

HOW TO BEAT THE Summer SLUMP

Every church is aware of the trend: Summer rolls around, and your congregation disengages for months on end. **It doesn't have to be this way!** This guide will set you on track to not just survive the summer slump, but to thrive during the traditionally slower season.

BEFORE YOU START - PLAN AHEAD

Take advantage of your data. Does attendance usually drop off come Mother's Day? After Memorial Day? Not until the 4th of July weekend? Once you **embrace analytics** to understand your strengths, identify weaknesses, and share your plan for improvement with your congregation, you've taken the critical first step toward beating the slump.

1 LET'S GO DIGITAL

Just because your congregation is out-of-town or out-of-church doesn't mean they can't stay engaged. Set up a reliable **streaming service** to share sermon replays, provide a simple digital giving solution for your church family as they enjoy their summer, and consider setting up a **custom church app** so your congregation can engage whenever and wherever they are inspired. Don't forget to educate them about these systems from the pulpit—all your intuitive tech isn't worth much if no one understands how to use it!

2 INSPIRE SMALL GROUPS

The smaller communities that exist within your congregation are powerful allies in the battle against the slump. Encourage your adult bible studies, young adults group and parent support groups to further develop their **relational connections** during the summer months. You could even offer support as they plan & host events themselves, like barbecues or movie nights!

3 SET UP VBS

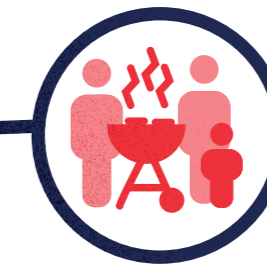
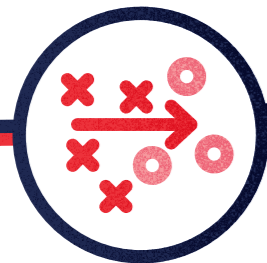
Children being out of school is a challenge for parents—but a huge opportunity for Church leaders like you. Vacation Bible School is a great way to keep families engaged during the summer months, and a chance to grow your congregation by assimilating new families whose children have a fun & educational experience through your VBS. You can follow up with new families through **child check-in data** to ensure they're feeling welcome!

4 PLAN SUMMER EVENTS

The slump can become a self-fulfilling prophecy: If you simply accept that attendance, engagement, and giving will drop between June and August, that drop becomes inevitable. Fight this mindset by **planning exciting programs** that you usually wouldn't consider due to traditionally low attendance—and promote them aggressively!—ensuring that **all generations** of your congregation will stay engaged all summer long.

5 TRANSPARENCY IS EVERYTHING

The quickest way to increase giving is being frank & open about your finances. Use graphs and data to show your congregation how hard the slump hits every year, and make it clear what a conscious & intentional effort to maintain giving would mean for your ministry and community moving forward. **Digital updates** are an effective way to celebrate your congregation achieving milestones together, remind them of what you're all working together to achieve, and to show gratitude for their generosity!



WHAT USUALLY HAPPENS

Mother's Day and graduations blur together, families are out-of-town or going to different churches, and then the vacations and summer activities begin. This is the start of the slump.

WHAT USUALLY HAPPENS

With the end of school, many grandparents and other elders are moving around to help their families care for younger children. Engagement and volunteering from your regulars dips significantly.

WHAT USUALLY HAPPENS

VBS is a boost for most churches! New families' interests are piqued in your ministry—but most churches fail to follow up, so the spike is temporary.

WHAT USUALLY HAPPENS

As the summer wraps up, most families try to cram in last minute trips or events, and Church is seen as an easy pass because not much is happening.

WHAT USUALLY HAPPENS

As people get back into town and school starts again, they slowly come back to church. Attendance rises, but giving and volunteering are often last on their mind.