

# EASTER GAME PLAN



OUR PATH TO THE  
EASTER EXPERIENCE

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# HOW TO USE THIS GAME PLAN

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## PLAN A POWERFUL EASTER EXPERIENCE

This Easter, we have a unique opportunity to help our attenders experience the powerful, life-changing story of Jesus and the perfect work of the cross!

We want to welcome new families into our church with intentional care, create meaningful moments, and prepare an experience that points people to the hope of Christ. This game plan is our starting point to achieve just that.

This Easter Game Plan walks us through the best ways to plan our Easter Experience so every detail, every person, and every moment is met with excellence.

## HERE'S HOW TO USE THIS GAME PLAN

1. **Start Planning:** Decide service times, special events, and volunteer opportunities.
2. **Create the Experience:** Choose our sermon (standalone or series closing), music, kids, connections, and other creative elements.
3. **Communicate Well:** Use ready-made invites, calendars, billboards, emails, texts, and social media (paid and organic).
4. **Prepare with Excellence:** Make sure every detail is warm and welcoming for guests.
5. **Follow Up:** Invite Easter Experience visitors to come back and get plugged in.
6. **Download Resources:** Access everything you need with easy links. (i.e. anything underlined in this Game Plan is a clickable link)

Jesus has already done the work that matters most. This game plan exists to help us remove distractions, reduce last-minute stress, and lead an Easter Experience that keeps the focus where it belongs—the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

# 1. PLANNING THE EASTER EXPERIENCE

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The best way to lead into Easter with clarity is to start planning early. When we align ahead of time, our teams feel prepared, volunteers feel supported, and we have more margin to focus on people rather than last-minute details.

## HOW TO CHOOSE SERVICE TIMES

As we finalize our schedule, a few simple considerations can help:

- **Keep families in mind.** Which days and times make it easiest for them to attend?
- **Know our limits.** Consider whether a Good Friday or additional gatherings and/or events fit our team and capacity this year.
- **Be clear.** Once we decide on a schedule, communicate it early and often.

## CREATING A MEANINGFUL EASTER EXPERIENCE

Before deciding on any details, pause and ask:

- What do we want people to **feel** when they walk through the doors?
- What do we want them to **understand** about Jesus?
- What is the **next step** we want to invite people to take?

## PLANNING TEAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Think about your team and their gifts. Who owns these areas:

- **Sermon:** Lead Pastor
- **Worship:** Worship Leader, Production
- **Kids:** Children's Director, Director of Stewardship
- **Connections (Hospitality & Next Steps):** Connections Director, Lead Pastor
- **Service Elements (Baptism, Communion, Prayer):** Lead Pastor, Prayer Team

# 2. EASTER SERMON PLANNING

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For many guests and families, Easter may be the first or only time they hear the gospel clearly. We steward this moment by keeping our sermon simple, hopeful, and personal.

## ENGAGING EASTER SERMON

Here are previous example sermon series we've done in the past:

- **Marked:** A six-week series on the divine power of Jesus' ministry in the Gospel of Mark.
- **In His Own Words:** A seven-week series on Jesus' "I Am" statements in the Gospel of John.

## A FEW HELPFUL SERMON TIPS

- Avoid church lingo that guests may not understand.
- Speak honestly about questions and doubts.
- Make the resurrection real and personal.
- Offer a clear Next Step, even if it's just coming back next week.



# 3. WORSHIP & CREATIVE

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Worship and visuals can create powerful moments for people on Easter. These creative resources are here to help our guests and attenders engage with the story of Jesus and draw closer to the heart of the Father.

## RECOMMENDED EASTER SONGS

Choose music that highlights Jesus, His work on the cross, and the redemptive grace of God in our everyday lives. Examples include:

- **“Graves into Gardens”** by Elevation Worship
- **“In Christ Alone”** by Passion
- **“Revelation 19:1”** by Sunday Service
- **“Risen”** by Israel Houghton

## RECOMMEND CREATIVE SERVICE ELEMENTS

Create an unforgettable Easter experience with eye-catching, impactful visuals:

### *Message Graphics*

- **In His Own Words**: Embracing the 7 “I Am” statement Jesus made proving He is God in the flesh.
- **Glory Road**: Remembering Jesus’ journey to the cross and beyond the empty tomb into glory.

### *Countdown and Short Videos*

- **The Stone Easter Worship Intro**: Since the stone was rolled away, the empty grave declares our sins are forgiven through Jesus.
- **Holy Forever**: Before creation began, Jesus stood above every power, reminding us that our lives and redemption are part of God’s plan.

