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First free evangelical church

Initiating and operating a church bookstore in your community is a great way to not only encourage an exchange of ideas and shared philosophies amongst your target clientele but also to help raise money for worthy causes that your church endorses. In addition, its neighborhood presence can attract potential new members to the congregation as well as serve as the backdrop for book discussion groups, lectures, church socials, newcomers' meetings and religious studies classes and workshops. Here are some tips on how to decide what type of merchandise to sell in your shop and how to generate local support in launching a successful opening. Identify your core demographic. For instance, will the bookstore primarily be for the benefit of the members of your congregation or do you want to attract non-members to the products and services the store has to offer? Determine the best location for your bookstore. Is there currently an unused space on the church grounds that would lend itself to your vision? If your target market is strictly the congregation, your "built-in" audience can easily visit it before or after church services. If you want to court non-members, however, your shop needs to be visible, have convenient parking and be open more hours. Research the community bookstores within closest proximity to where you want to open shop. For your bookstore to be a success, it has to offer something different from the competition. A Christian-specific bookstore, for example, is a different enterprise from a retail chain even though the latter may offer religious titles. Decide what you want to sell. Will it strictly be reading material or do you also want to offer items such as greeting cards, bookmarks, stationery, coffee mugs and picture frames? Research how you're going to acquire your initial inventory. If all of the books in stock are going to be new, you'll need to survey publishers and query what kind of discounts they can offer. If the books are going to be used editions, will you be relying on donated copies or investing the time in trolling flea markets? If products other than books are going to be sold, you'll need to identify vendors and get estimates of their prices. Determine whether the bookstore can be a multi-use facility. If the space is large enough, for instance, it could be used for meetings, lectures, tutoring or Bible study classes. Decide how your bookstore will be staffed. Unless you feel comfortable running the entire show by yourself, you'll need to have an assistant or two. Ideally these can be volunteers from your congregation or students who want the experience or school credits provided by an internship. Visit the website of the Small Business Administration. This not only walks you through the steps of starting up a new business but also offers advice on how to secure a loan. Since it's unlikely that the church itself will underwrite your enterprise, you'll be responsible for acquiring the capital to get things off the ground. Draft a preliminary budget that addresses space rental, purchase of books, purchase/construction of shelving units, office supplies and equipment, and advertising. Present your proposal to the church clergy. Whether the bookstore is going to be set up on the church grounds or in a separate facility, the more benefit they can see to the members of the congregation, the more likely they are to support it. Start a buzz in the church newsletter. When the bookstore gets ready to open, you'll also want to put an announcement into the community newspapers. Design a website to attract online book buyers. Invite fellow church members and site visitors to make book recommendations and participate in discussion groups. Tips Consider putting your bookstore on wheels. This unique aspect of distribution would appeal to congregations with older members who aren't getting out as much as they used to. A mobile bookstore will also increase the visibility of the church because it can be driven to different locations throughout the community. As with any mobile operation, of course, you'll need to make sure you have the appropriate business licenses from your city or county. If a brick and mortar operation just isn't feasible, don't rule out the inventiveness of a "virtual" church bookstore. The advantage is that you can run the entire business yourself from home and, further, not have to worry about the storage space needed to carry a full inventory. When a customer wants a particular book, your only job is to sleuth out where to find it and order it for them. Warnings If you're not sure whether your new bookstore is going to be successful, it's better to lease a space than to buy an existing store and then worry about having to sell it. Your store will need to comply with federal regulations regarding access by individuals with disabilities (stairs, narrow aisles, curb cuts). It will also need to comply with fire safety regulations. If you have employees working for