



# TRAINING GUIDE

FOR YOU AND YOUR TEAM

A WEEK OF RADICAL GENEROSITY  
AND SERVICE IN JESUS' NAME

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**Thanks for signing up for Love Atlantic!** We're so excited to be joining together with you for a week of radical generosity and service in Jesus' name. From October 2-8, 2022, in a concerted effort, congregations of all sizes and representing multiple denominations will be actively seeking ways to serve and bless our communities as a demonstration of the love and compassion of Christ.

What will this look like within your community? That's up to you. Regardless of size, setting, average age, or socio-economic status, all churches can participate to whatever extent they are able. You have a great deal of flexibility in determining what you will do and how you will do it, with the primary stipulation being that you express radical generosity in Jesus' name. Simply invite Him to lead you, then be alert and available to respond to the opportunities He presents for you to demonstrate His love.

Because God has been so generous toward us, we are compelled in turn to be generous toward the world around us. It's out of His unending generosity that we give. This is always true in each and every season, but specifically during this one week, let's pull out all the stops to intentionally see just how much love we can show in Jesus' name. Imagine what God will do!

Within this guide, you'll find customizable tips and instruction to help you participate with other believers from across the Atlantic Provinces in declaring and demonstrating the love of God. We're looking forward to joining with you as we give and serve in Jesus' name. May our generosity be a reflection of His, all to the glory of God.

## **WHY LOVE ATLANTIC?**

Love is intrinsic to who God is. It's not merely one of His character qualities, it's core to His very nature. He is defined by love. "*God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them*" (1 John 4:16, NLT). As His lives in us, then, the outpouring of His love on those around us is a natural result.

The goal of Love Atlantic is not to bring credit to any particular person or church, but to direct the glory to God. Jesus warned against doing things publicly with the motivation of impressing others (Matthew 6:1-4), but He also described how our good deeds performed publicly with the right motivation could bring glory to God (Matthew 5:14-16).

Our prayer is that the goodness of God will shine brightly across the region as we demonstrate radical generosity in Jesus' name. As followers of Jesus across a broad spectrum of faith traditions band together, may we embody the unity of the Spirit and direct the glory to the One we serve.

## **YOUR TEAM**

Love Atlantic is designed to be a collaborative effort. Rather than carrying it solely on your shoulders, aim to build a team around you to plan and prepare in advance, and mobilize as many people as possible to participate. Below are some of the key positions to consider.

### **Point Person**

This may be the pastor, a staff member, or a volunteer designated to coordinate your church's involvement. This person should NOT be expected to do everything, but rather should delegate and coordinate all of the Love Atlantic activities at your church. This includes the planning and preparation ahead of time, the collection and disbursement of any funds, the promotion and performance of any service projects, the reporting of your involvement on the Love Atlantic website, and the celebration of all that God does through your church and across the region.

### **Financial Team**

Your financial team may simply consist of your current treasurer or financial committee, or it may be a different person or group selected specifically to manage Love Atlantic finances.

If your church will be receiving donations (and subsequently disbursing financial gifts within your community), this team will be responsible for setting up and managing options for receiving those donations (e.g. special offering, etransfers, PayPal, SubSplash, Stripe, text to give, etc.).

The team will also managing any funds received, participate in the selection of recipients, and cut the required cheques. Remember that the goal is that 100 percent of the proceeds will be disbursed in acts of radical generosity in Jesus' name.

### **Project Leaders**

Love Atlantic provides a concentrated opportunity for the Church across Atlantic Canada to express the love of Jesus through meaningful acts of service. Many such projects may happen organically as individuals take advantage of opportunities to serve on their own, but it would also be helpful for your church to have specific projects that are organized and promoted for people to join in. This will require the recruitment of project leaders (staff or volunteers) to identify and plan projects. A sample list of potential projects is provided later in this guide.

Details for each project should be confirmed prior to the week of Love Atlantic, with clear

pathways for volunteers to join in. These pathways will look different from church to church. Options include:

- Online registration pages
- Sign up tables in the lobby
- Info cards handed out and collected during a service
- Facebook event pages
- Email addresses/phone numbers to contact
- Etc.

### **Video and Photography Team**

If possible, mobilize a team of videographers and photographers to capture stories of what God does during Love Atlantic. Aim to record videos of groups performing service projects, while being sure to honour those being served. This may mean asking for consent before recording anything, while also being intentional to avoid demeaning or embarrassing them in any way.

You can also record presentations of financial gifts. Again, forewarn the person receiving the gift that the presentation will be recorded. (A sample script for such a presentation is provided later in this guide.)

You can select some of these videos and photos to highlight on Celebration Sunday, whether showing them individually or compiling them into a video recap.

Note that there may be some gifts and projects that you choose not to record or publicly celebrate because of privacy concerns, for safety reasons, or due to the sensitivity of the situations. These are prime opportunities to “not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing” (Matthew 6:3, NIV).

