

# Single friendly Church

A CAMPAIGN HELPING CHURCHES TO INCLUDE SINGLE ADULTS

## CHURCH IN THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS



## HOW CAN CHURCHES STAY CONNECTED DURING THE SUMMER?

Over the summer many churches take a break from their usual timetable of activities, as families go away or are less present during the school holidays. This can leave single people feeling disconnected when home groups, social opportunities and even services stop for a month or more.

In a recent survey, 75% of single people said some or all of their church activities stopped over the summer holidays. Some churches ran alternative activities or trips away that made summer a different but positive time for everyone.

**If your church stops activities over the summer, how can you ensure that those who don't go away feel connected to community, and that single people are supported?**

## 01. HAVE A SOCIAL OPPORTUNITY BEFORE OR AFTER THE SERVICE

This could be an informal gathering like a picnic or going for drinks at the pub, as simple as announcing a meeting place in the park and asking everyone to bring their own food or drink.

If you don't have capacity to organise this, ask some social members of the congregation to take charge and be present to start things off.

If you have coffee time before or after church, try and keep this going during the summer months. If there's going to be a heatwave, you could invite people to turn up to church early for an ice lolly! Think of some creative ways to make things fun for those who aren't able to go away on holiday.



## 02. KEEP GROUPS GOING, EVEN INFORMALLY

Your small group leaders may want a break over the summer, but consider whether you can keep groups going informally for those who want to continue meeting. Drinks, games nights, or having dinner together are all great ways to keep people connected and deepen relationships



**"We meet for drinks on the nights that we would otherwise have home group. It is often the single people who come (but not always exclusively so). Looking back, I have really enjoyed these evenings and chance to relax and socialise with whoever is around."\***

\*quote from a single individual, July 2021

## 03. ORGANISE A CHURCH SUMMER SOCIAL



Summer is the perfect time for a BBQ, picnic or a trip to the beach. Ensure that any events are accessible for people coming alone, and that it's branded as welcoming for everyone, not just families.

## 04. COLLABORATE WITH OTHER CHURCHES

If your church congregation shrinks substantially during the summer, could you join up with other churches in your area? Whether for services or for social activities, this also provides a great opportunity for single people from different churches to meet and make new friends.

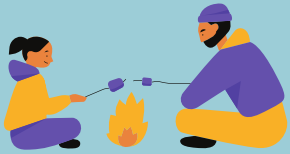


## 05. REMEMBER SINGLE PARENTS

The summer holidays can be a difficult time for single parents juggling childcare with work and other responsibilities. Consider how your church community could reach out to and support them.



## 06. CHURCH HOLIDAYS



You might run a church weekend away over the summer or at another time of year. Ensure that people coming on their own are welcomed and included, and try to avoid a surcharge for them. If it's far away, think about single people who don't drive or who are less mobile and how you could organise lift-sharing. If you're camping you could also run a buddy-up system for singles who don't want to cook alone. Reach out to single parents and ask what additional support they might need in order to attend.

## 07. SUMMER SERVICES FOR ALL

Lots of churches just run one service a week during August. If you're going to do an all-age service each Sunday, ensure it's targeted at everyone and doesn't cater solely for families and children. If you have fewer people to serve on the rota because families are away, ensure that single people don't feel undue pressure to fill in all the gaps because they aren't on holiday.



## 08. BE COMMUNITY

When we asked single people about the summer holidays, lots mentioned that they often felt disconnected or forgotten over the summer. Remember to check in with your single members, particularly those who live alone.

The summer months can be a fantastic opportunity to spend relaxed social time together and invest in community. Encourage people to continue to meet up outside of church, to go for a walk or a drink after the service. Lots of single people would welcome an invitation to join a family on a day trip. Be family to each other and use this time to grow and deepen friendships.

