

How To Hold a Successful Open House

Open Houses are a great way for councils to showcase their good works to their parishioners, and to invite them to become members. Properly planned, and effectively coordinated, Open Houses are powerful recruiting tools. Improperly planned, they will not live up to their potential.

Here are nine steps to help you hold a successful open house.

Planning for Your Open House

STEP ONE: Schedule a meeting room at the parish at least 30 days in advance of the Open House. The room should be scheduled for 2.5 hours, minimum, allowing time for the council to set up and break down. The open house itself should not be more than an hour. When scheduling, aim for the beginning of the week since schedules tend to be more open on Mondays and Tuesdays.

STEP TWO: Invite your pastor and your field agent. They make all recruiting activities more impactful. Make sure both can make it, and be sure to include them as part of your presentation. Hopefully your pastor will be willing to speak about the council and the good works it does for the parish.

STEP THREE: Schedule a first degree *in advance* for a week or two following the open house. This will allow you to immediately welcome new members into your council.

STEP FOUR: Place an advertisement/invitation to all eligible men *and their families* in the Church bulletin two weeks before the event.

STEP FIVE: Challenge all council members at the council meeting preceding the open house to hand out one personal invitation each to an eligible member of the parish. The challenge should be issued by both the Grand Knight and the Field Agent. The invitations (item #2595E) can be ordered on Supplies Online. Be sure to invite their families too.

STEP SIX: Send invitations to any member of the parish that is already on the council's prospect list. Be sure to invite their families too.

STEP SEVEN: Call prospective attendees a few days before the event to encourage them to attend, or to make sure they're coming. In cases where the prospective member was personally invited by a specific Knight, that Knight should make the call. This makes it personal, and increases the chances that that man will attend. In cases where the prospective member was invited by the council, the Grand Knight should designate someone to be responsible for follow-up.

STEP EIGHT: Prepare your presentation. Keep it brief, and make sure to emphasize what the *prospective member* and his family would get by joining the Knights of Columbus. Be sure to highlight your councils programs too. You should also plan on

showing a video – or videos – as part of your presentation. The Order’s Everyday Heroes series, available at kofc.org/heroes, are a great place to start.

STEP NINE: Rehearse the presentation. The presentation should be delivered by your best presenter, whether that is your field agent, your grand knight, your membership director, or someone else. Whoever he may be – or perhaps there are several presenters who are splitting the presentation – he should schedule time to practice.

Conducting Your Open House

On the day of your Open House, remember to:

- Set up the room for the presentation with a projector and screen.
- Have snacks and drinks available after the presentation.
- Have a game plan for families with young children. Be sure there’s an activity that the kids can participate in during the open house.
- Encourage your council members to attend – especially those who personally invited prospective members.
- Invite the men present to either join online (time and technology permitting) or fill out the Online Prospect Form at the end of the presentation.

To tie it all together, make sure that a few days before the first degree, a member of the membership committee contacts the prospective members that handed in a Form 100 to confirm their attendance at the upcoming degree.

Have questions? Contact us at councilgrowth@kofc.org.