

Survivor Script
Youth Service
3/21/10

Host: (spoken dramatically over intense 'Survivor' theme music) Over the past 20 seasons, our competitors have traveled to some of the most desolate, dangerous, and beautiful regions of the earth. Battling everything from redemption, to immunity, to personal best, these men and women have stretched themselves, mentally and physically, beyond what they thought was possible. This season, join us on a new journey of exploration, endurance, and excitement as teams compete to discover uncharted territory-finding a perfect congregationthis season....on Survivor: Protestant Church Growth!

(Enter 'tribal council' complete with tiki torches, dressed in survivor garb. The council sits in a semi-circle around an altar of sorts)

Host: Welcome, teams! (teams nod a welcome back) It's been a rough week I know. Let's catch our viewers up on what they might have missed. Team Social Justice, tell us about your week.

S.J Leader: Habitat build went well, Jeff! Lots of volunteers showed up to feed the homeless as well. It's been exhausting and exhilarating all at once. Donations for the food bank have come in strong, so have school supplies. We have two work camps going on in the next two months. But, recently, our team reviewed the grant applications and.... and...

Host: And what?

S.J. Leader: There's just so much NEED out there! We're swamped! It seems everybody needs help these days, including our own volunteers. Do you have any idea how hard it is to get people to do the grunt work? Most just wanna write checks....which is AWESOME – don't get me wrong, but then there's the issue of which things we should support and who has which passion for which thing...

(one team leader, team stewardship, *waving hand frantically*, wanting to speak)

Host: Team Stewardship Leader, you have something to add?

Stewardship Team leader: Like draining a turnip, Jeff. Hard to get people to pledge! Everybody's got their "pet projects" that they think deserve all the money. And for the record, how can we even THINK about serving others when our pipes are bursting and chillers going out? Seriously, shouldn't we take care of our business at home rather than reaching out to others?

Host: Interesting observation. Anyone else care to comment? (looks around) Team Potluck dinner?

TPD: Is anybody hungry? Dontcha think we should have a meal as part of this meeting? I really think we do our best planning over a meal!

Host: Uhhh...Maybe next time, Team Potluck.

TPD: (clearly disappointed) Okay well anyhow... we're planning a party to celebrate the first day of spring. We're gonna call it (traces the words in the air as if it is a sign) 'SPRING!'

Host: How...um...original.

TPD: Oh it is! 'S.P.R.I.N.G.' stands for 'Surprising Petals Rising in Gardens!' Pretty catchy, huh?!

Host: (skeptically) Yeah...catchy

TPD: This will be a great follow-up to our Groundhog Day party, and lovely precursor to our May Day party. Don't forget our second Thursday of the month party.

Host: And we do this because...

TPD: It just might attract new members!

Host: Great work, Team Potluck! We can always count on you to make anything...and I DO mean anything...into a celebration! Let's see, who HAVEN'T we heard from yet? Oh yes, Team Throw Back.

Throwback Leader: You know, I don't want to rain on your parade but, back in the day, we didn't NEED parties to attract new members. Back in the day, all we had to do was open our doors and people almost knocked them in just to come to church...nearly trampled on each other just to get to their own special pew. Back in the day, we used to have between 60 and 70 thousand people in worship every Sunday. There were three choirs at each of our 5 or 10 services, each with 100 plus members. We took in 10,000 people as new members every other week! Those were the days, I'll tell ya. Let's just keep doing what we used to do...they'll come back.

Team Worship Leader: Okay, I need to weigh in on this one.

Host: Yes, Team Worship Leader...proceed

Team Worship Leader: I'm afraid it simply isn't enough to 'do what we used to do.' It's a new day. In fact, it's a new **century**! 80 percent of people under the age of 25 have never attended a church. Two to three UCC churches alone are dying every week. More and more these days, people, particularly young people, don't see organized religion as a viable option in their lives. In fact, because of some really un-Christian positions taken by supposedly, "Christian" churches, many think of church folks as the "enemy." Still, they see themselves as a spiritual people. We need to mix up our worship a bit – give different options and come up with creative ways to reach ALL the people. And, we can't be afraid of controversy, after all, **Jesus** wasn't.

Team Throwback: Yeah!? And it got HIM killed! Don't even **go** there.

Team Social Justice: Well, it doesn't mean anything if we aren't giving back to our community. *If* we don't matter to the community, maybe we don't **deserve** to survive.

Team Stewardship: Well, if we can't get people to give more money, we certainly can't do much, can we.

Team Potluck: Let's have 'invite a friend' Sunday and then, when people get here, let's have a luncheon...and then a bake sale...

Team Throwback: (interrupting)...We used to have HUGE bake sales! 250 thousand cakes one time...I think our youth group topped out at 5,000 that year.

Host: WAIT A MINUTE! ...Have we all forgotten why we are here?

(Team leaders grow decidedly quiet)

Host: The bible says Behold, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the desert
and streams in the wasteland. (*Isaiah 43:19*)

Jesus tells us to love our neighbors as ourselves...to clothe the naked and feed the hungry. That **all** people are a gift from God. It's a pretty simple message but one that gets smeared by strong feelings...

Team Worship Leader: Speaking of which, what ever happened to Team Hidden Agenda?

Host: We had to vote them off weeks ago, remember?

All: (suddenly remembering) Oh...yeah.

Team Stewardship leader: So why have church at all? So expensive. Can't we all just do this virtually...like a Facebook page or chat room or something? Saves us a lot of money.

Team Throwback Leader: There is something about community...a loving community that brings us here. It's easier to do God's work together. And together we really can achieve more. That's why I keep coming back.....despite the fact that we're operating with a FRACTION of past numbers....why, I remember when there were forty or fifty thousand chairs added to the back of the church...

All: (interrupting him – rolling eyes and groaning)

Team Potluck Leader: (tracing the air like a sign with her hand) TEAM: "Together Everyone Achieves More". We could have a dinner party, invite our neighbors.

Host: It's going to take patience and perseverance and a willingness to try new things. But I believe we can grow the church.

All: Amen

Host: The tribe has spoken!