

## 15 top tips on writing a press release

1. **Think of a title that tells the story** and put it at the top of your release. It will help to summarise it for the newsdesk.
2. **Include all the basic facts in your first paragraph.** *What? Who? When? Where? Why? How?* early in the release. Write in short sentences and keep paragraphs no longer than a few lines.
3. **Decide what is the most important or interesting feature** of your story and Include this in the first paragraph.
4. **Use quotes.** A relevant comment from a person directly involved in an event adds interest and helps the flow. If you want to express an opinion, do it in a quote. The rest should be factual.
5. **Steer clear of jargon.** Do not assume that reporters will know what you mean. If you simply have to use 'churchy' words, explain them. Avoid flowery language and stick to the facts.
6. **Use a format with 'news release' and the church's name** displayed prominently, so that the newsdesk can see easily the source of the information.
7. **Add your contact details** and make sure you are available to answer follow-up questions from the media during the day. If you have a website, add the address so that reporters can find more information.
8. **Keep the release to the equivalent of one side of A4** if possible, two at the very most. If journalists need more information, they will contact you.
9. **Date the release** to show when it was issued.
10. **Check the information with everyone involved** before sending it out. Ask someone else to read it through with a fresh pair of eyes to check for mistakes.
11. **Send the release in good time.** If you email, send your release as part of the body of the message, not as an attachment. Many weekly papers come out at the end of the week, so a good day to send a press release is a Friday or a Monday.
12. **Send information about an event in the future,** rather than an event which has happened. Future events are more likely to win coverage – and you may get coverage after the event as well.
13. **Supply a photograph if you can.** Increasingly, newspapers like good quality digital photographs, sent in JPEG format.
14. **Invite the media to attend your event or activity,** and look after them if they arrive! But remember that most newsdesks are short-staffed and are unlikely to be able to attend many events. Check you have parental permission before allowing a photographer to take a picture of children.
15. **Editors' notes** can be a helpful way of adding extra background information that is useful but not strictly essential to this story.