

Connect  
2 Church

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SUNDAY



Connect2Church

in association with

**BacktoChurchSunday**

## Brilliant simplicity

**Connect2Church Sunday** is a very simple idea. There are many people who have attended church or Sunday school in the past and who are open to returning; they are loosely connected. Sometimes the only reason they have not returned is that they have not been invited! A special day, some local media coverage and the availability of invitation cards enable church members to invite friends, family, neighbours or work colleagues in a natural way. It is not an alternative to focusing on groups who are harder to reach through doing things like Fresh Expressions. But it is an easy and straight forward way to draw new people into the community of the Christian church.

## Best done well or not at all

Becoming involved with **Connect2Church Sunday** does not require a huge amount of effort and it will not disrupt your parish programme. However, it is still better not to do it at all than to do it badly, which would only persuade people that 'we tried and it didn't work'. Check that you will be able to deliver the general thread outlined in this booklet.

## Part of the Going for Growth Strategy

**Connect2Church Sunday** is part of the **Back to Church Sunday** initiative which includes all dioceses in Australia as well as other provinces throughout the Anglican Communion.

As well as the benefit of the event itself we hope it will also help churches develop confidence in praying for others and improve their general culture of welcome and integration of newcomers.

## How we will help

- Pay for and distribute resource kits for every participating parish, containing prayer and invitation cards, posters and bookmarks.
- Generate media interest.
- Provide training workshops to refresh your welcome and get you thinking about new ways to offer hospitality.
- Provide additional resources at [www.connect2church.org.au](http://www.connect2church.org.au) as well as offer contacts for help and advice.
- Collect information for future improvement of the program.

## What your church might do before the day

1. Register your church through the Parishes and Other Mission Agencies Commission Office.
2. Appoint a **Connect2Church Sunday** coordinator/parish contact person. This can be a lay person who is willing to take on the project or could be the Parish Priest.
3. Soon after you register share some of the church stories with your church and Council. Hopefully this will inspire people and get them thinking about what they might do.
4. Two months before the event invite the members of your congregation to think of one person whom they will invite on the day. Ask them to pray for that person regularly until the event. They should pray for their general well-being and also specifically that they will respond positively to the invitation.
5. When you receive your pack give out an invitation card to every member of your congregation, including your young people. As most people do not come every week you will need to have the cards available for several consecutive weeks to get them round to everyone. Ask everyone to write on their prayer card the name of one person they will invite to the event.
6. The card has space for names and a message and church members are encouraged to use this when inviting someone to **Connect2Church Sunday**. Remember the invitation card is an aid to inviting someone but you don't have to use it. You may prefer to simply give them the details via email or over the phone.
7. Have some extra invitation cards that the clergy and others can use to invite people they have had some pastoral contact with during the year, e.g. baptisms, weddings, funerals.
8. Take the opportunity to incorporate themes of welcome, friendship and mission into church services in the weeks running up to **Connect2Church Sunday**.
9. Although some people may turn up in response to general publicity, make it clear that over 90% of new people who come will be those who have been invited personally. Often it will be better if church members arrive with those they invite, rather than simply meeting them at the door when they walk in.
10. A month before **Connect2Church Sunday** begin advertising and put up posters wherever you can in your churches and halls. Involve your youth groups with making banners and advertising. Consider how you can advertise in your local schools. Perhaps invite a local school choir, with their parents.
11. You may wish to appoint a small group to plan the day and the follow up.

## What your church might do on the day

1. Encourage all the members of your congregation to come to church that Sunday, even if they have not invited anyone, so that they are present to worship God and welcome newcomers. No one should feel disadvantaged because they were not able to invite someone or if the person they invited couldn't come.
2. Simply hold your normal services in the usual sort of style.
3. Take some trouble to make sure the quality of what you do is as good as you can make it. Ensure a warm welcome. Fully explain the service so that newcomers will not flounder. Allow some time for silence – many people will come with a burden or a need for space in the midst of a busy life. Have details available of the church's life, other events, youth activities etc.
4. Make your services welcoming and cheerful. Create a pleasant atmosphere that will encourage visitors to return.
5. If you have children in your church make sure they are fully involved – they can invite their own friends. Your youth groups could be involved in the service in some way – drama, music. Ensure your crèche/children's groups are prepared for extra numbers.
6. As a minimum make sure there are good quality refreshments and time to chat at the end of the service. Encourage church members to talk to newcomers and start befriending them. If a visitor makes two or three friends in the church in the first few weeks they will stay. If no one talks to them, they won't return.
7. Some churches may also want to do something more special to mark the day. You could hire a bouncy castle, or serve lunch.

## What your church might have in place as follow up to the day

1. Ask church members who invited someone to **Connect2Church Sunday** to maintain that contact after the day, encouraging them to come to church events and services again. You could advertise Bible study programmes or groups they could be involved in. Make sure there are some attractive social events in the near future.
2. Make the time to visit some of the ‘newcomers’ as a way of getting to know them and helping them to find their way into the church community.
3. You may wish to invite people to a ‘newcomers meal’ a couple of weeks later. If your church has established home groups, make sure group leaders are present to invite newcomers to join them.

## Quotes from Churches in our diocese who have participated in Connect2Church previously

“Some new faces in church on **Connect2Church Sunday** was very encouraging for a small struggling congregation”.

**One couple who invited their adult children and families, commented “The research is right. My daughter said, ‘I’ve been thinking about coming to church”.**

“For one congregation member it was very special as he was able to have all his family worship together, even ones who rarely or never come to church”.

**“My personal highlight was a lady who has been having home communion for years due to poor health who enjoyed the corporate worship”.**

“It helped people to realise that inviting someone is not as hard as they think and encouraged them to see that they can invite someone any Sunday”.

**“Connect2Church Sunday has inspired people to share what they have experienced and heard in faith with those they know”.**

“As a parish there was quite a bit of energy to do working bees to clean up the grounds and replace the church carpet”.

**“More people had a focus outwards which is the beginning of something new”.**



Connect 2 Church

for more information, visit  
[www.connect2church.org.au](http://www.connect2church.org.au)



Anglican Diocese of Brisbane