

The Poster

THE SAN DIEGO SOUTHERN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

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Faith in Action Xtreme Comes to San Diego Churches

“Faith if it is not accompanied by works is DEAD!” (James 2:17) God said it. He means it. He will be taking names.

Believe this! ... The practice of our faith must include moral behavior and essential spiritual habits or its useless. Likewise, the **proclamation** of our faith must include the demonstration of God’s love or it’s ineffective.

For 3 years of Jesus’ public ministry, “He went about doing good.” And as He healed the sick, fed the hungry, befriended the lonely, etc. etc. He proclaimed the good news of God’s Kingdom.

95% of Jesus’ recorded ministry in the New Testament took place outside of the Temple and the synagogue. It was carried out in the marketplace, on the roadside, in the living room, at the community pool, the graveyard, wedding parties, in the fields. Wherever people gathered ... wherever people were in need, He showed up. He demonstrated the love of God through acts of ministry and service. Then He proclaimed the love of God in words. It worked beautifully. Powerfully. Consistently.

Now, we come to Faith-in-Action Xtreme. I know that this is not the only way to reach out to a lost and broken world. It is not the only way to demonstrate God’s love or to declare His love and share the gospel. If you’ve got another, better way, use it.

But Faith-in-Action Xtreme with its *six month season of service* in the community is one very

promising way to get that job done. It’s the best I’ve found in 41 years of ministry.

Working simultaneously with other churches should feed the energy and enthusiasm and maximize the “good will” effect for the whole city.

I plead once again for every church—small or large—to take the challenge and love on your community in the name of Jesus. Join us in this six month season of service. I believe it will be so Jesus-like.

In case you don’t remember the important details or have some lingering questions, let me urge you to read the Frequently Asked Questions in the remainder of this Special Edition of the POSTER.

In a couple of weeks, I’ll communicate one more time about how to get the most out of a Faith-in-Action Xtreme experience at your church.

The second wave is forming. We need you in it.





aka: Six Month Season of Service

FAQs

1. What is Faith-in-Action Xtreme?

It is a *six month season of service* in which individual churches are urged to extend their congregation's reach into the community through extensive and sustained community service and community ministry projects. Its ultimate objective is to lead people to Christ and involve them in church. The "game plan" is remarkably simple: Good deeds should produce good will which should open the door for sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

2. How will Faith-in-Action Xtreme help my church?

A *six month season of service* (involving extensive and sustained community service and community ministry projects) should produce at least 5 high value results for your church:

- ◆ It should project your church's presence into the community. It will give you the opportunity to introduce and call attention to your church in a very positive light.
- ◆ It should help you identify prospects for church attendance and cultivate relationships for "pre-evangelism".
- ◆ It should enable you to harvest new believers among those whom God has already prepared.
- ◆ It should excite and energize your church members. As they get excited about what they and their church are doing, it should motivate many of them to invite their unsaved/unchurched friends to come and help in some of the community service and ministry projects. After they have worked beside your people and felt your heart, it should be much easier for those unchurched to cross the bridge into a church service where you can then help them across the final bridge into the Kingdom.
- ◆ It should enlarge your leadership pool. Many of the people who attend your church are not serving in any meaningful way—either because they don't feel needed, or qualified, or interested in the typical church leadership roles. But, they would love to serve the community and help others. They may never personally share Jesus with anyone, but their service and ministry should help create the atmosphere and audience for someone else to do it.

3. What kinds of things can we do?

We have grouped the activities of a typical Faith-in-Action Xtreme into two expressions: community service and community ministry.

- ◆ Community Service is intended to demonstrate that the church is a good neighbor by performing acts/projects which improve the general quality of life for the whole community. It is being a good neighbor. Examples might be: painting a school, cleaning up a park, painting out graffiti, etc.
- ◆ Community ministry is intended to meet individual human need (physical, educational, emotional, etc.) among people outside of the congregation itself. Examples might be: doing yard work or housework for disabled persons, making visits to homebound seniors, offering parent's night out to single moms and dads, tutoring children who are struggling with reading, etc.

