

# EDUCATOR RESOURCES



## Outreach and Education to Faith-Based Organizations

Many Blacks and African Americans are engaged in their communities through churches, mosques and synagogues. Fifty-three percent of Blacks and African Americans report attending church at least weekly<sup>1</sup>. Studies suggest that working with faith-based programs is an effective strategy for increasing access to health education and screening in a safe and trusted environment<sup>2, 3</sup>. In addition, faith-based venues have been successfully used in the past to increase participation and retention for many types of health programming including smoking cessation<sup>4</sup>, cervical cancer<sup>5</sup> and mammography re-screening<sup>6</sup>, among others.

According to a study by the Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion & Public Life, Blacks and African Americans are more likely to report religious affiliation than whites or Hispanics/Latinos<sup>1</sup>. Nearly 80 percent of Blacks and African Americans reported that religion is very important in their lives. Among those who are affiliated with a faith community, the majority described themselves as belonging to churches in the historically Black Protestant tradition, followed by either evangelical or mainline Protestant traditions. A small number of Blacks and African Americans identified with other traditions or were unaffiliated. The below table contains popular churches and the percent of Blacks and African Americans who reported affiliation to denominations belonging to those churches.

Religion/Church	Percent Reporting Affiliation
Protestant	Total Protestant: 78
Baptist	45
Pentecostal	8
Methodist	5
Nondenominational Protestant	5
Mainline Protestant	4
Restorationist	2
Holiness	1
Other Protestant	7
Catholic	5
Unaffiliated (Atheist, Agnostic, “nothing in particular”)	12
Jehovah’s Witness	1
Muslim	1
Other religions (less than .5 percent affiliation)	4

## NOTE

While nearly 88 percent of Blacks and African Americans are affiliated with a religion, 12 percent report being either Agnostic, Atheist, or having no particular religious affiliation. Moreover, 19 percent of African Americans ages 18-29 and 13 percent ages 30-49 report not being affiliated with a church<sup>7</sup>. These individuals, and those who do not attend church on a regular basis, have to be reached outside of faith-based organizations. **Section Three: What is the Venue?, Getting to Know the Community You Serve and Conducting Outreach and Education in Beauty Salons** offer additional suggestions for reaching the Black and African American community. As always, it is important to know your intended audience well, including where they can and cannot be reached.

### ***Tips For Planning and Providing Educational Events in Faith-Based Organizations***

#### **Identify church leaders and ask for their support.**

Set up a meeting with the church leaders and/or health ministry to introduce your program and get their support. Consider approaching influential females within the church, such as the first lady or the church secretary.

- Ask if the church hosts an ongoing breast health group, workshop or discussion — or if it has ever hosted a breast cancer education workshop. If not, ask if the church would be interested in allowing you or your organization to provide outreach and education to the congregation.
- Provide information about the importance of breast cancer education and mammography screening in the Black and African American community. This might include information about incidence and survivorship rates among Black and African American women, and the importance of early detection.
- Ask leaders if they can introduce you to people or groups that can assist you in recruiting participants for your program.
- If the church holds its own health fairs, ask for permission to participate by setting up a table to engage in conversations with members about breast cancer in their community. Empower them to take action and get screened.



For more information about breast cancer incidence and mortality rates, see **Breast Cancer Among Black and African American Women.**

#### **Plan your event.**

Based on your conversation with the faith-based organization leadership, determine how much time and resources you will need to conduct your program.

- Decide if you will conduct a one-time event or several events that will require more planning.
- Identify volunteers who can help you set up and promote your event(s) and recruit participants.
- Invite a guest speaker, such as a breast cancer survivor or representative of a breast cancer organization, to speak to your audience.
- Consider partnering with someone within the congregation or part of the clergy to assist with conducting the event. A person who is well-known by the congregation may be seen as more influential than someone outside of the church.

## Promote your event.

Use printed material such as flyers and handouts and/or posts on websites or public media to promote your event(s) and provide participants with facts about breast cancer.

- Download and print materials from [KomenToolkits.org](https://www.komen.org/toolkits).
- Use flyers, printed bulletins and bulletin boards to announce your upcoming event.
- Use social media to promote the event. Ask the church leaders the best way to reach their congregation. For instance, if they have a large following to their Facebook or Twitter page, ask if they will announce your event. See [\*Tips for Using Text Messaging and Social Media for Outreach and Education\*](#) for more ideas.
- Ask faith leaders if you can include information about your event in their newsletter, or if they can announce it during services.
- Ask faith leaders if they would be willing to share information with the congregation during their service, time of worship, mass or assembly.
- Participate in the organization's regular services and distribute event flyers after services.

## Other ideas

- See if any other organizations in your community have a faith-based program with which you can partner or a Toolkit from which you can gather ideas. The names of these programs vary, but include *Worship in Pink*, *Pink Sunday* and *Pink in the Pew*.
- Invite a health care professional to your event to speak about the importance of screening.
- Invite a speaker to Bible study to share their story and lead a prayer for those affected by breast cancer.
- Request that church leaders ask the congregation to wear pink or pass out pink ribbons or flowers to honor survivors and those who have passed.
- Ask the church leaders to have a moment of prayer for those affected by breast cancer during their services.
- Ask church leaders to praise the improvements that have been made to screening and treatment for breast cancer over the years. Provide a script, if needed.
- Develop a recipe book with healthy recipes submitted by the congregation. Cook with these recipes at an event focused on breast health.
- Set up an education booth to hand out materials and answer questions after weekly services.
- Serve pink lemonade and pink cake before or after services to start a conversation about breast health.
- Ask church leaders if you can create a "pink-space" on a bulletin board to post facts and information on breast health.
- Ask if you can create a Wall of Hope with names, pictures and stories of congregation members who have been affected by breast cancer.
- Host a women's only prayer group or educational event for women who may not feel comfortable accessing breast health information in front of the congregation.
- Ask if you can form or help set up a team to participate in a local Susan G. Komen Race/Walk. To locate an event near you, visit: [apps.komen.org/raceforthecure](https://apps.komen.org/raceforthecure).

For more information about conducting your event, see [\*Leading a Breast Health Session\*](#).

- 1 "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, Report 2007," Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.
- 2 Kerner, J., Dusenbury, L., & Mandelblatt, J. "Poverty and Cultural Diversity: Challenges for Health Promotion among the Medically Underserved," *Annual Review of Public Health* 14 (1993): 355-377.
- 3 Kotecki, C.N. "Developing a Health Promotion Program for Faith-Based Communities," *Holist Nursing Practice* 16 (2002): 61-69.
- 4 Stillman, F.A., Bone, L.R., Rand, C., and Levine, D.M. "Heart, Body, and Soul: A Church-Based Smoking Cessation Program for Urban African Americans," *Preventative Medicine* 22 (1993): 335-349.
- 5 Davis, D.T., Bustamante, A., Brown, C.P., Wolde-Tsadiq, G., Savage, E.W., Cheng, X., et al. "The Urban Church and Cancer Control: A Source of Social Influence in Minority Communities," *Public Health Reports* 109 (1994): 500-506.
- 6 Duan, N, Fox, S.A., Derose, K.P., and Carson, S. "Maintaining Mammography Adherence through Telephone Counseling in a Church-Based Trial," *American Journal of Public Health* 90 (2000): 1468-1471.
- 7 "A Religious Portrait of African Americans," PewResearch Center, last modified 2009, <http://www.pewforum.org/2009/01/30/a-religious-portrait-of-african-americans/>