

## Making the Most of Holidays and Special Days

Amazon. CBD. E-books. Life has gotten tricky for bookstores these days, so making the most of your relationships with patrons matters more than ever. Win a loyal patron, and you win repeat sales, word-of-mouth advertising, and new customers.

During the holidays and other special days, it's important to portray the appropriate holiday spirit and celebrate with your customers. Here are a few ways to do that:

- Employ social media to encourage, remind, and incentivize customers to come to your store. During any holiday you can:
  - Offer a Taste of the Day: Invite customers to join you for hot cocoa (or lemonade or tea, etc.) and a Christmas story (or Valentine's, Father's Day, etc.)—you get the idea
  - Provide Sweet Thank Yous: Give tiny candy canes (or candy hearts for Valentine's Day, or candy corn for Thanksgiving, etc.) with purchase. Include your social media urls and encourage them to post Sweet Thank You comments about your store.
  - Offer giftwrapping services on special occasions. During holidays, engage youth group volunteers to come on Saturdays and giftwrap for a contribution for their group or missions trip.
- Special People: Mother's Day, Father's Day, Grandparent's Day
  - Hold a store's "Mother of the Year" (or Father or Grandparent or Bride): Have customers submit names with email addresses, choose the winner, give a gift, and announce it on social media.
  - Give a flower to a Mom, Father, or Grandparent who makes a purchase on their special day.
- MLK Jr. Day, President's Day, First day of Spring, Earth Day, Cinco de Mayo, Memorial Day, July 4, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Election Day, Veterans Day
  - Invite a veteran to come and speak.
  - Tweet to give discounts on stories of veterans, conservation for Earth Day, Hispanic resources on Cinco de Mayo, etc.
- Summer contests (have one for kids and one for adults)
  - Give a prize to whomever reads the most books, but give them triple points for books purchased at your store.
  - Pay it Forward. Provide your social media urls and encourage contest participants to post comments about the book they read and your store to get double points for each.
- Summer Weddings
  - Invite a counselor or pastor to give a talk about the importance of premarital preparation. Then invite engaged couples to the talk and give discounts for premarital resources.
- Other social media ideas to remind customers about a special day:
  - Be a bookworm. Join our summer reading program and earn discounts.
  - Graduating? Get discounts on books about life choices and careers.

- Plug into our book club and power your brain. Specials for book club members today.
- Tweet a story mob discount to book clubs and other patrons for all who come and purchase within a short, limited timeframe (say, 6-9 on Tuesday evening).
- Tweet: Getting married? Show your ring and wedding date, and get a discount on select premarital resources.

Susan G Mathis is an author, editor, and international speaker. Her books, *Countdown for Couples: Preparing for the Adventure of Marriage*, and *The ReMarriage Adventure: Preparing for a Lifetime of Love & Happiness*, are great books for premarital events.

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