4. Do you have any "pre-packaged" projects or activities we can easily or immediately get into?

Through the extensive research and planning of multiple staff at Vision San Diego, there have been identified five areas of community need that extend into every community in San Diego. They have gathered and organized the information to help any church with one or more of these city-wide needs. They have even provided staff member specialists to help individual churches who may need a little personal help to launch one of these ministries.

Those 5 Pillars of city-wide ministry are: Elder Care; Military; Mentoring troubled youth; Tutoring underperforming children; and Foster Care group homes.

For a much fuller description of these needs and opportunities, go to the website at www.visionsandiego.com. Click on the icon for Faith in Action Xtreme and then click on Areas of Impact. These 5 Pillars will display an icon. Click on the one(s) you are interested in for the description. If you still need more help, call Vision San Diego's office at 858-444-4400 and ask to speak to the specialist in your area of interest. And as always if there is any way we can help you here at the Associational office, our number is 619-275-2550. Spanish speakers can call Tammy Cookson at 858-229-1322 or Hugo Campos at 619-520-2020.

5. Do we have to use the 5 Pillars of activity that have been organized by Vision San Diego?

Of course not! You are free to develop your own *six month season of service* doing anything you choose to do. There may be needs or opportunities that are unique or compelling to your community. You and your congregation may already have a passion and compassion for things not included in those 5 Pillars. Go for them! Serve your community. In the name of

Jesus. Do the good deeds that creates the good will which opens the door to share the Good News.

6. How often do we need to do these community service and ministry projects or activities?

Some of the projects or activities may be onetime only – such as a community park cleanup. Some of the service and ministry may be repeated several times – such as a Single Parents Night Out. Still others will be ongoing (whether weekly, monthly, etc.) – such as eldercare or tutoring.

7. Why do we need to keep this up for six months? Why not once or twice?

The unfortunate truth is that most of our neighbors have decided that church is no longer relevant to the things they care about. We need them to see us differently – as a good neighbor who can add value to their life. (And we know that the greatest value is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.) This requires a “values shift” and we know that values are caught not taught. In a values shift, we don’t just tell someone something or show someone something one time and that settles it. It has to be presented again and again in different settings and different ways. With each experience a little more of the new value drops into place until after a period of time all the tumblers in the combination lock of the mind and heart fall into place and the door springs open. There is really no shortcut to regaining the church’s visibility and credibility in the eyes of an unbelieving world.

8. Do the projects/activities always have to be a church wide event? “I don’t think everybody will be interested in everything everytime.”

You’re in charge! You can do whatever you want to do, whenever you want to do it, for whomever you want to help with, whomever you want to do the helping.

Some of your community service and community ministry projects or activities will lend themselves best to individuals (such as mentoring troubled youth or tutoring underperforming children). Others will be well-suited in scope to small groups (i.e. Sunday School class or home Bible Study group). Still others will require the full church – such as a community park clean up. You can even have church wide Faith-in-Action days with multiple projects at multiple locations.

9. Do we have to cancel Sunday morning services in order to do Faith-in-Action Xtreme?

Absolutely not! The first 33 churches generated attention for the community ministry by going out during Sunday morning church time and rescheduling worship in the evening as a celebration (inviting community people they served or who helped them to serve). That was a one time attention builder. No one is asking our churches to reschedule their morning service in order to continue. (I might note that almost every one

of the churches who participated in that original Faith-in-Action Sunday back in April and October of last year, are committed to this larger *six month season of service*.) You can do these projects on Saturday, a weeknight, Sunday afternoon, midnight, or whenever it works for you.

