



Worldwide Forgiveness Alliance

Creating Your Own Observance of International Forgiveness Day

*Contributed by Sally Santana
National Coordinator of IFD of
Port Orchard, Washington*

Please bear in mind that your observance of International Forgiveness Day need not have all the features of those done by larger groups. All we ask is that there be two or more people together who reflect on the power of forgiveness.

The following outline is a guide for establishing your own observance of International Forgiveness Day. It is not meant to tell how the day must be observed, but gives organizing tips for the creation and promotion of the event. Feel free to add to, modify or delete from what follows in accordance with your circumstances.

Also, please consider that forgiveness is not tied to any particular faith and attempt to keep it open to everyone.

Decide the scope of your event. For international planning purposes, the event is always the on the first Sunday in August.

If you want to expand the scope of your observance, ask yourself, “Will the event be just for your own spiritual community, church, synagogue, temple, mosque, etc? Or your community, county, city, state?”

Your answer to this question determines the scope of your program and the amount of resources, time and energy required to promote and produce the event.

If it is your own spiritual community:

- 1) If you want a speaker for your event, your clergyperson is a likely prospect or someone else that your clergyperson deems able to address the issue eloquently.
- 2) If you choose to select a “Hero or Champion of Forgiveness,” make sure it is a person or a representative from the group who would be willing to speak about the difference that forgiveness has made in his/her life.
- 3) Ask your music director/choir/vocalists) to perform pieces appropriate to the theme of “forgiveness” if you choose to use music.

4) Consider having a potluck or other meal following the event, during which attendees are encouraged to share their feelings.

5) Place a notice in your spiritual community’s newsletter, bulletin, etc. advertising the event.

6) Send a press release to your local newspapers to inform the public of what you’re doing and providing a name and phone number for those who would like more information about doing this in their own spiritual community.

If it is your wider community:

- 1) Engage some like-minded friends to help you with the planning and arrangements. Decide how large you want to make the scope of your event. Just to other local faith communities? Your city or county?
- 2) If it is your entire community, consider sponsoring a Forgiveness Essay and Poetry Contest in the public and private schools.
- 3) Choose a venue. This can be a city park, a civic center or a large place of worship. In making this



choice, consider the number of people you hope will attend.

You will probably also need to consider the cost of your venue, which will be out-of-pocket and will determine how much the sponsors of and/or participants in the event will have to contribute to offset the cost.

4) Avoid conflicting time-wise with Sunday worship services.

5) Engage your speakers/presenters. Consider having at least one speaker on the subject of forgiveness and a musical group that can address the topic with songs.

6) Consider also having a potluck/picnic at the conclusion of the event which provides a time for folks to share feelings/stories.

7) Send a descriptive notification of your event to your local Chamber of Commerce and ask them to put it on their "Calendar of Events."

8) Send this notification to any other community communication resources as well, such as web-sites, radio (P.S.A's), etc.

9) Send another descriptive notification to at least 10 of the largest local places of worship by early June addressed specifically to their respective clergypersons.

Ask that the information be placed in their July/August newsletter and/or late July bulletins. You may also request that they consider making their sermon that Sunday on forgiveness.

10) In mid-July send out a press kit to your local papers with a news release for inclusion in its community news and/or religious section. Also state your availability for an interview, giving your day phone number, etc.

Press kit example: a white, two-pocket folder with articles on forgiveness on the left side, and your agenda (this can be in the form of a brochure) and cover letter on the right.

If you can make them at home, create 3" x 4" labels with a clip art piece of the earth with "International Forgiveness Day" to use on the cover of your folder.

You may also create business cards with the earth logo to go into the card holder portion of the folder.

11) Consider also getting word out about your event by sending a descriptive notification or press-type kit to local service clubs (Rotary, Kiwanis, Soroptimist, Lions, etc), the local chapter of

Red Cross, fire and police depts., etc., notifying them of the event, as well. They may be able to provide you with "helpers" if you need them.

12) You may also contact service group presidents, offering to be a "program speaker." Typically this is 15 to 30 minutes during a breakfast or lunch time meeting.

In any event:

Create a colorful flyer to post around your community. Places such as the local laundromat, large grocery stores with community bulletin boards, etc.

The last week of July, check in with everybody to make sure there are no last minute cancellations or other problems.

NOTE: The worldwide Forgiveness Alliance is grateful to Sally Santana, National Coordinator of IFD, of Port Orchard, Washington, for preparing the above guide.

Sally was named National Coordinator on 3/1/04. If you would like help create an Forgiveness Day in your area, contact her at sally.santana@wavecable.com.