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How We Run a Sunday, and Why

Parker Manuel · Lead pastor, Pinewood Church, Boulder · 20+ years in ministry

Check every name, pronoun and detail before you use this.

Start here

This is one Sunday at Pinewood Church, from the week before to the review after. Every step says what we do, who leads it, and why.

The order of service is the easy part to copy. The reasons are the part worth taking. A step your team understands is a step they can run without you.

It is one church's way, not the way. Take what helps, change what doesn't, and write your own "why" next to each step.

A few of our words

- **Team Rally:** the short gathering of every volunteer before doors open.
- **Stage Huddle:** the last check-in for everyone involved in the platform and production.
- **Legends:** the set-up and tear-down team.
- **Growth Track:** the newcomer class.
- **Connect 4:** four questions for meeting someone new.
- **SWOT:** the review every team does after every gathering (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats).

The morning at a glance

When	What
Before set-up	Leaders' huddle and prayer
Set-up	Legends load in and build the rooms
After set-up	Soundcheck and rehearsal
Before the rally	Team huddles, about 5 minutes each
45 minutes before	Team Rally
30 minutes before	Stage Huddle
20 minutes before	Mic check
On the hour	Service starts, on time

The service, about 80 minutes

Part	Minutes
Worship	25
Host moment	10
Message	35
Response	10

Start Here: What We Believe About Sunday

The convictions behind the Sunday

Meet people where they are and point them to Jesus.

Jesus is our message. We are Jesus people, not religious people. Methods will come and go, yet our message will remain the same.

From the parking lot to the pulpit, everyone serves. Every role is different but they are all important.

If it doesn't start with prayer it's flawed from the start.

Everything below hangs on those four.

The week before

What we do

- The set list is done before Thursday.
- The service hosts and the Team Rally speaker are picked by midweek, not on Sunday.
- A guest speaker sends notes to the tech team when they are ready, and the team builds slides Sunday morning.

Who leads: staff for the plan, Team Leads for their rosters.

Why

We believe that balance in life isn't attainable. But healthy rhythms are.

In order to maintain health and sustainability, we encourage all teams and leaders to set healthy rhythms in their weeks so that they come into Sunday feeling rested and ready to serve.

What we learned

- Brief the hosts ahead of time on the flow and each transition.
- A short end-of-week check that every area has a named person prevents Sunday scrambling.
- Tell people face to face what is happening next week. Don't rely on the app alone.

Before the Doors Open

Leaders arrive first

What we do: leaders are in the building before their teams. They gather for a short huddle and prayer before set-up starts.

Who leads: staff and Team Leads.

Why

You have to show up to grow up. So much of leadership is consistency and presence.

- Leaders go first.

Load-in and set-up: the Legends

What we do: we set up and tear down every week. The Legends bring everything in from storage and build each room.

Who leads: the Legends lead.

Why they are called Legends

Because they are the first to arrive and the last to leave. They are truly legends.

Sayings we use

- Leave it better than you found it.
- Nothing great is built on the talents of a few but the sacrifice of many.
- We get to do this.

What we learned

- Organized storage is the biggest set-up lever: labels, shelving, photos of how things go, itemized lists.
- When set-up finishes early, the team has time to connect with each other before guests arrive. Early set-up is a people win, not only a logistics win.
- The energy in set-up carries into the service, in both directions.
- Put the set-up roster in the scheduling system like any other team.
- Set-up is never overstaffed. Keep recruiting.

- Have a plan for when things go badly wrong.

Soundcheck and rehearsal

What we do: soundcheck, then a run-through, before the rally.

Who leads: the worship leader and the production lead.

Two non-negotiables

1. The room stays clear during rehearsal.
2. The platform is for presenting, not practicing. Preparation happens before Sunday.

Why

Worship is how we fight our battles. We believe worship shifts the atmosphere.

What we learned

- Someone has to own soundcheck and in-ear monitors or it drifts.
- If one tech person's absence sinks the morning, the bench is too thin.

Team huddles

What we do: every team huddles on its own for about 5 minutes before the Team Rally.

Who leads: Team Leads and Captains.

What we learned

- Small huddles before the big rally lift the energy in the room.
- A Sunday when every huddle happened was itself a win worth naming.

What a Team Lead covers

Check in, a word (brief), a challenge, and prayer.

Team Rally

What we do: every volunteer gathers 45 minutes before the service, for 10 to 15 minutes.

