



Jesus Seminar on the Road

Local Publicity Checklist

Local publicity is vital to every Jesus Seminar on the Road. According to a Spring 2014 JSOR survey:

- 42% of attendees found out about the event from family and friends
- 23% of attendees found out from a church notice
- Up to 10% of visits to the JSOR page online come directly from the host's website and/or the host's email

The good news is that a lot of local publicity is simple and straightforward. For publicity support, contact Cassandra Farrin, Director of Marketing, at 208-954-6848 (Mountain Standard Time) or cfarrin@westarinstitute.org

What Publicity Does Westar Do?

Feel free to copy from and use Westar-designed materials to promote your JSOR!

- Develops a program page and registration form on the Westar website
- Creates a promotional color flier and registration form
- Sends out regional and national email blasts to the Westar mailing list
- Promotes the event in *The Fourth R* magazine
- Promotes the event on social media
- Writes a news release and sends it to the local media

10 Vital Publicity Tasks You Can Do

- Designate someone to handle publicity, preferably a person who is comfortable with PR and has some experience promoting local events
- Announce the event in person to your host group and any sponsoring groups
- Announce the event—in person or in writing—to other friendly community groups, churches and local college/university religion departments
 - You may find it helpful to reach out to congregations and individuals listed in the [Progressive Christianity.org Directory](http://ProgressiveChristianity.org)
 - You can request from Westar staff the names of any churches or organizations in your area that have sponsored a JSOR in the past

- List the event on host and sponsors' calendars and/or church bulletins
- List the event on local community calendars
- List the event on your website. Include the general description of the event, date & time, and a link to the Westar program page so it's easy for people to sign up.
- Announce the event on your social media page(s), if you have them
- Post event fliers (provided by Westar) around town at least a month ahead of the event
- Announce the pre-registration deadline 2–3 weeks in advance of the event
- Invite members of the press to report on the event. Westar sends out a press release, but a personal invitation from a local person is a good boost.

Sample Email or Letter of Invitation

This is just a sample. Feel free to personalize to suit your unique program.

Dear [PASTOR AND/OR EDUCATION DIRECTOR NAME](#),

I'm writing to alert you to a Jesus Seminar on the Road event in [CITY/DATE](#) that members of [CHURCH/ORG NAME](#) might like to attend. [Include a personal note about how you know of or heard about this church/organization.](#)

Religious studies scholars [Presenter Name](#) (Ph.D., [School Name](#)) and [Presenter Name](#) (Ph.D. [School Name](#)) will be presenting "EVENT TITLE" at [Host Name and Full Address](#).

As with all Westar Institute-sponsored events, this does not represent any particular faith perspective. All faith and non-faith voices are welcome, and historical-critical research on religion is taken seriously. The Friday night lecture is \$20, the Saturday workshops are \$30 apiece, or the whole weekend is \$60. More information is available at westarinstitute.org/events/

If you have questions or concerns, you can also reach out to local organizer [Organizer Name and Contact Information](#).

Kind regards,

Cassandra Farrin
Marketing & Outreach Director
Westar Institute

More Publicity Ideas

- ❑ Reach out to schools and community groups within a few hours' drive of your event. Give them a call and personally invite them to attend. If you're not sure where to begin, try the following types of groups, which are often supportive of Westar's work:
 - College/university religious studies departments (you may need to emphasize that the event is unaffiliated with any one religion)
 - Humanist/secular groups
 - Mainline churches like United Church of Christ, Methodist, Presbyterian and Episcopal, especially those that describe themselves as "reconciling" or "welcoming" congregations
 - Unitarian Universalists
 - Spiritual/intentional communities
 - Other groups that might be uniquely interested in the topic
- ❑ Share Westar resources on your event topic with your groups—in person, linked from your website, or on social media
 - [Free YouTube video clips](#)
 - [Free *Fourth R* articles online](#)
 - [Westar's Facebook page](#)
 - [Westar's Twitter account](#)
- ❑ Set up a study group using a book, article or film related to your topic
 - Order 5 or more copies of the same item at once from Westar and get a 30% group discount
 - To browse materials, visit www.westarinstitute.org/store-home/
- ❑ Invite your local talk radio station to attend and/or interview your speakers. You never know who will take an interest!
- ❑ If you have a budget for advertising, you might consider one of the following options. Westar can help design a professional ad as needed.
 - Ad in the local paper, theater, billboard, radio spot, etc.

Thinking of Hosting an Annual JSOR?

Annual JSOR hosts have a unique opportunity to build a community around the event. Publicity can happen before, during and after the JSOR to encourage people to stay connected and come back next year, resulting in a stronger program over time.

- ❑ Start a local email list so you can let everybody know when the next JSOR will happen. Include an email sign-up on your website if possible.

- ❑ Assign one or even several people to report about interesting things they learned at the event. Share the report in person at your next gathering, on your website, in the church bulletin, on social media, etc.
- ❑ Get someone who is comfortable with social media to share live updates on Twitter or Facebook during the event. We can help him/her with ideas on how to do this successfully, and we can share it on Westar's national social media pages.
- ❑ Meet at other times of year. Share a meal, discuss a topic of interest to the group, and get to know each other!

Thank you for your efforts to host a Jesus Seminar on the Road. The Westar team is happy to support your publicity efforts in whatever ways we can, including free resources, samples of all the publicity items suggested above, and descriptive/promotional materials to fit your needs. Best of luck to you!