

Understanding Special Events

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Definition

In the *Special Events Manual* he wrote for the Home Mission Board, Tom Eggleston offers the following definition of a special event:

A special event is an attraction, exposition, sporting event, or happening that brings people together for the purpose of entertainment, education, competition, enjoyment, or leisure.

Special events can be divided into two categories. Those events that occur annually or more frequently, such as state/county fairs, carnivals, rodeos, art/music/craft festivals, parades, agricultural expositions, historical reenactments, flea markets, seasonal/ethnic/town festivals, pioneer days, trade shows, and sports events.

Other special events may occur every two to four years, such as World Fairs, summer and winter Olympics, PanAm Games, national Boy Scout jamborees, and political conventions.¹

Special events draw together large crowds that have collective and individual needs and expectations. Ministry can take place in responding to those needs and expectations on physical and spiritual levels. They provide a distinct place for resort and leisure ministries to be applied.

Understand the Event

Surveying the event in terms of the following information is essential before ministry needs reveal themselves (see the sample survey at the end of this presentation):

- Technical information
- Organizational information
- Visitor information
- Ministry information

Apply the resort and leisure missions strategy

A comprehensive, balanced, and local church oriented ministry can best be developed when the principles of the resort and leisure missions strategy are followed.

Ministry Responses

Ministry responses can be on site, with the ministry presented as an official part of the event program, or off site, with the ministry presented as an alternate or supplemental part of the program.

On-Site Ministry:

- Program: (be an official part of the event)
 - Entertainment by performers, groups, etc.
 - Participate in the event
 - Have a booth, display, etc.

- Offer worship services during the event
- Personnel: (be an official part of the staff)
 - Provide volunteers to work various levels of the event
 - Serve as chaplain to the staff

Off-Site:

- Program: (provide an alternate or supplemental program)
 - Entertainment at an off-site facility
 - Worship at nearby facilities
 - Programs that relate to the event or visitors
 - Witnessing or entertainment in traffic flow areas
- Support: (provide needed resources to assist the event.)
 - Day care/day camps
 - Meals, restrooms, refreshment areas, etc.
 - Hospitality centers
 - Housing or event participants or guests
 - Community involvement

Endnote:

¹Tom Eggleston, *Special Events Manual*, Home Mission Board, SBC

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