

# TOPTIPS

## WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

TT11

**Getting positive news into the local media about what is happening in your church gives you a great opportunity to engage your community in what you are doing and spread the gospel message. The most obvious way of communicating with the media is through a press release. When writing a press release for your church, consider these five things:**

### 01 : LAYOUT

A press release should look professional and be easy to read. Make sure that the text is not too small and is in a readable font (avoid Comic Sans as it lacks authority and may put the reader off). Make sure that spelling is accurate and it makes grammatical sense. If you are sending by post, put it on the church's headed paper so the media outlet knows it is a trusted source. If sending by email, it is best to put the text in the body of the email and not as a word document as attachments sometimes will not get through the recipient's firewall.

### 02 : THE HOOK

The hook of any press release is the headline and first sentence. It is what encourages someone to read on. The headline can be quirky, use puns or alliteration. The first sentence should sum up what the story is about and not be too long or complicated.

*How not to do it:*

If you were looking for this first ever Collinstone Family Fun Day to of been a damp squid – no hope event after the morning heavy rain then you can forget it. The People of Collinstone proofed that this Community wants to have fun come rain or sunshine ...

A better way to do it:

Rain Doesn't deter party spirit

The first Collinstone Community Church carnival last Saturday (23 September) attracted a large crowd of revellers, despite heavy rain.

### 03 : CONTENT

Say WHAT the event was, WHEN it happened, WHERE it was, WHO was involved and WHY was it important. Ideally promote the event in advance i.e. what the event is, when it is happening etc.

Assume people don't know anything except what you tell them. Explain acronyms and church jargon.

### 04 : QUOTES

Try to include quotes – what does it mean to people? Never have quotes from bystanders, onlookers, members. Only have named people

Have quotes that mention Jesus: 'Gary Mann, chairman of the carnival committee said, "We wanted to show the community that following Jesus doesn't mean you can't have fun."' "

## 05 : NOTES TO THE EDITOR

At the end of the release put 'ENDS' and then after this put 'Notes to Editor.' In this section you should put:

- a daytime telephone number a journalist can contact if they want to know more about the story
- information on when the newspaper can take photos (possibly arrange a photo op time at an event if you are promoting it in advance) or receive them from you
- any other additional information about the church that may be useful to the journalist as they write up the story like website links, how many attend the church, how old the church is etc.

Once the press release is completed, find out the email address/postal address and contact person it should go to at your local newspaper/radio station and then send it! If you have a photo you could attach that with the email at the same time (make sure high resolution, in focus and with a clear focus on a person/s or object/s)

*If you need advice on your press release, contact Chris Hall on 01235 517756 or email [chall@baptist.org.uk](mailto:chall@baptist.org.uk)  
You can also get more top tips in Phil Creighton's book, *How to be Heard in a Noisy World Church Publicity Made Easy**