### *Lobby Experiences*

**Easter Photo Op**: Create backdrops and memories for new guests and attenders.



# 4. KIDS, YOUTH, & FAMILY MINISTRIES

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When kids are engaged on Easter, parents can relax and be present for the entire service. That simple step can make a lasting difference for families who may only attend once or twice a year.

## EASTER LESSONS

Teach our littles about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus with interactive lessons that help them understand the true meaning of Easter.

- **Resurrection Eggs**: See, touch, and hear the story of Easter.

## EASTER ACTIVITIES

Create an Easter experience they'll never forget by decorating our kids area, playing fun games, and letting them express themselves through creative activities.

- **Easter Bowl**: An outreach event the week or day before Easter with food, games, activities, and egg hunts pointing people to Jesus.
- **Easter Coloring Pages**: Help young minds engage with the gospel message of Easter in an interactive, creative way.

## 3 FUN IDEAS FOR FAMILIES

- **Family Photo-Op**: Craft an Easter backdrop or area near our kids area where families can capture this special moment on camera.
- **Lobby Scavenger Hunt**: Hide 5-10 surprises in our lobby (easter eggs, words, figurines, etc.) and challenge kids to find them all to win small prizes.
- **New Family Gift Bags**: Create a small care package for new families to communicate who we are and how much we care about their child.



# 5. COMMUNICATION & PROMOTION

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The best way to keep our attenders engaged and excited for Easter is to communicate early and often. With simple strategies and best practices, we can help our church family stay informed and encouraged to invite others.

## EASTER COMMUNICATIONS CALENDAR

Use a simple timeline to guide our communication. Full calendar on next page.

## SHARE THROUGH MARKETING MEDIA

Create cohesive messaging with sermon graphics, social media, and other marketing assets. Begin sharing on social media and lock in 2–3 platforms to go all in on. Below are recommended marketing strategies:

- **Website:** All Easter details can be found at [harvestministries.org/easter](https://harvestministries.org/easter).
- **Billboard:** Display on nearby highways 3–4 weeks before Easter weekend.
- **Email:** Use a 28-day email campaign.
- **Flyers:** Canvas apartments and neighborhoods putting flyers on doors. Encourage current attenders to pass out flyers each week leading up to Easter weekend with a goal of bringing 5 guests to church.
- **Text:** Use a 28-day text campaign mirroring the email campaign.
- **Social Media:** Leverage countdowns, carousel posts, reels, and other interactive posts.

## SIMPLE INVITE STRATEGY

- **From Stage:** Briefly share details during weekend services. And repeat it weekly!
- **Online:** Create a central landing page with service information and shareable graphics.
- **Personal:** Encourage attenders to personally invite their friends, family, and neighbors.

# COMMUNICATIONS CALENDAR

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Use a simple timeline to guide our communication:

- **6–8 weeks before:** Finalize Easter services, branding materials, marketing strategy, and environments. Update website.
- **4–6 weeks before:** Announce service times and encourage invitations from leaders and current attenders. Launch marketing strategies including invitation push and paid ads at a low budget level.
- **2–3 weeks before:** Continue marketing strategies and running paid ads at a higher budget level. Encourage current attenders to bring at least 5 people with them to church on Easter. (i.e. Bring 5 Challenge)
- **Week of Easter:** Send final reminders via email, social media, and text.



# 6. EXCELLENCE & GUEST EXPERIENCE

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Take an “excellence walk” through our building with fresh eyes before every service. Use the **Easter Excellence Checklist** to capture every detail:

- Lobby and common areas are clean, decorated, and inviting.
- Restrooms are fully stocked and spotless.
- Harvest Kids prepped with curriculum, supplies, and working tech.
- Guest Services counters are clutter-free and stocked with needed materials.
- Parking lots and entrances are well-lit, clear, and easy to navigate.

## PREPARING TEAMS

We get to set the tone for our church. Here are practical resources to help us onboard and train new volunteers effectively and create an amazing first-time guest experience:

- **Volunteer Training & Onboarding:** We host a church-wide volunteer training at least one month in advance of Easter weekend. Each ministry leader will conduct more thereafter, as needed.
- **Easter Teams:** Communications, Harvest Kids, Hospitality, Mobilization, Next Steps, Outreach, Prayer, Production, Worship.



# EASTER EXCELLENCE CHECKLIST

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God is excellent and we expect excellence so people can experience God.

