

COMMUNICATION REPRESENTATIVE

A MINISTRY DESCRIPTION FOR LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS

Introduction

It's true that communication is central to every aspect of our local church structure today, technically making every leader in the church a communicator. But as the appointed communication leader, your role in ministry is specifically defined to insure that members are kept informed and the church is properly represented to the public. Following are the four areas that encompass your ministry as communication leader in the local church:

Public Relations

As communication leader, you are responsible for building, monitoring, and protecting the image of your local church and its name, within your community.

To do this effectively: Ensure that the church is identified by an exterior sign appropriate to the building's architecture and check the church's appearance regularly for problems needing attention. Arrange for the identification of the church through listings in local telephone directories, tourist publications, highway signs, and hotels and motels. Arrange for church representation at exhibits and fairs, in parades, and at other community events. Build and nurture relationships with community leaders, clubs, and organizations, and encourage increased church involvement and support in the community when and where appropriate.

Try this: Develop and maintain a church web site; join a communication association like the Society of Adventist Communicators and the Religious Communication Council; supply the *What's a Seventh-day Adventist?* brochure and the *Hands of Hope* booklet to members for distribution to friends, work associates, and community leaders; customize and share the Giving is Caring calendar with community contacts and local government officials.

Media Relations

Your objective is to raise public awareness of our church—its members, its mission, and its message; work to get church activities and events noted in the media; and help to get the church's views included in the news adequately and accurately.

To do this effectively: Report church activities to local radio, television, and newspapers by submitting news releases and public service announcements, arranging for interviews, writing letters to the editor on matters of concern to the church, writing or assigning feature stories or columns, arranging for photo coverage of congregational activities or events, and serving as a source of information for public media representatives. Look for opportunities, story ideas, and current issues that concern your church and community. Seek to become personally acquainted with newspaper editors, broadcast assignment editors, religion reporters, and community relations personnel. Develop initial contacts with press kits, nurture contacts with phone calls, and follow up contacts with hand-written note cards.

Try this: Develop and maintain a local media contact list; seek coverage of camp meeting, a health fair, or a Pathfinder event that benefits kids or the community; send your contacts Christmas cards from your church.

News and Information

It's vital to keep church members informed about upcoming activities, and equally important to share church news with conference communication directors and the larger Adventist family.

To do this effectively: Publish a regular newsletter with photos, articles, and input from members and/or submit articles and photos to conference communication directors for conference newsletters or sections in union papers. Maintain an attractive bulletin board in the church lobby highlighting church activities, news, photos, and developments.

Try This: Send sick, shut-in, and missing members copies of the church newsletter or bulletin. Publish a church pictorial directory paid for by ads from community businesses and church well-wishers; watch First Wednesday via satellite to keep up with your worldwide Adventist family.

Advertising and Promotion

One of your most important responsibilities is to strategically promote all church programs and evangelism campaigns to attract attendance.

To do this effectively: Regularly consult with the pastor and departmental leaders about events and activities they are planning. Assist them with the creation and placement of brochures, flyers, direct mail, broadcast and print ads, and other promotional ideas. Professionally prepared advertising materials are available for many programs, as are public relations and advertising agencies for consultation.

Try This: Ask a college student member whose talent is graphic arts to design your flyers, brochures, and ads; invite members who work in communication by profession to help develop an advertising campaign for your next evangelism effort or church project.

Resources

The following resources are recommended for your ministry. You can purchase these by calling *AdventSource* (800-328-0525), the Adventist Book Center (800-765-6955) or your local Christian bookstore.

Brief History of Adventism, by George Knight.

Community of Faith, by Russell Staples. The author explores the biblical and theological background for our understanding of the church and its role in today's world.

Professional Representation. To represent your church in a polished and professional manner in meetings or at community events, use the Adventist Press Kit Folder. Fill it with brochures, news releases, and a business card to make a good first impression. To send reminders, follow up with colleagues or new contacts, or say thank you, use the Adventist Note Cards. To place bulk orders for these materials, call *AdventSource* at 800-328-0525.

Search for Identity, by George Knight.

What's a Seventh-day Adventist? Want to share your faith in a friendly yet professional way?

There's a new brochure called *What's a Seventh-day Adventist?* available in English, French, and Spanish that you can give to friends, neighbors, work associates, and family members who want to know about Seventh-day Adventists. It briefly notes the Sabbath, our beliefs, history, mission, and statistics. There's a space for you to attach your local church contact information and it lists the official Adventist Church web site address and a toll-free number for further inquiries. *The Hands of Hope* booklet and other useful pamphlets are also available. For special bulk rates, call *AdventSource* at 800-328-0525.

Who Are the Seventh-day Adventists? by John Seaman. This sharing booklet gives a brief sketch of Adventist history, beliefs, people, church, and mission.

Web Sites

News and Information - www.adventist.org; www.nadadventist.org; www.adventistreview.org

Events - www.plusline.org

Resources - www.plusline.org; www.adventsource.org

Visit *AdventSource* On-Line at www.adventsource.org/communication for a complete list of the latest resources available for local church leaders. You can place an order or request a catalog by calling 1-800-328-0525.

For information about additional resources and answers to your questions call the Adventist Plusline at 1-800-732-7587 or visit them on-line at www.plusline.org.