The format

1. Hand the mic to a Team Lead
2. One value

3. Honor someone
4. A quick song
5. Prayer
6. The creed

Why we gather everyone before doors: the team sets the temperature. The room takes on what the team brings.

Team is a thermostat, not a thermometer.

The Team Rally Creed

Jesus is our message, our life.
This is His church, built on love and full of faith.
We are here to serve and not be served.
We are grateful, expectant, and ready.
To God be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

We are vocal with our honor, meaning we are not stingy with our words.

What we learned

- Starting late was the most repeated weakness in our reviews. The fix that stuck: if the rally starts late, keep it short.
- Keep it to 10 to 15 minutes. Going long hurts as much as starting late.
- People sitting down drains it.
- The prayer time was named as the best part.
- With two services, the second service needs its own rally.
- Hand off the mic. Develop Team Leads to lead it.

Stage Huddle and mic check

What we do: Stage Huddle 30 minutes before the service, mic check 20 minutes before.

Who is in it

Worship team, speaker, hosts, and AVL team.

The speaker gets a head mic and a handheld. A stage hand brings the podium on as the speaker walks up and takes it off as they walk down.

Where it came from: the speaker, the worship leader and production needed one moment together before the service.

What gets said: walk the service once (the transitions, who hands off to whom, anything different today), then pray.

Guests, Kids and Follow-Up

Doors: the guest path

What we do: a first-time guest meets four people on the way to a seat.

1. Parking team
2. Door greeter
3. Connect table
4. Usher

Connect 4

Anyone on the team can use these with someone new:

1. What's your name?
2. Where are you from?
3. What's your story?
4. How can I pray for you?

Why

We make no apologies for being specifically focused on reaching those far from God. We desire to bring the broken home at all costs.

We also believe that your connection determines your direction, therefore we are serious about connecting others to our community.

- If it was for the one, it was worth it all.
- One invite could change a life.
- The Gospel flies best on the wings of relationships.

What we learned

- Volunteers park farthest from the building so guests get the close spots.
- Keep someone outside for 10 to 15 minutes after the service starts, for late arrivals.
- Put a person in the hallway during the service.
- Hospitality needs a lead of its own. Have water out.

- In a shared rented building, agree with the landlord about other people walking through, especially near the kids' areas.

The ten minutes before

What we do: countdown on the screen, music playing, and the first song starts right on time.

Where I am: a bit of both. In the room greeting people first, then a few quiet minutes before I walk up.

Why we start on time: it honors the people who came.

Kids

Safety rules

1. Matching tags at check-in and pick-up
2. Two adults in every room
3. Background checks for every volunteer

Why

- Not babysitting, disciple-making.

What we learned

- Check-in needs an owner and its own review. Early on it was a constant problem.
- Kids set-up needs its own helpers, not one person.
- Show the kids' space on your website and keep check-in signage clear.

Guest follow-up

What happens when a guest fills in a connect card

1. Right after the service:

They are also prayed over right after service by our prayer team.

2. Sunday or Monday: a personal text.
3. At the staff meeting: the cards are prayed over.
4. By the next Sunday: an invitation to Growth Track.

Why

- Growth Track is how you go from spectator to participant.

What we learned: after a big day, the first priority is quality follow-up and the health of the leaders who carried it.

The Service, Part by Part

Songs 1 and 2

What we do: two worship songs open the service.

Who leads: the worship leader.

Why

Worship is how we fight our battles. We believe worship shifts the atmosphere.

We are a responsive and vocal church.

What we learned

- Start the first song without a talking break.
- "Service is too long" and "better transitions" stayed on our list until we set a time for each part.

Host moment: welcome, announcements, giving

What we do: after the second song the host welcomes guests, gives two announcements at most, and leads into giving.

Who leads: the host.

How we talk about giving: generosity is our privilege.

Generosity is about giving more than what is required. We see generosity as a privilege. We're generous with our time, talents and treasure. We go first in our giving. God has given richly towards us, it's our honor to give back to Him. We don't give out of obligation, but as an opportunity to invest in the Kingdom.

What we learned

- What is said from the stage sets the culture.
- Plan how the band leaves and returns during announcements so it is smooth.
- Unless the tech booth is fully staffed, don't pull tech people out to host.

What the host says every week: a welcome to guests and one next step, such as where the connect table is.

Who decides the announcements: the staff, together.

Song 3, with ministry flow

What we do: one more song before the message.

