in your newsletter or posting on social media to let followers know about your updated needs throughout the spring.

### HERE'S A GOOD EXAMPLE:

*"Did you know you can help [Mission Name] by shopping for our current needs? You can help make sure we're stocked with the items our guests need most throughout the spring! [Link to Mission's Current Needs page]"*



**Create an Amazon Wish List** for your ministry to get the in-kind items you need most. Holiday season feasts and difficult winter months often deplete Mission pantries of staple items leading up to Easter. Create or update your Wish List now with the items in demand, and share a link on your website to make sure you'll be well stocked.



### PRO TIP!

Link to your Wish List anytime you post to social media asking for in-kind donations. For generous friends who can't make it to the store to buy goods or to your Mission to drop off donations, this provides a quick and easy way to give! You can even sort desired items into specific lists, like "urgent food needs" or "cleaning supplies," so your shoppers can focus on meeting a certain area of need.

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## Online Engagement (cont.)



**Easter goal countdown.** Amp up anticipation – and donor participation – by setting a goal for your Mission to meet by the end of the Easter season. Whether it's a certain dollar amount donated, number of Easter baskets given to guests or pounds of canned goods collected, tracking progress toward a measurable goal and posting regular updates via social media is an exciting way to engage donors. Consider posting a daily prayer request along with your goal countdown to foster even deeper bonds with those in your online community who will be happy to share this spiritual support. (Check out a sample prayer calendar in the “Church & Community” section on page 5 to inspire you!)

### HERE'S A GOOD EXAMPLE:

*“UPDATE: 20 days till Easter, and we’ve got 4,000 more cans to go! Help us reach our goal of 10,000 cans of food by Easter. Drop off canned goods at [Mission address] or give a gift today to purchase ‘virtual cans’ at **MissionName.org**. Thank you for helping us reach our goal!”*



### PRO TIP!

If you've set up your Amazon Wish List, the above example could be edited to include a link to your Mission's Wish List page. Add to your list the specific canned goods you need, and you'll avoid receiving too many donations of one item over harder-to-get nonperishables.





## Drives

**A**n empty Easter basket... an empty dinner table... these are unfamiliar ideas to most people on Easter Day. But those you serve are no strangers to this emptiness – and when your community finds out, they’ll be eager to fill the void and meet these urgent, basic needs. This Easter, hold drives to collect what will fill your guests – body and soul!



**Baskets of Blessing.** Invite your community to help share God’s love through Easter baskets full of items needed most by those who come to the Mission – a toothbrush & toothpaste, soap, deodorant, towel & washcloth, brush or comb. Encourage “basket designers” to add a Bible or devotional book, a treat like wrapped candy and an encouraging handwritten note or card to make the blessings abundant for your guests! You might also ask for baskets for specific people and age groups, like “an 8-year-old boy” or “a single mom of 2 kids,” to give your supporters an idea of who they’re blessing with these thoughtful gifts!



### PRO TIP!

Ask for donations of special baskets filled with items your youngest guests will enjoy. Children whose families are experiencing homelessness come to the Mission with very little. Receiving an Easter basket filled with small toys, wrapped candy, a huggable stuffed animal and a children’s Bible can lift a child’s spirits this holiday.



**40 Bags in 40 Days.** In the season of Lent leading up to Easter, challenge donors and community members to collect one bag a day of items your organization needs. By the end of the 40-day season, they will have 40 bags of essential items to donate! This drive is a great opportunity for groups! You can even assign each of the 40 days to collecting a specific item: clean socks, Bibles or journals, hygiene supplies, etc.



### PRO TIP!

Consider inviting churches in your community to hold this drive for 40 bags of Bibles on your behalf. You can also ask for donations of gift cards to Christian bookstores to purchase the materials your guests need. Many congregations provide Bibles for first-time guests at their Easter services, so after Easter, you may find churches have extra Bibles on hand they’d be happy to donate.

Drives like these are ideal Easter goal countdowns for social media! Regularly sharing how many (or how few) Easter baskets or Bibles are needed to meet your goal by a specific date encourages your followers to get involved as they see how they can help.



