



CONSIDER THE GIFT MIX OF YOUR PEOPLE

Take a good look at the abilities and interests of your congregation. How can you match those gifts with the needs of your community? Outreach can often be driven by the pastor, but for maximum impact to the community and the growth of your people, it should match your group's interests. Take a snapshot of the congregation to determine the fit. One needs to ask questions such as, "What are we interested in?" "What is the unique skill or giftedness of this particular group believers?" "Do we have the resources to accomplish this ministry?"



DO WHAT YOU KNOW

The sport of soccer has provided a tremendous opportunity for outreach in our community. Our community is heavily involved in various sports, from preschool age to college, and adult recreational. In addition to that, the people in our congregation have expertise in and passion for these sports, including soccer. This has proven to be an avenue to reach out to families in the community.

FILL A NEED

The outreach ministries we select tend to fill voids within community life. Our goal is not to compete with existing activities or efforts, but rather to support and become involved in community vision and passion. Soccer is very big in our town, but most programs here begin at the kindergarten age level. We decided to start a three- and four-year-old soccer academy. The goal was to provide foundational skills that would be built upon as the children develop and mature. Families from all over the community come to our campus. They are introduced not only to the game of soccer, but also to the church and the people who serve here. The academy runs for three weeks (on Saturdays) and costs only \$15, which covers expenses t-shirts for participants. The space needed is minimal, so the front yard of the church works perfectly.



The academy stresses fundamental (technical) training through the use of fun games designed to improve individual skill. The student learns to use his or her feet by practicing dribbling, soccer moves, and juggling. We do not emphasize playing full scale games (tactical training). Three- and four-year-olds need as many touches as possible, and playing a full-scale game would not maximize those touches.

It has become a great introduction to the game with little pressure on the child. Parents appreciate having their child find interests and passions correctly. No one wants that "first experience" to be a bad one and turn him/her off for life.

FIND THAT THING

Your situation may be much different than ours. Your community may have interests in other sports, hobbies, or past-times. The key is to find something that the community needs or wants and that your group can provide. The right ministry may be crystal clear to you. Avoid having tunnel vision, repeating unsuccessful outreaches, or copying exactly what someone else has done.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Provide something that your congregation has interest in. Successful ministry requires energy—You will need many hands on deck!
- Work in an area of strength. In what areas do your people have expertise? Doing something well will build your church's reputation in the community.
- Match those interests and areas of expertise with a need!

