

Free Indeed Tips for Organising and Publicising Your Exhibition

Recruiting artists to participate in the exhibition

Ask artists you know and advertise within your congregation, school, aged care facility or other groups in your community.

How many artists you need depends on the space you have and how many artworks you can display. If you only have a wall in a coffee shop, one or two artists may be all you can fit. If you have a very large hall or auditorium, you may need lots of artists.

Consider a community art installation as part of the exhibition. Ask members of your community to contribute to one large scale project (see Community Art Ideas in the Resource Pack)

Confirming your venue and opening hours

Ideally, your exhibition should be open to the wider community, at least some of the time. It's fine to use your local hall, school gym, church hall or any place you have ready access to.

Some things to think about:

- Is there a cost to your venue? How will you pay that cost?
- When is the venue normally open? If it is a business or public hall, what hours are they willing to allow members of the public to come in to view your exhibition?
- Is the venue easily accessible to the public? Can people with mobility issues access the building/space? Is there sufficient parking near by?
- Do you need to organise volunteers to man the display during opening hours? If so, what hours are they available?
- It is alright to offer limited hours – you don't need to be open 9am-5pm 7 days per week if that's not feasible. Try to have the display open at hours that make it accessible for most of your community.

Entry Fees and Proceeds

The main aim of these exhibitions is to share the love of Jesus with your local community, so it might be wise not to charge too high an entry fee.

If you need help with the cost of the venue etc, consider seeking donations from local businesses/congregational groups.

You could attract more people by making entry free.

You could charge a small entry fee or ask for a donation.

Consider having all or at least some of the proceeds go to a local charity or cause, so that you can bless your community. Alternatively, ask for donations to Australian Lutheran World Service or other LCA NZ ministry areas.

Decide if the artworks will be on sale, and how you will manage any sales.

Depending on your circumstances, some or all of your artists might like to be able to sell their work on display.

If so, you will need to discretely display prices and perhaps have a catalogue with the artist's name, title of the work, medium and price.

Selling other people's work can be tricky to manage. You will need to decide what percentage of the sales price will go to the exhibition/venue, and how much will go to the artist. This should be clearly communicated to artists beforehand, so there is no dispute later.

You will also need to think about how people will pay, and when they can collect the artworks (usually at the end of the exhibition).

Schools and aged care facilities – a great fundraiser can be to have all artworks on sale for the same amount, with all proceeds to a project at the school/aged care or to a charity. For instance – you could have all the children/residents create an A4 work and sell each one for \$10, with proceeds going to the school/facility. That makes it easy for volunteers to collect the money and make a note of who bought which picture. Sold stickers should be put up immediately after a sale so everyone knows an artwork has been sold.

Setting Up an Exhibition

When it comes to setting up your exhibition, there are a few things to consider.

- Look at all the artwork as it comes in to determine colours, themes, size and medium.
- Arrangement - Aim to have artworks complement each other – play around until you find a nice blend of colours, sizes and framing. You might consider grouping artworks by similar themes or colours, or even around Bible texts they relate to. If your exhibition space is very large, consider creating zones or areas by using partitions, furniture, rugs or floral arrangements to encourage visitors to move from one area to the next.
- Visual space - make sure you place artworks far enough apart that people aren't overwhelmed. Ideally, you want people to be able to spend time looking at one work at a time.
- Visibility – can all the artworks be seen easily? What will people see when they first walk through the door?
- Lighting - as best as you are able with the resources you have available, try to make sure that all artworks are well-lit, and that artworks aren't obscured by shadows.

- How to display artworks – you may be lucky enough to have a hanging system or hooks in the wall. If not, find out if you are allowed to use removable hooks. Other ways to display artworks include using free-standing pinboards or pegboards, easels, or tabletop displays for smaller artworks or sculptures. You may be able to borrow some of these things from local schools or the council. If you have artworks which could withstand the elements, consider displaying some outside – fences make good supports and these artworks will draw attention to your exhibition.
- Signage – make up small labels/signs for each artwork with the artist's name, the title of the artwork, the medium, and perhaps a small blurb from the artist explaining how their artwork connects to the theme. Ask if they were inspired by a particular Biblical passage – if there's space, you could include it on their sign. It might be a good idea to give each artist a form to fill out so you collect all of their information. Try to keep signage consistent in style throughout the exhibition.
- Exhibition management – where will you collect entry fees/donations? Where will volunteers sit/welcome people? Where will you manage sales (money tins and/or EFTPOS, record-keeping etc)? Where are the nearest toilets?
- Sound – consider playing some soft music in the background to add to the mood and make visitors feel less self-conscious about talking about the exhibits.
- Signage – how will people find your venue? Can you put out sandwich boards, flags, balloons to draw attention?

Publicizing Your Exhibition

It's really important to get the word out about your exhibition.

Spread the Word

To help you, LCA Communications have prepared some publicity resources for bulletins, newsletters, websites and powerpoints in church or at school. You can find them at <https://www.lca.org.au/departments/ministry-support/communications/spread-the-word/>

Churchwide Publicity

As part of Free Indeed, Visual Arts will help promote your exhibition across the church and online.

We will do this by collecting the details of your exhibition and using it to

- Create an interactive map of exhibitions
- Create an online and printable guide to exhibitions – a kind of Free Indeed Art Trail
- Publicise exhibitions on our website and Facebook and through LCA Communications.

That is why we are asking you to complete the Exhibition Registration Form and the Publicity Form and send them by the due dates, so we can start putting together these resources.

Local Publicity

Of course, the main audience for your exhibition will be your own community.

There are several things you can do to publicize your exhibition locally:

- Create posters and flyers (you could use the templates attached to help you, or design your own). Post these anywhere you can – shop windows, at the venue, at the local supermarket or community noticeboard.
- Ask your local paper and radio stations to run a story about the exhibition
- Make sure all the details are sent to local schools, churches, community groups, aged care facilities at least a month in advance and ask them to add the information to their newsletters.
- Use the Publicity form to help you think through the information you need to share.

Organising a Launch Event

It's a good idea to host some kind of event to start your exhibition. Usually, a launch would include a guest speaker, some refreshments and perhaps some entertainment to complement the exhibition. The details will depend on your local community and your venue. Choose what suits you!

Some ideas:

Guests

- The artists and their families
- Local dignitaries – local council, State or federal MPs, principals of schools, etc
- Representatives of any charities to whom you are donating proceeds
- Guest speakers could be your pastor, pastoral support worker, a local Christian artist or a local dignitary who understands the significance of the theme. Encourage them to keep their remarks short... 😊

Refreshments

Wine and cheese are typical launch refreshments, but feel free to be creative! Depending on your venue, the people attending and any health restrictions in your area, you might try:

- A morning or afternoon tea with cakes and other light refreshments
- A cocktail party featuring local delicacies
- A bring-your-own drinks and food picnic outside the venue
- Ask a food truck or coffee van to set up outside for anyone wanting refreshments

Entertainment

- This isn't necessary, but some quiet music in the background can create a relaxing atmosphere.
- If you have local musicians a school band or choir, you might like to involve them in the event. Ask them to choose music appropriate to the theme, if they can!

Invitations

Make sure you give people plenty of notice about the launch. Invitations should go out about a month before the event.

COVID

Make sure you comply with any COVID restrictions which apply in your state/territory at the time.

