



EXPO, FAIR, or EXHIBIT EVENT Planning

For three years (2007-09), four area west Michigan outreach groups of Stonecrock Ministries have joined together for a booth in the Grand Rapids Women's Expo, directly reaching 5,000+ women with information about the ministry. (The expo attracts 15,000+ women.) This suggested information is given from our experiences to encourage others to engage in such events in hopes of sharing the love of Jesus Christ in their communities. Prayer by the local outreach team is the first step in considering this project.

PURPOSE

The purpose is to inform others of the various Stonecrock opportunities in their community by supplying printed information and having volunteers on hand to welcome women and answer questions.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

1. Prayer by the local outreach team(s) with Representatives is the first step in considering this project.
2. The Chair or Representative should hold an initial meeting with all interested women one year before the event.
3. Form a team of women, the majority of which are not on the current team. If there is more than one group working together on this project, involve women from all of the groups.
4. The appointed chair of this team should contact the event producer or sponsor for a contract. Note: As a non-profit organization, there may be a lower price for the booth or entry charge.
5. The first organizing meeting should be held 10 months before the event. At this meeting, all positions/needs should be understood and assigned. Open discussion for suggestions is very helpful. No two events are alike, so the plans are flexible. The next meeting could be held one month before event to tie up loose ends and pray!

TEAM



An ad-hoc (temporary) committee can be formed with a chair and 3-5 volunteers. This is perfect for those who like to do one-time projects. Suggested committee:

- Chair-oversees committee with timely meetings, prepares budget, obtains funds, prepares financial report for Stonecrock's Home Office, and follows up the contact cards.
- Volunteer Coordinator-schedules volunteers for the event.
- Publicity Coordinator-gathers flyer information and has flyers prepared and printed.
- Door Prize Coordinator-gathers two to three door prizes for attendees to sign up for drawing and prepares the drawing process.
- Gift Bag Coordinator-gathers supplies for gift bags, schedules groups to assemble gift bags.
- Booth Coordinator-secures a local store to decorate the booth, schedules helpers for the decorator.

(Each coordinator could have a helper or two depending on how much they want to split up the work. This is a *suggested* committee. There could also be a smaller team for smaller exhibits/events. Instead of position titles, there could be "assignments," such as coordinate volunteers, coordinate door prizes, etc. A pivotal person/chair is necessary to pull the assignments/coordinators together.)

EVENT/LOCATION



The event could be a secular setting: a county fair, city expo, or community gathering. Consider any possibility where a group can have an exhibit.

The event could be in a ministry setting: church expos, Christian seminars, church camps.

The location should be a public venue with a history of successful attendance.

COST/EXPENSES



A budget of costs must be set up to include some of the following: booth or entry fee, electricity fee, printing of publicity flyers, gift bags and contents, thank you gifts, door prizes for booth, booth decorating/design fee. Many of these costs could be underwritten by business and individual donations. Businesses should be acknowledged in publicity.

TARGET



If the event is held in a secular setting, the booth and all publicity materials should be welcoming and nonabrasive to all. The purpose is to share about outreach meetings, special interest groups, and Stonecroft Bible Studies in the area. Have Bible study sample materials ready for reference. It is very helpful to have contact cards available for later follow-up.

If the event is held in a church or ministry setting, the target is to inform other Christians of the outreach ministry and their possibility of involvement. All materials should be clearly displayed and an information board can be borrowed from the Home Office for display.

PUBLICITY



Flyer: All of the outreach groups in the area should have information for the three months following the event, giving program, location, date, and cost information on an attractive flyer to be handed out at the event.

Gift Bags: If desired, a small bag with the flyer, candy, pen, Discover and Connect cards can be handed out. To assemble large numbers of gift bags, various groups can be used, such as youth groups, Boy or Girl Scouts, classroom or school groups needing community service hours. The beauty of this is the opportunity to send one of the gift bags home with each helper to give to his/her mother!

T-Shirts: If desired, Stonecroft t-shirts could be worn by all volunteering in the booth as great publicity. These could also be worn in the community for publicity. Just be sure to always have an invitation to your local group with you to hand out when someone asks about your t-shirt!

FOLLOW-UP

At the booth, have a convenient table with sign-up forms for the gift/door prizes that are displayed. The forms should have a place for name, address, phone number and e-mail address. These forms are then used for e-mail invites or mailings for future outreach meetings. A name is drawn for each of the door prizes and the person contacted. It is desirable to invite the winner to the next outreach meeting to award the door prize. If possible, the door prize could also include a paid reservation to the outreach meeting.

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