

BBO Guide – Part 2

Start Your Own Brown Bag Outreach!

Our Brown Bag Outreach isn't exclusive just for us! We got our idea from the "Backpacks & Brown Bags" ministry of Necia Freeman. We want everyone to get involved with the needy in their local communities. A brown bag type of outreach is a perfect way to start, and also has the potential to grow into something big!

Our program is simple and straightforward enough to get anyone well on their way to helping their local homeless. Below, we will cover the basics from planning, shopping, and some tips for while you're on your own route! There is also a set of downloadable resources that cover everything in our guide, including this guide itself!

Here are the Basics (with a team of 3):

- Shopping Time: < 1 hour
- Prep Time: 30 min. – 1.5 hour
- Outreach Time: 1 hour – 3 hours
- Weekly Spending: \$50 – \$75

Here are the sections to our 3-part guide:

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Part 2: The Prep

Prepping The Bag

Generally, this is the order and how things get prepared (at least, how we do it!). The more people you have to help you, the more things you can get done simultaneously, and the faster you'll get done!

1. Unfold 48 brown bags and place them in rows.
2. Place the beverage in each bag (to weigh them down).
3. Place the chip/snack in each bag (to space things right).
4. Place the finished sandwich in each bag (see next section for food prep).
5. Place a set of condiments into each bag.
6. Place a piece of candy into each bag.
7. Place a invitation card into each bag.
8. Place a napkin (or two) into each bag.
9. Fold the tops of the bags.
10. Place the finished bags into the cart/bag.
11. Dispose of all boxes and packaging, save the leftovers, and clean the tables!

Prepping The Sandwich

Again, this is the order and how things get prepared when we do it. The more people you have to help you, the more things you can get done simultaneously, and the faster you'll get done!

1. Lay down the tray or other clean surface.
2. Lay down 24 slices of bread (or less depending on your space).
3. Lay down 2 slices of ham, stacked then folded in half, onto each slice of bread.
4. Lay down 1 slice of cheese on top of each pair of ham.
5. Lay down 24 new slices of bread on top.
6. Bag each into a sandwich bag and fold the top over.
7. Place finished product into the brown bag (see bag prep section above).

Prepping The Route

Our route is a total of 2 miles, starting from our church to a major road (Van Ness Ave.) and back. Here are a couple things we considered when mapping our route:

- Are there any parks, tent cities, or other areas of homeless congregation?
- Which roads or trails will allow for the highest chance of finding someone?
- What areas might be too dangerous to walk through (at least for now)?
- What is a reasonable distance participants will be willing/are able to walk?
- Are there physical obstacles or barriers that may make walking difficult?
- Is this a route that you would be willing to walk in difficult weather?
- Would 40-50 homeless be served on this route?

It may help to walk or drive around the neighborhood before beginning this outreach program to see areas that can best be served by you and your members. Also, know that the population we serve never stays in one spot, so be willing to adjust and make changes to the route as time goes on (when it rains, for example). That being said, it's best to stick to the route you have chosen so you can be consistent and build relationships with those that you meet regularly.

Prepping The Team

It would be best for you to sit down with your team and discuss a few things before heading out on your first outreach.

First, pray together, that God will use you and your team's outreach to further His Kingdom in your neighborhood and city.

Second, go over the purpose of your outreach. Why are you doing this? Do you have a mission statement? Is there a goal? What are you working towards?

Third, go over some safety items and procedures. You can never be too careful. Here are a few things we recommend:

1. Come up with a plan if there is an emergency, such as where to meet or what to do.
2. Consider leaving all your valuables (cell phones, jewelry) at church.
3. Have one person bring a phone just for emergencies.
4. Go over (include pictures) of health hazards to watch out for:
 1. New and used syringes
 2. Syringe and syringe plunger caps
 3. Tourniquets
 4. Drug mixing/prepping caps/cups
 5. Weapons (razor blades)
 6. Drug paraphernalia
5. Be extra watchful during the first several outreaches.

This might seem like a lot, and a bit scary, but it's better to be prepared than surprised later on. It really helps to have someone who has had experience with drugs such as a recovering addict (such as myself), or someone who has worked with the homeless in places such as shelters before. They can help guide and prepare you for some of the things you might see when you're out there.

Optional: Designing The Bag

You may have seen some of the photos on our site with brown bags that have been decorated. In order to get more members of our church involved, we have asked them to help decorate bags that go out during special holidays and occasions. For example, we decorate bags for Thanksgiving, New Year's, Valentine's Day, and Easter. This is also a great way to get the children involved.

Remember to review all the finished bags. Words of encouragement are great, but some might be taken the wrong way or even hurt our friends in need. One time we had a bag that said, "You got yourself in this situation, but God will help get you out." While that may be very true, we want to take the supportive and encouraging approach to begin the building of relationships. Be conservative and keep it clean!

Quick tip: When decorating bags, remind artists to keep the decorations to the lower 75% of the bag. The top gets rolled up, and anything pretty or any glued on decorations will get ruined and make the bag impossible to close!

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