you, you'll need to carry workers' comp insurance. Churches provide a range of outreach services for their members and the surrounding community. They rely on donations, but often, many business opportunities exist that can generate a significant amount of revenue. Member-driven business activities that don't rely on the church's resources can help maximize profit potential. Revenue from business activities must be used for religious purposes and reported to the IRS in order for the church to maintain a nonprofit status. Church members can donate or create items for a church bazaar. A bazaar is similar to a flea market in that there are a wide variety of items available, but proceeds from a bazaar benefit a charitable cause or nonprofit organization. Request articles from the congregation based on the time of year. For example, during October and November, you might request Christmas decorations members no longer use in preparation for a December bazaar. Post a notice in your church bulletin requesting business owners in the congregation offer significant discounts to members of the church if a certain number of members commit to making a purchase. Sell the coupon to the committed customers in advance of purchase for the discounted price. The church can split the profits with the business owners. Invite prominent choirs and Christian music artists to perform at a weekend concert series. Purchase wholesale snacks to sell at a concession stand. Choose a multicultural assortment of musical acts so that you can partner with other neighborhood churches to promote the concert. During special programming on weekends or in the evenings, provide childcare for a small fee. Use volunteers from the Sunday School to oversee the children. If you are selling tickets to your program, you could tout free childcare to attract more parents to attend your paid event. Benzinga's Top Ratings Upgrades, Downgrades For July 14, 2021 Benzinga's Top Ratings Upgrades, Downgrades For June 24, 2021 Seeking Alpha Catalyst Watch 10 Best Stocks to Buy That Will Get You Through the Day Church & Dwight Co Inc. Q1 adjusted earnings Beat Estimates Church & Dwight Q1 2021 Earnings Preview Church & Dwight declares \$0.2525 dividend Church & Dwight Recalls Select Vitafusion Gummy Products Benzinga's Top Ratings Upgrades, Downgrades For April 19, 2021 7 Recession-Proof Stocks to Buy Church & Dwight Co Inc. 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Profit Climbs 8% In Q3 Page 3 Even though church attendance in America is steadily declining, you shouldn't have any trouble practicing your chosen religion. There are still millions of people attending thousands of churches and places of worship across the country. We know the most sinful cities in the United States, but let's look at the other side of things. Getting right with God is easy in these 15 cities with the most churches. PropertyShark divided populations by the number of houses of worship to discover the cities where churches are most prevalent (broken down into the average number of people per church). We're guessing No. 1 on the list probably won't shock you, but the No. 2 city is surprising. 15. San Francisco San Francisco has a surprising number of churches. | Heyenge/iStock/Getty Images Average people per church: 1,565 people San Francisco residents work too much and never go on vacation, so heading to mass for a spiritual reboot is probably a good idea. There are plenty of options in that department with 528 houses of worship within the city limits. Next: This big city isn't short on houses of worship. 14. New York City The Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. | Theo Wargo/Getty Images Average people per church: 1,353 The most populous area in the United States is also one of the cities with the most churches. New York City houses 6,160 holy places within the city limits or one church for every 1,353 inhabitants. Next: A city making up for lost time. 13. Miami A look inside St. Brendan's Catholic Church in Miami. | Rob Fodly/Getty Images Average people per church: 1,303 Miami's first church wasn't established until 1921, according to the PropertyShark data, but it's making up for lost time. In less than 100 years, it's built 462 houses of worship or one for every 1,300 people. Next: A cemetery is this city's signature holy site. 12. Phoenix Phoenix has more churches than you realize. | Dreamframe7/iStock/Getty Images Average people per church: 1,291 PropertyShark includes cemeteries as religious places, and Phoenix has one of the largest in the country. The National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona covers 225 acres north of downtown, and when you include the many historical churches in town, there's a holy place for every 1,291 Phoenix residents. Next: The future isn't looking too good, but this city still makes the list. 11. Chicago A funeral mass at Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago. | Nam Y. Huh/Getty Images Average people per church: 1,224 Even though the Chicago archdiocese is planning to close 100 churches in the future, for now, Chicago still ranks as one of the cities with the most churches. It has a huge number of Christian churches, and when you include mosques and Jewish temples, there's a holy place for every 1,224 people in the city. Next: This city's oldest church has tons of history. 