## LOBBY / COMMON AREAS / RESTROOMS

- Lobby furniture is clean, straight, and arranged to handle Easter crowds.
- Floors are clean, the area smells fresh and welcoming.
- Trash is cleared inside and outside all entrances.
- Entryways are clean and weather-ready. (mats, umbrellas, signage as needed)
- Restrooms are fully stocked, all surfaces are clean.

## HOSPITALITY

- Guest bags for first-time guests are stocked and easy to access.
- Connection Cafe counter is clean, clutter-free, and highly visible.
- Extra info cards, pens, and name tag supplies are ready.
- Team members are positioned to greet, guide, and answer questions.

## KIDS ENVIRONMENTS

- Check-in printers are functioning properly and extra label rolls are stocked.
- Check-in computers and tablets are clean and functioning properly.
- Cords and cables are secured and organized.
- Sign-in sheets and capped pens are available in every classroom.
- Curriculum videos are downloaded, tested, and ready for Easter weekend.
- TVs, remotes, and playback devices are working.
- Crayons, toys, and supplies are clean and in good condition.
- Storage cases are fully stocked with wipes, gloves, and disinfectant.
- Rooms are clean, calm, and welcoming to all kids who will be participating.

## FINAL WALK-THROUGH

- Do a full "guest-eye" walk from the parking lot to the worship center.
- Look for confusion points, bottlenecks, or distractions.

# 7. EASTER ONLINE

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Our Easter services could be someone's first step to finding faith, and an excellent online experience can help people feel seen, connected, and invited into deeper community.

## PREPARING FOR EASTER ONLINE

- **Confirm:** Service times, chat settings, moments for prayer, salvation, giving, and connection.
- **Run a test stream:** Test our connection and work through any technical issues.
- **Prepare your team spiritually:** Pray and create a rhythm for checking in on our people.
- **Involve staff and families:** Make online ministry feel like a shared calling.
- **Create a follow-up plan:** Make a clear plan to re-engage new online attenders after Easter.

Use the **Online Excellence Checklist** to capture every detail.

## HELPFUL ONLINE RESOURCES

Equip our team with resources and training that set them up for success.

- **Online Minister Guide:** Equip our online hosts to serve with these best practices, communication tips, sample procedures, and prayer prompts.

# ONLINE EXCELLENCE CHECKLIST

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## TECHNOLOGY SETUP

- Test internet connection (strong, stable Wi-Fi or Ethernet).
- Test audio quality from your mics and sound mix.
- Check camera positioning, lighting, and focus.
- Confirm all live stream integrations are working properly (YouTube, Facebook).
- Recommended: Run a Preview Service to review all service components and content.

## PLATFORM PREPAREDNESS

- For live stream: Embed your video.
- Upload any additional service content (service notes, host notes, links to PDFs, etc.).
- Ensure all interactive features are activated (Chat, Share Button, Website Links, etc.).
- During the service, give online attenders concrete Next Steps.

## ONLINE MINISTER READINESS

- Assign Online Minister for Chat and Prayer.
- Equip Online Minister with pre-scripted prompts and engagement cues for the chat.
- Train Online Minister to welcome attenders, engage in live prayer, and provide helpful links.
- Ensure familiarity with live streaming platform.
- Prepare Online Minister with FAQs and who to reach out to when issues arise.

## POST-SERVICE FOLLOW-UP

- Review live chat transcripts (availability may vary per platform).
- Trigger automated follow-up emails or thank-you messages.
- Analyze attendance reports and chat engagement metrics.

# 8. EASTER SALVATION & RESPONSE

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For many people, Easter is the moment the gospel finally makes sense. We have an extraordinary opportunity to explain the good news and give people a chance to respond.

## PRESENTING THE GOSPEL ON EASTER

As we prepare our sermon, keep the invitation simple:

- **Explain the gospel.** Share who Jesus is, what He's done, and what it means to follow Him in everyday language.
- **Invite a response.** Let people know they can respond, without rushing or forcing a moment.
- **Offer clear options.** Some may be ready to say yes. Others may want prayer or a conversation. Give direction either way.

## WHEN SOMEONE SAYS YES (IN-PERSON)

A clear Next Step helps new believers to understand what their decision means.

### *Following Jesus Course*

This video-based course walks alongside new believers as they begin following Jesus. Each video includes Scripture and practical guidance that answers common questions about Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, and other important beliefs about the Christian faith.

### *Next Steps Course*

This video-based course walks alongside new guests and attenders with Next Steps to take at our church.