### **Your Entire Congregation!**

Every person in your congregation has the ability to participate in some way, whether they give, serve, or pray. You may have “official” opportunities that are organized and promoted through your church, but even beyond those, encouraged your congregation to seek ways they can personally express God’s love to others throughout the week of Love Atlantic. Aim to mobilize as many people as possible to join in as we all express radical generosity in Jesus’ name!

## **FINANCIAL GIFTS**

Through this one-week initiative, hundreds of thousands of dollars will be raised and given away in Jesus' name through churches across the region. Recipients will include a broad range of schools, community organizations, parachurch ministries, and individuals with specific needs. Ultimately, each congregation will decide if and how financial gifts will be received, and will determine where the funds will be distributed.

### **Love Atlantic Offering**

Some churches will decide to receive a special "Love Atlantic Offering", whether this is collected on one specific day or amassed over several weeks. However you choose to receive this offering, it should be completed on or before October 2 in order to distribute the funds during the week of Love Atlantic.

Note that, if you choose to receive such an offering, these funds are to be processed, distributed, and receipted through your own church or organization. (For details about when and how to issue tax receipts for cash donations and gifts-in-kind, visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/operating-a-registered-charity/receiving-gifts/what-a-gift.html>.) Love Atlantic does NOT have a central fund where donations are being amassed; the intent is for you and your church to use whatever funds you receive to turn around and use them to bless your own community. We merely ask that you report the total amount received for statistical reasons, as is discussed later in this guide.

### **Budgeted Gifts**

Rather than receiving a Love Atlantic offering, some churches will opt to specify an amount from their annual budget. Again, how these funds are used will be determined by you and your organization, provided it expresses radical generosity in Jesus' name.

### **Individual Gifts**

Not every church will be able to receive a Love Atlantic offering or designate funds from the budget, but not all funds need to flow through a church bank account or be receipted for tax purposes, either. As believers across the region seek ways they can personally bless others in Jesus' name, they may be led to invest funds wholly apart from those managed by your organization. In fact, this may be your church's preferred method for financial giving during Love Atlantic! Whether giving gifts personally or spending funds as part of a service project, individuals can use these funds to demonstrate radical generosity in Jesus' name.

## Selecting Recipients

If you will be disbursing financial gifts through your church, you will need to identify who the recipients will be. How this is accomplished will greatly depend on your church's existing administrative structure, bylaws, and policies. For some churches, the staff or Love Atlantic team will have the authority to determine the recipients. For others, the financial committee or church board will carry this authority. Some may require approval from the broader church membership, and others may require consultation with an overseeing body within the governmental hierarchy.

Regardless of who makes the selections within your context, it should be done prayerfully. If possible, a mix of gifts toward community organizations, local ministries, and individual needs is recommended. If you have existing relationships with such organizations already, be sure to include them in your list.

You'll also need to determine the size of the gifts you'll be able to give. These gifts might range from a few hundred dollars each to several thousand dollars.

Of course, if you will be receiving a Love Atlantic offering, you may not be able to finalize your list of recipients or the size of the gifts until after you know the total amount received. As much as possible, though, have your tentative list prepared and approved in advance with the potential to make adjustments as needed.

Keep in mind that larger gifts distributed among fewer recipients generally makes a greater impact. It's also powerful if are able to predetermine a specific item that would be a blessing to the recipient and present that item instead.

To get you started, here's a list of potential recipients to consider:

- Community organizations
- Parachurch ministries
- Local schools
- Families and individuals going through a difficult time
- Healthcare organizations
- Hospitals
- Police stations
- Fire departments
- Humanitarian organizations
- Homeless shelters
- Food banks
- Soup kitchens
- Etc.

## **Presentations**

Once you've chosen the people and organizations you intend to bless with a financial gift (and set the amounts that will be given), you'll need to schedule a time to make the presentations during the week of Love Atlantic. These presentations may be done by you, a staff member, or a volunteer from within your congregation. In fact, if you will be making multiple presentations, it's a good idea to involve a variety of people and to have a couple people participate during each presentation.

Though you may adapt to your own situation, a typical approach would be to take along a presentation envelope (such as the Jam Paper Envelopes available from [Amazon](#)) including a cheque from your church/organization for the designated amount. If you need to collect contact information for CRA purposes (e.g. the organization's complete name, charitable number, address, and contact name), bring along a form to record those details, too.

Prior to the presentation, explain to the recipients that you will be giving them an envelope that can be opened immediately and that they will find a cheque inside. It's recommended that they not say the amount on camera, though, as this can lead to comparisons and detract from the intent of giving the glory to God. To allow for cashflow and processing, you may wish to present a "fake" cheque first, with the real cheque to be delivered later. Just give the recipient a "heads up" about this before the presentation to avoid any confusion.

