

Publicising your Music Sunday Event

Your event will only be a success if lots of people get to hear about it and come along! There are many ways to make the members of your church and the wider community aware of your event:

Church magazine/newsletter

Make sure details of your event are included as soon as possible.

Advertising

One of the best ways to ensure a great turnout for your event is to advertise in local newspapers and community magazines. Some will help you to create your advert, but for others you may need to provide the artwork yourself. Be certain to include all the relevant information people will need to make it to your gathering:

- The purpose and nature of the event
- Where and when it will be held
- Ticket price, if relevant
- How much your church is hoping to raise
- Please include the RSCM Music Sunday logo if you can

For a barbecue, you might also want to include a partial menu - make it sound as tasty as it's going to be! If you've lined up live entertainment, definitely include that information as well.

Posters/flyers

When printing posters and flyers, you'll need to include all the same information as the advertisement, and make it eye-catching too. A map showing where your event will be held can be very useful - this simple addition has been statistically shown to increase traffic by up to 30%!

As well as your own church, distribute the posters and flyers to local meeting places and businesses, such as town notice boards, tourist information centres and libraries, and spread the word to other churches in the community with which you've formed partnerships and friendships. You can also ask church members to put them in the windows of their homes and cars (so long as they are not obscuring the driver's vision!). Get the word out, and people will come.

Online

Post your event on local community websites and forums. Most cities/towns maintain an events calendar and/or an e-newsletter, so use the internet to search for them. Posting is usually free and takes only a few minutes.

And, of course, make full use of any social media outlets that would be appropriate, and your church or choir's website.

Using the media

A feature in a local paper, or a radio or television interview, can be invaluable in giving advance publicity for an event such as Music Sunday. The sending of a press release to the local media can be the catalyst for such extra (and free!) coverage.

It may need some research to establish the names of journalists who are likely to be interested in reporting your event. Is there an Arts Correspondent for example? There may well be a separate Features Editor. What is the name of the journalist who seems to write the longer (and possibly more thoughtful) features? Time invested in this research now will be invaluable for not only your Music Sunday event, but for the future too.

Neither should you rule out radio, television and online. Many BBC local radio stations broadcast a religious-oriented programme on Sunday mornings; why not see if they would be interested in a short interview? Do this a few weeks in advance. Offer music extracts either from a commercial CD, or from recordings which can offered without incurring any performance fees.

Writing your press release:

You can download the template from the Music Sunday webpage as the basis for your release. There are also plenty of examples on the media page of the RSCM website: www.rscm.com/media

- Make it clear that your document is a PRESS or NEWS RELEASE, and who you are (logo if you have one and the name of your establishment).
- Headline – short and snappy, to grab harassed journalist’s attention!
- The text should include basic “who, what, where, when and why”.
- Include a quote if possible, from someone involved with the event/project.
- Include contact details for subsequent enquiries, including email and web address if appropriate. Above all make sure the contact is briefed and available!
- Do say if photographs or further interviews are available on request.
- You can add ‘Notes for Editors’ at the end, with any helpful background information.

General points:

- Use a simple font, double-line-spaced in the body of the text.
- Be as concise as possible. Don’t use flowery language or jargon.
- Set out the essential points as early as possible.
- Proof read everything before you send it out!

Researching journalist contacts:

- The best source of information is the internet. Otherwise, use local directories or check the contact details in the appropriate publications.
- Keep a list of contacts at the key local papers and magazines, local radio stations, and any other publications such as national religious and music press.
- Don't forget diocesan and church contacts – many have regular magazines, newsletters and website listings of events. It is worth getting to know your Diocesan Communications Officer.

Sending out your release and follow up:

- By email is best, but some research will of course be necessary. It's worth maintaining an up-to-date list of the people you are likely to contact regularly.
- State briefly in the email 'subject' who the release is from and what it is about.
- We suggest you include the text in the body of an email, as well as attaching as a Word or PDF file.
- Photographs can jam email systems. If you have electronic photographs available, say so in the release and include a contact number or email address.
- Check copy deadlines and make sure you don't leave it too late.
- Do make a follow-up phone call to key journalists. The release is a scattergun part of your publicity campaign. Individual contact such as this is just an important part of the process. Say you've sent a release (rather than asking if they've received it) about the event you're seeking coverage for, and whether they can give it any coverage.