10. Does the pastor have to lead Faith-in-Action Xtreme?

No. In fact, it is best if he does not. Whether your pastor is full time or bi-vocational his plate is full and running over with church leadership responsibilities. Some motivated, organized congregational leader should accept the leadership for Faith-in-Action Xtreme. Pastor, you can delegate that privilege to a staff member or trusted congregational leader. Then you become the voice and face of the *six month season of service* by becoming an enthusiastic advocate in the pulpit and in one-on-one conversations with church leaders and members.

11. Can we get some help for our community ministry and community service projects or activities?

If you need help with planning, contact either Vision San Diego at 858-444-4400 or our Association office at 619-275-2550. Spanish speaking churches can contact Tammy Cookson (Church and Community Ministries Specialist with the California Southern Baptist Convention) at 858-229-1322.

If you need help with manpower (i.e. you’ve got some projects that are bigger than your size church can handle alone), contact Vision San Diego for the possibility of an SFC partner. Or call our Associational office and we will help you submit a request for help through the Georgia Baptist Convention and through the online networking site for mission teams at North American Mission Board.

If you need help with money, your congregation will surprise you with their generosity to help others in need. Don’t cheat them out of their blessing. Ask and give them a chance to help. If there is still not enough, contact Vision San Diego and our Associational office. We each have limited funds to help with some churches that need it.

12. How do I sign up?

You don’t have to sign up to participate. Just start doing it. However, so that we can track what God is doing among us and so that we can give Him the glory that He is due for His help, we will appreciate being alerted of your participation and some reports of your activities along with any results or stories that might encourage others.



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FIA Testimony from East Clairemont SBC

The senior adult lady knew a group from East Clairemont Southern Baptist Church had volunteered to come and help her with some housekeeping and yard work. She was “floored” when the cars started arriving and the work teams started to work! By the end of the work period, her house had been cleaned inside. Part of her windows had been washed. Electrical problems had been corrected. A broken mailbox had been repaired. Her overgrown yard had been cut, pruned, and manicured. Over four pick up loads of trimmings were hauled away to the dump.

She was so grateful she could not control the tears! The neighbors saw the church van and trucks. They asked, “What is going on at Letha’s house?” What a testimony to her neighbors.

The team leader reported that her Sunday School class had requested that they continue with this type of help for the senior adults in their community. (No prompting was necessary.) Church members who only knew each other as Sunday morning acquaintances got to know each other better as they worked side-by-side.

HOW ONE CHURCH IS DOING IT

On March 29th Bethel Baptist Church of Escondido “left the building” and entered their community to become the hands, the heart, the voice of Jesus to their neighbors. Here is a quick glimpse of the service and ministry projects they performed in the name of Christ:

- ◆ Prepared lunch bags for the homeless
- ◆ Painting for Mountain Shadows Home for the Disabled
- ◆ Homemade cookies and prayer for the neighborhood fire and police stations
- ◆ Gardening and painting at two local schools.
- ◆ Worship and fellowship visits at Life Care Senior Center and Crestview Manor
- ◆ Collected food and baby items such as diapers, formula, etc. for distribution to military families in need
- ◆ Assembled welcome bags to be distributed to seniors through Meals on Wheels

Their next Faith-in-Action Day is May 31st. Small groups and Sunday School classes are taking the lead in developing projects for this venture into the community.

What could you and your church do? Don’t get intimidated because you’re not as large as Bethel. Do what your church can accomplish with its people and heart. But get busy doing **something!**

FIA TESTIMONY FROM BETHEL SBC

From The Broadcaster of Bethel Baptist Church in Escondido, Pastor Todd Hitchcock’s monthly column:

“What a huge success Faith-in-Action was, yet again! The word for compassion is only applied to one person in the New Testament (except for Jesus’ use in the story of the “Good Samaritan”).

“When you look at the world around you, what do you see? Are you continually looking through the lens of Jesus’ compassion?”

“In this, we will be relentless: How will they know unless someone tells them, or even better, unless someone shows them!”

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