Why split the worship this way: two songs gather the room, the host welcomes, and the third song prepares hearts for the Word.

What "ministry flow" means: room to follow the Spirit. The song can stretch for prayer or a ministry moment, and the band stays ready to support it.

We are flexible and desire to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. If you feel led to extend a worship moment, revisit a bridge, pray, or create space for ministry before preaching, please feel freedom to do so. The band is always ready to support those moments.

The message

What we do: a message of about 35 minutes, in a service of 1 hour 15 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes.

Why

Our church responds well to authentic stories, strong biblical teaching, practical application, and clear invitations to follow Jesus. We love God's Word, the work of the Holy Spirit, and creating space for people to encounter God personally.

The Scripture Creed

I wrote it. When we say it:

Right before the Scripture reading, but not every message. Only on occasions.

This is my Bible.
It is God-breathed and true.
It tells me who I am
And how He calls me to live.
It is alive and active.
It never returns empty,
But accomplishes its purpose.
It is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.

Heaven and earth will pass away,
But His Word will remain forever.
I will hide His Word in my heart,
So I might not sin against Him.
I will meditate on it day and night,
So my life will be fruitful.
So today,
I will receive it with humility.
I will believe it with faith.
I will obey it with courage.
My mind is ready.
My heart is open.
My life will never be the same.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Response time: altar, prayer team, the gospel

What we do

We have a strong altar culture. At the end of every message, people are encouraged to come forward, kneel at the altar, and respond to what God is doing. We also have a prayer team available on both sides of the stage.

We present the gospel every week.

We close with a simple salvation prayer that the whole church prays together.

The Salvation Prayer

Jesus, I acknowledge that I need You.
I confess that I have sinned against You.
I believe that God raised You from the dead.
And right now, by faith, I say, "Jesus is Lord."
Thank You for forgiving me.
By Your grace I am saved.
And by Your power I am set free.

Why the whole church prays it together

- So no one prays it alone. Someone praying it for the first time is surrounded by the church, not singled out.
- It reminds all of us of the gospel, every week.

The prayer team: invited by a pastor and trained. They pray; they don't counsel.

Prayer is not a last resort, it's our first response. We pray specific so we can praise specific.

What we learned: a clear gospel presentation at the end of every service took months of intent to become weekly practice. It needed a decision, not just a wish.

Host close

What we do: the host closes the service. Tear-down is announced from the mic.

What we learned

- Write a handful of ready lines that move people from the close into staying and talking.
- People do what is said out loud. Announcing tear-down to the whole room worked the first week we tried it.

What the host says in the last minute

We're so glad you joined us today, maybe a super short take away from the message, and then a blessing and we'll see you next week.

After the Amen

Tear-down and load-out

What we do: tear-down is announced from the mic, everyone helps, and gear goes back to labelled storage.

Who leads: the Legends lead, with every volunteer.

Why

An owner doesn't fill a seat, they find the gaps and meet the needs of the organization as a whole.

- Leave it better than you found it.
- If serving is beneath you, leadership is beyond you.

What we learned

- Volunteers tear down before they hang out.
- Scattered tear-down means no one is directing it. Station people at storage and have others carry to them.
- Say everything out loud: when tear-down starts, when more hands are needed, when it is done.
- Quick, cheerful tear-down is a strength in its own right.

The review

What we do

Each team makes a SWOT analysis after every event or gathering. Your SWOT can be simple bullet points.

Why

It's impossible to make it better and stay the same. Growing organizations recognize that change is not only healthy, but it's necessary. We encourage every servant leader to make it 1% better every week. Progression over perfection. We will always welcome and provide quality feedback in an honorable way.

A critical spirit is born out of a negative attitude. We celebrate constantly realizing that the things God

is doing is greater than the mistakes we are making.

What we learned

- Keep it short: 5 to 15 minutes, four headings.
- Strengths come first, and include people stepping up, not only logistics.
- Every weakness becomes an item with an owner.
- The habit is easy to lose in busy seasons.

The staff still reviews Sunday every week with a short SWOT at staff meeting.

- Inspect what you expect.

Sundays that change the flow

- **Baptism Sunday:** "something that should be celebrated in front of the people you love and your community of faith."
- **Communion Sunday:** monthly.
- **All Team Sundays:** four times a year (Easter, Candlelight, Anniversary, Conference). "Schedule the whole team for these Sundays. All hands on deck."
- Party with a purpose.
- Sundays are for service.