



Step #8

Plan Your Hope25 Event

As we approach Easter, many parishes will have considered what they will do for Hope25. But we are all on a planning journey, with some more fully planned than others. If you haven't yet planned something for Hope25, it's not too late.

The [steps from the last newsletter](#) can help guide your planning. But what kind of event will best suit your context and the people you are trying to reach?

At the Hope25 National Workshop in February 2024, participants brainstormed a variety of events that parishes could hold during Hope25. Many of these have been transformed into [how-to guides available on the Hope25 website](#). These guides will guide you step-by-step through planning suggested events, such as an evangelistic service, a wine and cheese night, a festival, an op shop ball, an op shop fashion show, and an evangelistic course. Your parish can select one of these guides and implement it. That's fantastic.

You might also consider one of them as a springboard for ideas. The Op Shop Ball could transform into an Op Shop Bush Dance – brilliant! The wine and cheese night might turn into a Beer and BBQ event, or a mocktail-making evening – be creative.

Reflect on what will work in your context and who God calls your parish to be and connect with.

Authenticity is crucial here. Don't try to be something you're not as a parish; be who God is calling you to be. Consider the gifts and skills of the people in your parish. If you have some talented musicians, you might think about organising a musical event. If your parish struggles with rhythm, that might not be the best path for you. If you have fantastic cooks in your parish, consider hosting a foodie night and sharing the hope of Jesus through food.

So, what do you need to do to organise your event?

First, consider who should be on your event team? You have a parish Hope25 Working Group, will that also be your event team? For some parishes, they may be the same team, for others, a Working Group may also oversee Lenten studies, training, prayer, and reviewing welcoming in the parish, so a different, but overlapping event team might be a good idea. Are there people that should be on that event team who have particular gifts and skills that would be helpful to the organising, planning, and execution of the event?

Secondly, what needs to be planned for your event? What needs to be purchased (food, drinks, etc.)? Do you have a budget? What logistics need to take place, and in what order, to complete the event? Who is going to do what? Is this an event where you need to organise speakers and ask people to help with various areas at the time of the event? Is there content that needs to be organised?

Third, how will you communicate about your event? Communication is key to organising anything. The organising team will need to communicate well within the team. They will also need to communicate within your parish and help people to be involved and excited about what is happening. Finally, they will need to ensure communication that will bring people to the event. Relational invitations are often the best pathway, but depending on what event you choose, you may want to communicate through social media, your website, a local newspaper or other relevant avenues.

It may also be helpful to consider some "what if" scenarios, not to stop you from planning the event, but to ensure that you aren't surprised. An example is the date of the Federal Election, it may well fall between Easter and Pentecost. This shouldn't prevent you from holding your event, but be aware that the dates may clash. Who will be your first aid person if an issue requires first aid? What if more people show up than you expect? What will you do if a key volunteer or speaker gets sick? There is no need to panic about these ideas, but giving them a little thought (and prayer!) can help ensure a smooth pathway if something unexpected does happen.

As you plan, a key item to consider is what happens after the event. Is there a pathway for those who came to the event to be able to come into church? How will congregation members whose friends or family came along go about continuing to have spiritual conversations after the event? If someone decides to get involved in church or become a Christian, what pathways do you have for them to continue on their journey?

Your event doesn't need to be big. It doesn't need to be complicated. **But it does need to be authentic.** Have fun planning your event and have fun at the event. Continue to pray that God will use your work to share the hope that we can only have in Jesus.

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Hope25 Parish Working Group Meeting Notes:

Brainstorm what events might match the unique gifts and character of our parish community. What type of events would we be excited to invite friends to?

Are there resources we can make available during the event that points to hope in Jesus? e.g.: can we make available the Hope25 gospels of Luke for free at the event?

How can we create meaningful follow-up opportunities for those who attend the event? Is there a [faith formation course](#) we could plan and organise for later in the year?

What potential challenges might arise during our event, and how can we proactively address them?