

Welcome to "No" Church - 4 Steps to Reversing Your Negative Church Messaging



Almost without exception, churches somewhere utilize negative messaging for very practical reasons. After all, someone parking in the wrong spot can create havoc. So it's quite natural to put up a sign that says, "No Parking Along Curb."

But is that the only way to get the intended result?



The question is worth asking because studies show the impact of negative verses positive messaging on the brain. **Negative messaging narrows your thought activity and focuses on actions related to the message. Positive messages on the other hand, broaden your thinking and create openness.** [More on this topic](#), from The Science of Positive Thinking.

So the big question is **what kind of brain patterns do you want to create for people as they**

enter your church and prepare to worship the all-powerful and all-present living God and creator of the universe?

Let's play this out for a guest coming to your church. What happens when they hit a cascade of messages like these:

- **No parking**
- **Do not enter**
- **For church members only**
- **No skateboarding**
- **No rollerblading**
- **No bicycles**
- **No scooters**
- **No food or drink allowed**
- **No talking**
- **No trespassing**
- **No running**
- **No mobile phones**
- **No signs allowed**
- **No posters**
- **No advertising**
- **No parking along the curb**

Essentially you create what we call the “No Church” church dynamic. Enough negative messaging and you might as well be saying...



- **Don't come here**
- **Don't relax**
- **Don't worship**
- **Don't find God**

Sounds laughable, doesn't it. It wouldn't if you could feel the influence of multi-stages of negative messaging from the perspective of someone totally new to church.

What can you do about this dilemma? Four things:

Step #1: Inventory your negative messages. List every one, walking from your entrance of your church to the worship center or sanctuary.

Step #2: Ask how important the prohibition message really is. I once worked with a church that prohibited the use of the ball field on their campus. Is that really worth it?

Step #3: Consider a positive message instead. This might not be obvious at first glance, but explore options as a team. Can a “No parking along curb” sign be replaced with a “Please keep traffic flowing” sign?

Step #4: Use your negative message with a point of humor. Why not have fun if you must communicate a negative message? The classic illustration is the “*Thou shalt not park here*” sign. What other ideas have you seen?

And, if you have any other funny negative messages, please share!

[Read more from Will.](#)