## WHEN SOMEONE SAYS YES (ONLINE)

Online attenders often don't have immediate access to a Christian community. Our video-based courses guide and graft them into our faith community.

# 9. FOLLOW-UP & DISCIPLESHIP

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Follow-up works best when it's simple and personal. The goal is not to overwhelm people. It's to help them take one clear Next Step.

## SIMPLE FOLLOW-UP AFTER EASTER

In the days following Easter:

- Thank guests for coming.
- Invite them back the following week.
- Share one clear Next Step.

A short text, email, or personal message within the first couple of days can make a big difference.

## HELPING PEOPLE TAKE A NEXT STEP

Easter often opens the door to invite your attenders to go even deeper in their faith journey. These are great steps to offer:

- **Baptism**: Offer new believers an opportunity to be baptized.
- **Serving**: Encourage them to get involved by volunteering.
- **Membership**: Offer an opportunity to join our church.
- **Giving**: Encourage them to make a financial impact in God's kingdom.
- **Groups**: Invite guests to groups where they can build lasting relationships.

## KEEPING MOMENTUM AND CARING FOR OUR TEAMS

Easter doesn't have to end on Sunday. These are easy next steps we can give our church and our team:

- Preview what's coming next (new message series, baptisms, etc.).
- Highlight kids and youth opportunities for new families.
- Thank our staff and volunteers for their hard work.
- Share stories and celebrate wins with our team.

# WEEK-BY-WEEK EASTER CHECKLIST

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## 7-8 WEEKS BEFORE EASTER

- Confirm service dates, times, and formats.
- Assign owners for ministry areas and events (i.e. sermon, worship, kids, etc.)
- Choose the direction for our Easter sermon.
- Create marketing assets. (i.e. Connect Card, social media, billboard)
- Update website. (i.e. homepage, Easter page)
- Develop marketing campaign plan. (i.e. email, text, social media, calls)

## 5-6 WEEKS BEFORE EASTER

- Evaluate environments to accommodate services and programming.
- Order flyer invitations and begin apartment distribution plan.
- Begin recruiting and scheduling volunteers.
- Develop post-Easter discipleship plan. (i.e. Next Steps)
- Order gifts for first-time guests.
- Develop Easter follow-up strategy and sequence.
- Church-wide volunteer orientation and training.

## 4 WEEKS BEFORE EASTER

- Launch 28-day Easter communications promotional plan.
- Finalize kids and youth resources for Easter weekend.
- Look for invite stories to share.
- Record series after Easter promotional video.
- Update social media page headers, links, pinned posts, etc. (Easter theme)
- Create photo booth/family photo plan.
- Ministry volunteer trainings.

## 3 WEEKS BEFORE EASTER

- Pass out invite cards to congregation.
- Get follow-up plan items in place. (i.e. pre-written thank you notes)
- Start selfie invite video plan on social media.
- Ministry-specific volunteer orientations continue.

# WEEK-BY-WEEK EASTER CHECKLIST

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## 2 WEEKS BEFORE EASTER

- Community outreach and events. (i.e. HOAs)
- Finalize creative assets like graphics, videos, and slides.
- Lock in Easter online plan, including platforms and service times.
- Host a volunteer rally. (i.e. final walkthrough, prayer, fun activities)
- Social media lives and invite videos.
- Ministry volunteer trainings.

## 1 WEEK BEFORE EASTER

- Community outreach and events. (i.e. HOAs, Worship on the Lawn)
- Finish marketing plan and ramp up paid ads.
- Do an "excellence walk" through in all environments.
- Train Connections team with clear expectations and guest scripts.
- Finish volunteer thank you notes.
- Ministry volunteer trainings.
- Recommend: Run a full-service rehearsal for message, worship, tech, and online.

## EASTER WEEKEND

- Community outreach and events. (i.e. Easter Bowl)
- Share simple reminders or encouragements through email, text, and social.
- Equip Connections team with Next Step guidance.
- Equip Prayer team prayer prompts.
- Create space in every service for people to respond and encounter Jesus.
- Eliminate unnecessary announcements and promote big rocks. (i.e. giving, connect/next steps, new/current series promotion, VBS)

## THE WEEK AFTER EASTER

- Mail volunteer thank you cards.
- Execute follow-up emails/texts to first-time guests. (i.e. Next Steps)
- Celebrate wins and stories of life change with your team.
- Debrief together and evaluate what you'll adjust next year.



**HARVEST**  
MINISTRIES

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