

## **Growing Through Flower Festivals!**

**Flower Festivals** - love them or loathe them or even if you are ambivalent they can provide a unique opportunity for the furtherance of the Gospel. Here are my top ten tips for getting your Flower Festival to grow not only flowers but also disciples! If you want any further help or ideas do get in touch.

1. Involve as many people as possible. To put on a good display you need all kinds of people, people who can make special stands, water features, paintings, think about those around you in the local community and try and draw them in. A message that the Church needs you to help build a special stand can be much better than the Church needs you to come to worship or even to give money! As you work alongside these different people be ready in a gentle loving way to share your faith with them, not forgetting to listen to their stories as well. And don't forget to involve the children and young people.
2. Try and develop a theme that will take people on a journey where they will encounter God in some particular way that will arrest and challenge them.
3. Try to have good literature available, not only explaining the Display but also a simple Gospel message. And/or have other literature available, either locally produced or from agencies such as Christian Enquiry Agency.
4. If it is possible ensure there are refreshments available (and if possible toilets!).
5. Have details of local events and information for any visitors to the area.
6. If possible think about playing the 'Jesus Video' or similar in a quiet corner.
7. Add in extras, Story Telling for example.
8. Ensure that there is a nurture group, for example Alpha, Credo or Emmaus set up and ready to run after the Festival. And be expectant that people will want to know and be interested. A simple meal and explanation of such a Course could be a good way to conclude a Flower Festival, thinking of it as part of the journey.
9. Pray before, during and after, and be creative. Quite often people welcome someone to pray with them or for them there and then. Perhaps you could also incorporate prayers on the hour or something along those lines.
10. Acts of Worship - apart from giving thanks try to ensure that any Services point people to the God revealed in the beauty of nature and that they can have a personal relationship with God through Jesus.

Gordon Banks, 27/07/2007

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