

# 15 IDEAS TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO RETURN

Choose one idea that will work in your context, don't try them all. Or maybe none of these are for you, but they may spark an idea which will work for you. Take a look at this [Padlet board](#) for more ideas.

1

## 1 TREASURE HUNT

On a Saturday morning, do a fun children's treasure hunt around your grounds, or along the street leading to your church – ending with the treasure in the church. Have refreshments for people when they arrive.

2

## 2 CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHATS

Some clergy and lay leaders set aside a week during Lent for people to book slots to come to talk individually about their lives and faith. This might be a good time to do that, making a point of inviting especially those who have slipped away.

3

## 3 VISIT

Alternatively, draw up a list of all those you haven't seen recently. Identify if there are any people who could join you in visiting them (or arrange meetings in a coffee shop). Be realistic about how many visits you could do a week. Go with an enquiring mind-set, not a judgemental one. Find out their story. Look to bless them.

4

## 4 CORE PURPOSE

Remind folks in church – onsite and online – of our core purpose. Preach about this, but also connect people with it through the way we introduce things, welcome people, and send them off. It connects people with the bigger picture and helps them to see why gathering is important.

5

## 5 YOUTH GROUP

If you once had a youth group – but it has dispersed during Covid – this is the time to open homes and churches for gatherings again. (With all due safeguarding requirements in place.) See this [guide](#) for activities to reconnect young people, or this [article](#) to get you thinking about what to do.

6

## 6 LEAFLET AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Leaflet your parish/area – if that's possible – as well as doing social media, advertising all events and services well.

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## 7 EASTER

Make a big thing of Easter. It is a great opportunity to reconnect the disconnected with the centre of the Christian year. This [Facebook group](#) is a place to find and share ideas around this season.

8

#### WELCOME HOME MONTH

Hold a Welcome Home month (or Sunday). Put a big banner outside church, add bunting, bubbles and cake. One church increased attendance by 25% in this way (see their social media videos [here](#)).

9

#### LETTERS OR CARDS

Letters or cards to everyone on your contact list and electoral roll who hasn't been seen – showing a personal interest.

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#### INVITE

Don't forget to invite. Invite people to attend through your regular email, your social media and so on. And also, at the end of each service, invite people back the following Sunday. (Take a look at this [article](#) on some research in the US that shows overall 41% of previous church attenders would return if invited.)

11

#### RETHINK

This is maybe the time to start some small fresh expressions of church – in schools, pubs, coffee shops as an alternative way of connecting with people. This may work well for those who have stopped attending church, but don't feel they have left church.

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#### FOOD, FOOD, FOOD

Gather around food in a variety of different ways. Take a look at [Hope 15:13](#) for ideas.

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#### QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE WEEKEND

[Hope Together UK](#) have a great range of ideas and resources to help make the most of the June 2-5 special bank holiday weekend to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee .

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#### LOCAL LISTENING

Hold an event where you invite leaders in the community to share their experience of the pandemic (medics, community project leaders, business people, head teachers and so on), and find creative ways to thank them and bless them. Invite those who haven't been to church to attend. An event like this (online or onsite) envisions people ('I didn't know that..'), communicates what we value ('we're a local church for the local community.') and reconnects people with what is going on.

15

#### VOICES

15-30 second videos from church members, shared on the Church website and through social media, with an encouragement to existing congregation members to like the posts and link them to people they know, especially those who aren't attending. They could be videos of what people are finding helpful about gatherings, or ways that people are encountering Jesus.