

# GUIDELINES FOR A SUCCESSFUL OPEN HOUSE

To be included in this year's Sacred Sites Open House complete your registration by April 17, 2017.

## REGISTRATION:

**-Click here for the Online Registration form-**

Please take a moment to write a description of the activities you have planned for the weekend, your site's history and architectural style. A complete registration form ensures your site will be published in our online guide quickly!

After submitting your registration form, please email 3-5 high quality photos to [sacredsites@nylandmarks.org](mailto:sacredsites@nylandmarks.org). Clear, quality, photos go a long way in promoting your site in our online Guide. Please include at least one exterior photo. Close-up photos of architectural details are also welcome, they can help highlight the unique character of your site.

Changes to your registration information can be made by contacting Amy Woodin, at [sacredsites@nylandmarks.org](mailto:sacredsites@nylandmarks.org) or 212-995-5260.

Late registrations will be accepted, but we cannot guarantee that your site will be listed in our online guide, maps, or included in press releases.

If your religious institution is listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places, or is located within a National or State Historic District, you can download a copy of the nomination form using the Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS) here: <http://nysparks.com/shpo/online-tools/>. Nomination forms will contain information on the architectural style, date of construction and historic significance. Information for designated buildings in NYC can be found here: [http://www.neighborhoodpreservationcenter.org/designation\\_reports/index.php](http://www.neighborhoodpreservationcenter.org/designation_reports/index.php) or at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/lpc/html/publications/designation.shtml> if the site was recently designated.

## PUBLICITY:

**-Download and Print our Sacred Sites Open House banner!-**

You can download our printable banner [here](#). Most importantly, announce your participation to your congregation or parish. Recruit volunteers to greet guests and help with any planned activities. Encourage members of the congregation to attend the open house and keep reminders posted on notice boards or in service announcements so that everyone is aware that people will be coming to visit.

Publicize the Open House on the congregation's web site, Facebook page and newsletters. You can also tag the Conservancy in your photos on Facebook. Like us to follow our Sacred Sites promotions at [www.facebook.com/nylandmarks/](https://www.facebook.com/nylandmarks/)

Draft a press release to inform local TV and radio of your participation. Contact local newspapers with letters to the editor or submission to a community calendar of events. **A Sample press release is available [here](#).**

Create flyers that can be posted in local libraries, at a historical society, or neighborhood shop windows.

Extend personalized invitations to local politicians, civic groups or organizations that rent space within the building. **An example invitation letter is available [here](#).**

## PLAN YOUR EVENT:

Each congregation is unique so plan your participation around what works best for your own site. We require a commitment to participate at least one day for a minimum of 2 hours; the rest is up to you! Some activity suggestions that have been successful in the past include guided tours, refreshments, organ demonstrations, choir performances, book sales, and local history lectures. Host a planning meeting to figure out how your site would best like to participate and then put out an announcement to recruit volunteers.

Guided tours are a great way to share the history of your site and engage visitors.

Brochures for self-guided tours are also helpful; [here are some examples from past participating sites](#).

In the week leading up to the Open House weekend have a “get ready” orientation meeting for volunteers. Provide them with the information they will need to oversee special activities and/or greet visitors.

Coordinate with other Open House sites in your community to increase visitor participation. Invite near by religious sites to participate or look up participating sites on the Conservancy’s website. Information on participating sites may also be available through your regional denominational leaders.

## DAY OF THE EVENT TIPS:

Open Doors will bring in visitors! Display clear signage that you are a participating site and have a greeter at the door to welcome visitors. Not only does it make participating sites easily identifiable and welcoming to visitors, it is also a way to bring in foot traffic from neighbors walking by!

## AFTER THE EVENT:

Post pictures of your Sacred Sites Open House experience on your website, Facebook page, etc. and share them with the Conservancy. After the Open House weekend, an online survey will be emailed to each participating site; constructive feedback helps us enormously in planning next year’s event.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Questions? Contact Amy Woodin at [sacredsites@nylandmarks.org](mailto:sacredsites@nylandmarks.org) or 212-995-5260.