

# Church Open House

By Victor Beshir

You may ask, how to reach out to the masses for Christ and His Church? In reality, there're a few methods you might follow to reach out to the masses: one method is writing of books, web pages, or articles in newspapers and magazines. Another method is to invite people to come to the church, which includes using a church as a tourist attraction, and conducting a Church Open House.

People like to go to Church Open House because they know there're food, gifts, tour, and other interesting things. It is very similar to festivals, so it is a sort of fun for people. Some Church Open House even involves outdoor games for children and adults.

For the Coptic Orthodox Church, an open house is one way to introduce the church to the community and establish bridges to people around the church. In addition, people will come to you, ready to listen, to learn, and to involve in future activities if you have planned some. You don't have to go from one house to another and you do not have to convince people to come to your church. What an advantage!

Effective planning is a key to success. Preparing takes long and hard work but it pays off. One major ingredient in planning is to prepare evangelists who will conduct church tours and present the church in an attractive way, then invite people to attend a Bible Study. Gathering names of interesting individuals is so important.

Sometimes in the long process churches loose focus on the main objective. Churches could spend time and efforts to arrange for food, videos, newspapers, invitation of dignitaries and guests, and hundreds of other tasks. With influence of others, focus could easily transfer to how to create money for the church using food and gifts. The goal could be transferred to certain individuals to appear on TV or newspapers or to have the name of the church mentioned in the media. Yet, evangelism could be lost.

The main objective of the Church Open House should be attracted people to the Church by providing good flyers, booklets, books, DVDs, CDs, presentation, tours, question & answer session following presentation, and ready-to-start a Bible Study in English or French or in the local language. This means a leader for the activities of the Church Open House should make it very clear from the beginning that the purpose is evangelism. Yes, the church might create some money,

people might appear on TV, articles could appear in newspapers, but this does not mean losing the golden evangelistic opportunity this activity will bring home.

The plan should include the following:

- 1- Preparation of evangelists for church tours, question & answer sessions, presentations, and also to be mingled with people to talk about the Church
- 2- Preparation of presentations & tours
- 3- Food & gifts
- 4- Good advertisement to reach to everyone in the community
- 5- Invitation of dignitaries
- 6- Preparation of articles about the Coptic Church in general and the local church and its activities in particular
- 7- Invitation of TV stations and newspapers
- 8- Create some fun activities for children
- 9- Preparation of a bookstore full of books, booklets, and gifts on the Coptic Church
- 10- Guest book that people sign it when entering the church, asking for e-mails in order to send Thank You Note and other church announcements in the future
- 11- Preparations of posters, videos about our church in Egypt, our monasteries, ... etc.
- 12- Along the tour & presentation, announce short 15 minutes mini lectures about the Church: Faith, Worship, History, ... etc.
- 13- Prepare a group of people to pray together weekly for the success of the Open House.
- 14- Plan for a Bible Study meeting

After the Open House:

The Open House is just a beginning. Once it is over, more important tasks should start. Here is a list of those tasks:

- 1- Create a database of the names of people attended
- 2- Send "Thank You" e-mail to all attendants, showing interest in them and telling them that they're welcome to come again.
- 3- Thank you to all newspaper, TV, dignitaries, and all those who worked hard in the process
- 4- Establish a good relationship with TV and newspapers personnel to enable you to send articles and news of the church
- 5- Start the Bible Study in the local language. The Bible Study should be evangelistic in its approach, which means it should be

used to make the Church known (Please refer to Bible Study in our web site: [www.evangelismcopticorthodox.org](http://www.evangelismcopticorthodox.org)).

Attached is an account of a big Church Open House as reported by Eng. TaLaat Atala. It was designed for a big church and a big community. The church set a big budget for it. It included lots of activities. It is included here as an example only to show planning, and different steps of preparations. But, not every Church Open House should be that big. Yours could be as simple as you wish as long as you include food, presentation, books, gifts, church tours, and announcement of Bible Study.