10. Boston Paul Revere and Old North Church (background) share an important role in history. | Three Lions/Getty Images Average people per church: 1,107 When you travel to Boston, the Old North Church is practically a must-see. It's where Paul Revere launched his legendary ride to warn everyone about the impending British invasion. It was built in 1723, so it's the oldest in town, but it's far from the only holy site in Boston, which has 575 religious venues. Next: A famous pastor's church is hardly the only religious venue in town. 9. Houston Joel Osteen's Lakewood Church is one of the thousands in Houston. | Cindy Ord/Getty Images Average people per church: 1,085 Joel Osteen is one of the richest pastors in the United States, and his Lakewood Church packs in 52,000 parishioners every week, but it's hardly the only religious site in town. With 1,991 houses of worship, it's one of the cities with the most churches in the U.S. Next: Almost everyone goes to church, and there are plenty to choose from. 8. Charlotte, N.C. Dale Earnhardt fans stand outside Charlotte's Calvary Church during his memorial services. | Donald Miralle/Alpsport Average people per church: 1,053 Only 17% of Charlotte residents aren't religiously active, according to the Public Relations Research Institute, which is one of the lowest big-city rates in the county. Everyone goes to church, and there are plenty to choose from since it has 736 religious venues within city limits. Next: Religion is very important to the residents of this city. 7. Dallas Police officers attend a funeral at the Potter's House Church in Dallas. | Justin Sullivan/Getty Images Average people per church: 909 More than 53% of Dallas residents identify as religious, according to Sperling's Best Places, which is nearly 6% higher than the national rate. Religion is very important there, and with close to 1,400 venues, it boils down to one church for every 909 people. Next: A city that beats Dallas by a nose. 6. Columbus, Ohio Columbus has several megachurches among its many places to worship. | David Rigg/iStock/Getty Images Average people per church: 907 Columbus can't compare to the nearly 1,400 religious venues in Dallas, but it's still one of the cities with the most churches. The city has some of the largest churches in Ohio, and there's a religious site for every 907 people who live there. Next: This city is a Christian hotbed. 5. Memphis, Tenn. The Mason Temple Church of God in Christ in Memphis. | Joe Raedle/Getty Images Average people per church: 804 The oldest building in continuous use in Memphis is Calvary Episcopal Church, which dates to 1832. Nearly 64% of people identify as religious, and most of them are Christian as a little over 2% are Jewish, Muslim, or other faiths. Next: This city has the largest church in North America. 4. Washington, D.C. Inside the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. | Doug Mills/Getty Images Average people per church: 738 Even though it's getting more difficult for them to attend masses, most presidents identify with specific religions. The Commanders in Chief who can sneak away for sermons have plenty of options since Washington, D.C., is one of the cities with the most churches. The largest church in North America, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, is less than four miles from the White House. Next: The second city from a southern state on our countdown. 3. Jacksonville, Fla. Jacksonville's Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. | Stephen Morton/Getty Images Average people per church: 562 Jacksonville is one of the largest cities in America based on square mileage, and it's also one of the cities with the most churches. If its 1,488 holy sites were divided equally among the population, there would be one church for every 562 residents. Next: It's not a religious city, but it has plenty of religious venues. 2. Seattle It's not a very religious place, but Seattle still has a lot of churches. | Peter Muller/Getty Images Average people per church: 481 Seattle resides at the other end of the spectrum as Charlotte with 33% of residents claiming they aren't religious. Despite that, the city houses 1,355 churches or other holy sites, one for every 481 people. Next: Far and away the No. 1 city. 1. Indianapolis Indianapolis has a plethora of churches within its city limits. | RudyBalasko/iStock/Getty Images Average people per church: 289 The city and state that gave us very religious Vice President Mike Pence is far and away the No. 1 city with the most churches. It has nearly 2,900 churches and other religious sites, one for every 289 people who live in the city. Check out The Cheat Sheet on Facebook! 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