

QUARTERLY

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Greeting cards bring joy to the homebound!

It's fun to get cards in the mail. This is true for all age groups — young or old. We enjoy the ritual: opening the card, reading the sentiments, looking at the artwork, seeing who sent the card and reading the personal note.

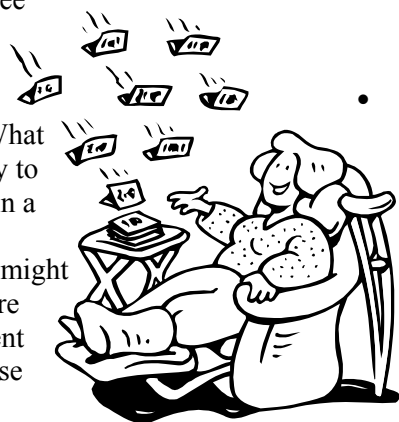
Many churches have a “card ministry.” Usually this means that the ministry committee members sends out cards to the homebound on special occasions. This is great!

But can a church do more? What are the possibilities? Why not try to involve the entire congregation in a greeting card ministry?

For very large churches, this might not be practical. Instead, it's more feasible to enlist a certain segment of the congregation, perhaps those groups in which the homebound member was formerly active, like the choir, for example.

Here are some ideas:

- Have a corner in the worship bulletin that alerts the congregation to birthdays or “get well” situations every week. Provide names and addresses.
- Have a greeting card rack in the lobby where homemade or computer-generated cards are placed for people to use. A donation box will help to defray expenses.
- Since greeting cards can be expensive, encourage people to be creative. Teach them how to create their own cards.
- Create a birthday schedule and give it to the teachers



Card Shower

of the Sunday School, so that each class is “assigned” one to three (or more, as necessary) homebound persons. These classes can consider the homebound person not as an assignment but as an “adoption.” Each child, as birthdays roll around, creates a birthday card under the tutelage of the teacher. These cards can be sent by the teacher, or given to the church office to send.

- Use a digital camera to take a picture of each child, perhaps a close-up or a head shot. That child's picture can then be printed and incorporated in the card design itself.
- Send a letter to every person in the congregation with a list of names and ask them if they would be willing to send a birthday card, or get well card (as necessary), to the people on the list. Include the mailing address. Make sure that every homebound person's name appears on about 10, maybe even 20, lists, if possible.

Remember that cards can be sent for no reason. Sometimes, a “Just thinking of you!” card is the most meaningful card of all!

Creating cards can be fun!

We can always buy cards at the grocery store. But this can be expensive! For a large-scale ministry like the one we propose, we need a less costly alternative.

Fortunately, the Internet and our computer software programs help us.

- My Card Maker is one of many Internet sites which allows free card-making after an initial registration. Go to: www.mycardmaker.com, or try www.bluemountain.com. Use Google to search for more options. Type in the search window: “Create

your own greeting cards” or something similar, and you will get a lot of hits.

- Do you have a nature photographer in your congregation? A simple photograph on nice, artsy card stock, which opens up to a handwritten message inside has a wonderful effect.
- Use your computer to make your own, personally designed card. Whether you’re using a PC or a Mac computer, making a greeting card is easy — after a few tries.

Making computer-generated cards isn’t hard!

You can even use Microsoft Word 2003 to make a card simply by printing out an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper printed on both sides. The card in this case would simply be folded in half to give you a card that’s 8.5 x 5.5.

That’s a large card, but it could be folded again in half to fit in most greeting card envelopes.

To create such a card, go to File and then Page Setup. Click the Margins tab and then select the Landscape option in the Orientation area.

Choose the 2 Pages per Sheet option from the Multiple Pages drop-down list. This tells Word to vertically split each page down the middle, which gives you the greeting card format. Click OK.

Now remember that you need four pages. Page 1 is the front where you can place some clip-art and a brief heading. Page 2 is usually blank. Page 3 is where you put your message and greeting. Page 4 is usually blank as well, unless you want to put a line at the bottom saying who made the card.

You will also need to print the first side and then take that same sheet and put it back in the printer to print on the reverse side. It might take you a couple of attempts to get it right.

An easier option is to use Microsoft Publisher to create cards. Publisher is a part of the Microsoft Office Suite programs, but can be purchased separately as well. (You can explore other options for a MAC system or PCs by browsing at your local office supply store.)

Publisher offers a number of greeting card templates.

First, open Publisher. Then in the upper left white box area, select Publications for Print. This opens up a drop-down menu of many options. Select Greeting Cards. Then scroll down to Birthdays, or Get Well, or Friendship templates. Select the one you like, and then personalize and print.

This program will print out a traditional card format. You simply need to make two folds, sign it, and put it in an envelope! These envelopes can be picked up in many sizes at your local office supply store.

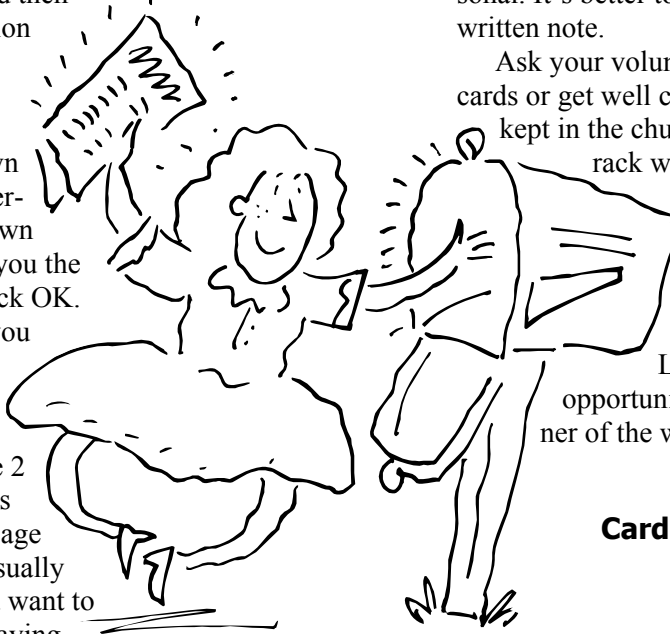
Recruit some card-making help

Find someone who could help you make some computer-generated cards. They need not be personalized with the homebound person’s name. In fact, when using the computer to create a card, it’s probably best not to personalize it in this way. Getting a card on which your name is computer-generated can actually seem less personal, rather than more personal. It’s better to personalize the card with a handwritten note.

Ask your volunteer to create a stack of birthday cards or get well cards to have on hand. These can be kept in the church office, or displayed on a card rack where people can readily find them.

Have you ever heard a homebound person say, “I wish I didn’t get so many birthday cards”? Didn’t think so. Cards are expressions of attention, care and love.

Let’s not neglect to use this great opportunity to bring joy to someone’s corner of the world!



Card-sending opportunities this quarter:

New Year’s Day
Valentine’s Day
Birthdays
Get Well
Friendship
Sympathy
Thinking of You

NOTE: The clip-art used in HTQ is available through ChurchArtPro. To subscribe, go to: www.ChurchArtPro.com.