## Church & Community

**T**he Easter season can be a busy time for churches, but it's also a season with ample opportunities for your Mission to connect with faith-based community partners and others who are seeking to serve.



**Easter season prayer calendar.** Create an Easter season prayer calendar to share specific prayer requests for each of the 40 days leading up to Easter. Post the calendar on your website and across social media, and distribute copies to local churches and personally invite them to pray. Consider beginning each week of your prayer calendar with a praise for God's blessings in the past. Remembering and rejoicing in His faithfulness, you'll inspire faith in His provision for the future!

One week of your prayer calendar might look something like this...

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Praise God for providing for the Mission through generous givers and volunteers!	Pray for God to provide the volunteers needed to serve our Easter meal.	Pray for Mission staff to have strength and wisdom for the busy season ahead.	Pray for the hurting women who have suffered abuse to find comfort and healing in our care.
THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
Pray for the children in our care to feel safe and comfortable while they call the Mission home.	Pray for strength and grace for the men & women seeking healing in our recovery programs.	Pray for our guests to grow in their faith through Sunday services as they experience God's love.	

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## Church & Community (cont.)



**Inform and equip your church partners.** Provide churches with a simple insert they can print and include in their Sunday bulletins, sharing with their congregations ways to bless the Mission this season and beyond. Include a testimony of someone from the Mission or a letter from your Mission director, along with your Easter food needs, upcoming drives, volunteer opportunities and other ways people can help this Easter.



### PRO TIP!

Reach out to your church partners to see if there are speaking opportunities for your Mission to share briefly about the work you do, either at the pulpit or in Sunday School classes or Bible studies during the Easter season. Ask a Mission resident to join you and share a testimony of how God has used the Mission in his or her life. End your message with an invitation to the church body to get involved in one of the many service opportunities your Mission offers.



**Mission tour.** Invite church groups, businesses and community members to tour the Mission at this time of year so they can see for themselves how much their prayers, gifts and support are helping in tangible, life-changing ways.



**Springtime sponsorship.** Ask local congregations or businesses to “adopt” a family, man or woman at your Mission for the springtime season. Determine how much it costs to care for a family or individual at the Mission during the spring season, and invite these groups to provide for this need through a meaningful financial gift.



### PRO TIP!

Encourage deeper connection between sponsors and the family or individual they take under their wing by periodically providing sponsors with updates, photos, thank-you letters or prayer requests from these guests.



**Connect with major donors.** Easter is the perfect opportunity to express your thanks to major donors, sharing with them how they have brought blessings to the broken throughout the year. Share Easter greetings and wishes by sending an Easter card with a personal message or by calling to thank them for their faithful support.



## Volunteers

**E**ngage eager hands to serve at Easter, a time when we reflect on how Christ served us. Easter tends to be a holiday less busy than Thanksgiving or Christmas, so you'll likely find more available volunteers.



**Encourage early sign-ups.** Start early to secure the extra helping hands you'll need for your Easter festivities and springtime needs. Regularly update your Mission website's volunteer page to reflect current volunteer openings and when positions are filled. Include the date on which your Easter or spring season volunteer sign-ups begin, as well as information for any trainings volunteers must attend prior to serving.



### PRO TIP!

Don't rely solely on your Mission website to communicate volunteer needs. Take advantage of social media to notify your followers (many prospective volunteers!) of sign-up days, special service opportunities and trainings. And don't forget to use social media to say thank you, shining the spotlight on your volunteers for their selfless service!



**Spring cleaning service day.** Do a walk-through of your Mission and take note of the needs around your facilities. Is paint peeling? Does the garden need weeding? Host an in-service volunteer day leading up to Easter for help with spring cleaning inside the Mission, as well as around your grounds. Encourage group sign-ups by reaching out to businesses and churches.



**Easter Dinner encouragements.** In advance of your Mission's Easter meal, ask school groups, churches and other organizations in your community to create encouraging cards to set at each place of your Easter Dinner tables. Each person you serve will be blessed with this personal touch that lets them know they are more than a mouth to feed – they're a treasured, honored guest!