

Associate Director of Connectional Ministries Sally Vonner and the NTC Church and Society Task Force call the following notice to the attention of NTC churches:

Subject: God Not Guns: Reaching Out to the Faith Community

A Message to Chapters: Reaching Out to the Faith Community Using God Not Guns

Second Annual God Not Guns Sabbath on September 26-28, 2008.

As Rachel Smith, Board Member, Chapter President and Founder of Gun Not Guns says, "In our second year, our goal is to engage as many faith communities as possible across the country in activities that will honor victims, confess our addiction to gun violence, and seek ways to build the Divine vision of a peaceable kingdom. And **we need your help to connect with local faith communities and make these local events happen.**"

To clear up some confusion: God Not Guns is a year-round faith-based outreach program. Chapters are welcome to do God Not Guns activities locally any time of the year.

But once a year, we bring a focus to the program, which we call the God Not Guns Sabbath. The Sabbath is highlighted by a weekend of activities at Riverside Church in New York, and a crescendo of local activities, with the idea that it would help you market the program if what you were doing locally was tied into national activities. (But if the dates don't work for you locally, you can plan activities anytime throughout the year.)

And unlike a media day, when we ask Chapters to do a press conference or lie-in to get press attention, the goal of this activity is to help you build your Chapter by reaching out to the faith community. And in many cases, instead of you doing all of the work, you are asking *them* to do something, while offering them assistance to do so.

Getting Started: WHO

You can choose to reach out to any local church, synagogue, temple, rectory, mosque, synods etc. to ask for their participation in our national Sabbath weekend. But you may want to consider:

- (1) starting with your own faith community, if this is new or unfamiliar to you; or
- (2) choosing a large faith community, so you maximize your efforts.

Try to set up a meeting with a decision-maker in the faith community. Depending on its structure, this could be the pastor/spiritual leader, but it could also be a lay member on staff, or the chair of a committee. Usually one phone call to the main number will get you connected to the right person or at least someone who can get you to the right person.

Getting Started: WHAT

There are a plethora of activities that a faith community can do to participate in the God Not Guns Sabbath, depending on their interest and busy-ness. Here is a sample of action, in order from high-to-low involvement:

- (1) Dedicate an entire worship service to the issue
- (2) Organize a specific prayer vigil or event
- (3) Take part of a service and focus it: a moment of silence, a special announcement, a special speaker, changing/adding prayers
- (4) Pass out literature, table, bulletin insert
- (5) Get faith community to sign GNG resolution, add name to online list

To repeat: it *can be* an entire worship service dedicated to our issue, but it doesn't *have to be*; there are plenty of other options.

SUGGESTION

For a first time ask at a new place, I would recommend asking for number (3) and focusing on victims, as in:

"Can we take a moment during the service on Sunday, September 28 and remember the victims of gun violence? This could be a moment of silence, adding a special prayer, or I can do a little talk, if you wish."

MATERIALS

To assist you and your participating faith communities, we have a couple of printed pieces.

(1) Pamphlet/Brochure:

English: <http://www.bradynetwork.org/site/DocServer/GNG-Brochure08.pdf?docID=942>

Spanish: http://www.bradynetwork.org/site/DocServer/GNG_BrochureSpanV.pdf?docID=943

This NEW full-color, two-sided brochure, with a tear-off response flap, gives an overview of the God Not Guns program and a description of the Sabbath. This piece can be used year-round when reaching out to faith communities. (It is designed for faith leaders, not as a handout for church go-ers.) They are available 20 to a Chapter, and are in English and Spanish. You can **order the brochure/pamphlets through Melissa**, along with any other Chapter materials you need for the fall, when you order Chapter Materials. See order form attached.

(2) Worship Guide: www.bradynetwork.org/worshipguide

This 48-page booklet is designed for faith communities who have committed to doing a God Not Guns activity. It contains sample services, prayers, ideas, and reflections that a faith community can use for their God Not Guns activity. Every Chapter President was mailed one copy of the (slightly revised) 2008 Guide.

To help you access -- and share -- all of the information in the Guide, we created a new webpage that breaks down the various sections of the Guide: it's at www.bradynetwork.org/worshipguide. (Each section is now available individually, to save you from having to download the entire booklet -- though a link to the entire guide is also there.) There is also a link to order more copies. You can use that link, or email Alicia directly (ahort@bradymail.org). **Alicia will**

handle the distribution of the limited number of Worship Guides that we have in stock. As the Guides are more costly to produce than the pamphlet, we ask that they be used strategically.

FOLLOW-UP

Once you know of a local event, let us know by having your local faith group complete the Action Form (downloadable at www.bradycenter.org/gng/worshipguide/action.pdf) and returning it to us.

We will keep a running list of God Not Guns events around the country, but the local contact remains your contact: to develop, nurture, and grow.

For more information or questions about any of this, please contact Alicia Horton directly at (202) 289-5766 or ahort@bradymail.org.

Thank you in advance for reaching out to your local faith communities and using this event to build your Chapter and our effectiveness.

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