



# COURAGEOUS STORYTELLERS

MEMBER RESOURCES FOR CHURCH COMMUNICATORS

## CHRISTMAS COMMUNICATIONS PLANNER

## HOW TO USE THIS PLANNER

**This planner is designed to be a guide** and help you think through some of the things you should be doing along the way. It is not exhaustive. There are plenty of blank spaces throughout for you to add your specific tasks and plans.

**There are also no dates.** Schedules will vary depending on context, church size, etc., so adjust the plan to meet your own schedule.

**Check out the appendix in the back.** It has ideas to help you with your theme, scripture selections, stories you can tell, and more.

Courageous Storytellers: Member Resources for Church Communicators

[CourageousStorytellers.com](http://CourageousStorytellers.com)

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## PRELIMINARY PLANNING

Plan an initial meeting with the key stake holders in the Christmas plan for your church. Schedule the meeting as far in advance as possible, then answer as much of the following as possible...

### THEME

What will be the main message for Christmas this year?

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What will be the main theme for Christmas this year?

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What is the main story you want to tell at Christmas?

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What is the main scripture the pastor will use in the messages this year?

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What are some immediate next steps you and your teaching pastors will want people to take as a result of attending the Christmas services? (E.g., come back after the beginning of the year, make a decision for Christ, feel warm and fuzzy, have a positive experience with the church, view church as something different than they expected, etc.)

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### NOTES:

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### BRANDING

What branding direction are you initially leaning toward? Is there any emotion that immediately comes to mind?

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What initial imagery comes to mind based on the theme you are going for?

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Notes:

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### NEXT ACTIONS

What are the immediate steps you need to take to be prepared for what's next in your Christmas planning?

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### DISCUSSIONS / RESEARCH

Based on this initial meeting, is there any research or discussions you need to have to move forward in your Christmas planning?

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## SOLIDIFY THE PLAN

Once you've made it through the fall rush, it's time to begin doing real work on Christmas planning. This month, begin creating assets and making concrete plans for marketing.

### CHECKLIST

- Schedule a second set of meetings with key stakeholders to review info from previous planning meeting.
- Design Christmas logo/graphics.
- Begin initial marketing planning.
- Plan stage design and begin thinking about who is going to acquire materials, build set pieces, etc.
- Plan any videos, begin scouting locations, auditioning talent, etc.
- Plan Christmas website, website assets, and/or microsite. Begin wireframing Christmas website.
- Create communication plans surrounding any missions / giving / outreach initiatives (Operation Christmas Child, Angel Tree, etc.).
- Plan anything that goes out to vendors, needs to be ordered, etc. (Print, props, banners, signs, etc.).

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### MARKETING

- Email campaign.
- Text messaging campaign.
- Social media campaign.
- Print invites.
- App push notifications.
- Paid advertising.
- Content marketing (blog posts, articles, etc.).
- Press releases and/or leveraging free local news coverage.
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### NEXT ACTIONS

What are the immediate steps you need to take to be prepared for what's next in your Christmas planning?

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### DISCUSSIONS / RESEARCH

Based on this phase of planning, is there any research or are there discussions you need to have to move forward in your Christmas planning?

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## WORK THE PLAN

You've got all of your Christmas communications planned. Now it's time to start executing the details.

### CHECKLIST

- Review/refine marketing plan.
- Refine Christmas logo/graphics.
- Begin implementing marketing elements.
- Schedule volunteers to help with stage design construction, plan acquisition of materials, etc.
- Secure video locations. Write video scripts. Schedule talent. Rent equipment. Etc.
- Begin designing Christmas website.
- Acquire resources for missions / giving / outreach initiatives (tree for Angel Tree, shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child, etc.).
- Send print items to printer.
- Order banners, signs, etc.

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### MARKETING

- Write copy for email campaign.
- Write copy for text messaging campaign.
- Create graphics/videos for social media campaign.
- Order print invites.
- Write app push notifications.
- Order paid advertising insertions.
- Write blog posts or articles for content marketing.
- Write press releases.
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### NEXT ACTIONS

What are the immediate steps you need to take to be prepared for what's next in your Christmas planning?

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### IMPEDIMENTS

Are there any obstacles that will keep you from executing the Christmas plan? If so, write them here and determine how to resolve them.

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## FINAL DETAILS

It's go time! In November, you should be fully into executing your Christmas communications plan.

### CHECKLIST

- Make any pivots or last minute tweaks of marketing plan.
- Construct Christmas stage design.
- Record, edit, produce Christmas videos.
- Make Christmas website live.
- Begin missions / giving / outreach initiatives
- Get items from printer and provide to congregation.
- Place/hang banners, signs, etc.

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### MARKETING

- Schedule email campaign.
- Send text messages.
- Post social media campaign posts.
- Distribute print invites.
- Schedule app push notifications.
- Paid advertising running.
- Post blog posts or articles.
- Send press releases.

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### NEXT ACTIONS

What are the immediate steps you need to take to be prepared for what's next in your Christmas planning?

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### STORIES

Begin thinking about how you can collect stories to share how God worked at your church at Christmas. Jot down a few of those stories here so you can share them in January.

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## AFTER CHRISTMAS

You did it! If all went as planned, your Christmas work should be about done. Relax and enjoy the holidays with your friends and family. When you return to work, do some tidy-up and preparation to set yourself up for success next year.

### CHECKLIST

- Record metrics and stats from your marketing efforts.
- Evaluate what went well.
- Evaluate what could have been done better.
- Begin planning for how you will follow up with guests and those who interacted with you at Christmas.
- Deliver anything you collected for missions / giving / outreach initiatives.
- Archive assets and organize them for next year.
- Store any banners, signs, stage pieces, etc.
- Send thank you cards to volunteers and find ways to celebrate your team and success.
  
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## APPENDIX

### Christmas Scriptures

Below are some scripture references to get you started with your Christmas planning.

#### Isaiah 7:14

Prophecy about Jesus - The Virgin Birth

#### Luke 1 & 2

The traditional Christmas story passages.

#### Matthew 1:18-25

Angel appears to Joseph.

#### Isaiah 9:6-7

Prophecy about Jesus - For to us a child is born...

#### Micah 5:2

Prophecy about Jesus - Ruler from the Clans of Judah

#### Zechariah 9:9

Prophecy about Jesus - The Coming of Zion's King

#### 1 John 5:11

God gives us life in his Son.

#### Acts 5:31

God exalted him as Prince and Savior

#### Philippians 2:8-10

Jesus humbled himself as a baby.

#### Isaiah 11:1

Prophecy about Jesus - The Branch From Jesse

#### Romans 6:23

The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus

#### John 3:16

For God so loved the world he sent his Son.

### Christmas "Stories"

- The King who Became a Child
- The Greatest Gift
- Mary & Joseph's Story
- The Herod Story
- The Inn Keeper's Story
- Shepherds & Angels
- Wise Men
- Zechariah & Elizabeth
- Christmas Through the Eyes Of..
- Simple Gifts
- The Carols of Christmas
- Surprised by Christmas
- Light Overcoming Darkness
- A Gift We Don't Deserve
- No Room For a Savior
- Blue Christmas

### Christmas Styles

- Nostalgic
- Trendy
- Modern
- Wintry Wonderland
- Regal / Royal
- Traditional

