

Bible in 90 Days • Best Practices for Churches

Churches are where most Bible in 90 Days groups take place. The detailed outline below will help you do your B90 group right.

Begin with a pilot group — say 3-12 staff and/or church leaders — that will start and complete The Bible in 90 Days prior to the church-wide effort. Use all the resource materials to become familiar with them, and meet just as the Participants in the church-wide effort will meet. So, a pilot group might do the curriculum from June through August just prior to a church-wide effort beginning in September. This serves several purposes:

1. For many in the pilot group, this may be their first trip through God's Word;
2. Often, the pilot group provides an incredible foundation for the church-wide effort;
3. Video, written, or live testimonials from the pilot group can be used to market the church-wide effort; and
4. Hands-on experience helps leadership understand how the various pillars of The Bible in 90 Days curriculum and resources fit together to undergird Participants' success.

Recruit a core group of Facilitators (Small Group Leaders) at least one month before your church-wide start date. See the printed Leader's Guide for more details.

A church-wide effort should focus on adults. Youths as young as age 10 have successfully completed the program using the resources—but this is the exception rather than the rule. Those who are ready can participate along with the adults. What will make an indelible impression on the youth in the church is that the adults — parents, teachers, staff, etc. — are reading the entire Bible. This will be something to aspire to when they get older.

Market B90 church-wide for at least 4 weeks prior to the first meeting. Use testimonials from the pilot group or elsewhere: in church services, bulletins, newsletters and social media. B90 is a great way to encourage the un-churched to come to your church for a specified period of time — 90 days. Most people want to read the entire Bible, and they'll even come to your church to do so. Then you have 14 weeks to encourage them to keep coming back.

During the run-up to launch, register attendees so you can estimate what materials to order. However, registration should be limited to getting people to come to the first meeting. Let them know that — at the first meeting — they'll be given all the information they'll need in order to make an informed decision as to whether or not they can participate in the 90 day challenge. During the weeks leading up to the first meeting, have people register for the first meeting, but do not take money or distribute materials — until the first meeting.

Why? Because...

1. Almost everyone who attends the first meeting will end up committing to the challenge and,
2. A lot more people will come to the first meeting, since their initial commitment only requires them to come to a meeting!

This two-step process may seem unnecessary, but really it's crucial — like courtships starting with a date rather than a proposal. During the first meeting, they'll be given all the information necessary to make an informed decision. Virtually everyone in attendance will say 'yes', and some will encourage friends and family to come with them to the second meeting.

- Do not distribute the Bible or Participant's Guide prior to the first meeting. This keeps people from "getting a head start", then falling victim to the same hurdles that typically thwart people's efforts to read the entire Bible. The information shared in the first meeting is crucial in helping people approach the challenge that results in successfully finishing B90.
- Participants need to invest in the B90 program. Many churches have Participants pay, say, \$15-25 for materials (Bible and Participant's Guide). The investment helps "lock in" their commitment.
- Keep Participants accountable through the course. The two-colored name tag system described in the Leader's Guide may feel awkward, but it's effective. It keeps Participants accountable while minimizing the burden on leadership. When Participants report their status ("current with reading" or "a little behind") it ultimately helps them succeed.
- The Senior Pastor and/or at least one respected key lay leader should be visible proponents and even Participants themselves in the B90 readings.
- During the 14 weeks of reading B90, we recommend the pastor preach a sermon(s) drawn from themes or topics from the prior week's reading. The pastor can choose what's best, or refer to the B90 sample sermons available on our site.
- Sermons from the B90 readings immediately rewards the Participants. It trains them that being in the Word will help them glean more from each week's sermons. And non-participants will wish they were, and will likely be more willing the next time B90 is offered. Also, there is no need for the sermons to summarize the prior week's reading.
- Consider a church-wide celebration upon completion.

Scheduling & Seasons

Offer several meeting times. For instance, a group on Sunday evening at 6:00 PM, another Tuesday morning at 7:00 AM, and another on Wednesday evening at 6:30 PM, etc. Make it as convenient as possible for your congregants and guests to say YES to the challenge.

Winter

For larger churches, it is best to start between late January and late February. This allows time to market the start after Christmas vacation. Starting by late February (1) still takes advantage of a people's desire to do something meaningful during the new year and (2) typically allows you to finish before school lets out for the summer. Note: Don't start a church-wide effort on January 1, and don't start on a day when you know some of the people will be out late the night before.

Spring

An excellent season for B90. Many Christian believers celebrate Lent, Passover, Easter, Pentecost, etc in the Spring. Starting B90 in March and finishing at the end of May is a rich season for God's people. This is especially good also because B90 can be completed before the summer months when most people choose to vacation.

Summer

A few congregations do well in the summer, but most do not. Try to start after schools close for summer and finish before classes resume in the fall. Prepare people to keep reading if even while traveling. Those who fly find this is a great time to do their reading.

Fall

Schedule so that you finish before Thanksgiving. Most people get caught up in holiday gatherings with family and friends, which can cause frustration and impede finishing B90.