Also, with permission, consider capturing the presentation on video to share with your own congregation. You can submit the footage to [loveatlantic.ca](#), too, understanding that some of the footage submitted from across the region may be used in the celebration video and made available to churches for Celebration Sunday on October 9. Not all presentations can or should be recorded, though, so use your discretion.

If you are recording the presentation, be sure to think through the wording beforehand. For example, you may want to include the name of the presenter (especially if a volunteer or part of a multi-staff church), the name of the person receiving the gift and the organization he or she represents, and how the organization serves the community. A sample script might be, [addressing the camera] "Hi, I'm [your name] and I'm standing here with [recipient's name] of [name of the organization]. This organization has been serving the community since [year] and has focused on [share some of the main functions or highlights of the organization]. [Address the recipient], as part of Love Atlantic, we'd like to present you with this gift in Jesus' name."

## **Late Donations**

If you receive an offering, it's possible—perhaps even likely—that donations will continue to come in throughout the week. You may be able to make adjustments to include these funds in

your disbursements during Love Atlantic. If not, though, consider using the funds for other benevolence initiatives at Christmastime or throughout the year.

## **SERVICE PROJECTS**

In addition to financial gifts, countless hours will be invested during Love Atlantic in serving God by serving others. Service projects can range from cleaning city streets to partnering with local organizations to helping elderly neighbours prepare their homes for winter. Again, your congregation will get to identify the needs God is calling you to meet. Some of these may be organized projects that happen corporately, while others happen privately as church members find ways to serve on their own to bless their neighbours, families, friends, and communities.

### **Organized Projects**

These are the projects planned in advance by your Love Atlantic Team, small group leaders, youth ministries, children's ministries, etc. Ideally, these will be projects for which others can be invited to sign up and serve, too. To get you thinking about the possibilities, some options include:

- Preparing baked goods and delivering to your local police station.
- Visiting a neighbourhood nursing home to visit the residents, do manicures, sing, etc.
- Volunteering to do some painting, cleaning, or construction for a community organization.
- Preparing a meal and serving it at a soup kitchen.
- Cleaning up a section of highway.
- Hosting a family fun day in the park, featuring music, face painting, balloon animals, etc.
- Conducting a food drive and delivering the contributions to your local food bank.
- Hosting a blood drive.
- Going on a prayer walk.
- Providing free breakfasts at a local school.
- Holding a free carwash.
- Taking care of landscaping or maintenance around a local mission.
- Offering free car repairs for single parents.
- Washing windows at a seniors' complex.

## Individual Projects

These are the projects that are not planned or promoted by your church, but are organized by individuals to serve on their own, with their families, or with their friends. Some of them will be planned in advance, and others will happen spontaneously as the opportunities arise.

As much as possible, we'd love to track these projects in our overall statistics, too. Encourage people to go to [loveatlantic.ca](http://loveatlantic.ca) and click on the "Report My Time" link to complete the form.

To help spark some ideas among your congregation, here are some examples of projects people can do on their own:

- Pay for the person behind you in the drive thru.
- Help a neighbour with yard work.
- Return your neighbours' trash or compost bins from the road (after the truck has been by, of course).
- Volunteer your time on a rainy day to walk customers into the grocery store using an umbrella.
- Fill an Operation Christmas Child shoebox. (Go to <https://www.samaritanspurse.ca>.)
- Prepare and deliver a meal for a family dealing with a sickness, new addition to the family, or loss of a loved one.
- Go shopping on behalf of a shut-in.
- Drop off trays of coffee and donuts for the staff at a local school.
- Deliver coffee or cold drinks to construction workers.
- Provide free babysitting for a single parent.
- Drop off a gift card for a person who regularly serves you.
- Send an unexpected note of encouragement through email. Better yet, send it in the mail!
- Deliver some baked goods to a new neighbour.
- Go for a prayer walk through your neighbourhood.
- Be creative... the possibilities are endless!

You'll hear about many of these projects and will be able to see the website submissions from those within your church. There will be other projects that you'll never hear about, though, and that's fine, too. If people are showing radical generosity by serving others in Jesus' name, that's a win, whether anyone else ever hears about it or not. Again, the glory is not to be claimed by any individuals or churches, but solely directed toward Him.

## Projects Beyond the Seven Days

As with financial gifts, it's likely that there will be projects that, for one reason or another, take place outside of the seven days of Love Atlantic. These may not be included in our statistics

after submissions are closed on the website, but you can still recognize and celebrate these within your church. Every act of loving service performed in Jesus' name is glorifying to God. After all, Love Atlantic is simply a concentrated emphasis, but expressing the love of Christ should not be confined to only one week, but a natural part of everyday life.

## **CELEBRATION SUNDAY (OCTOBER 9)**

So your church has just had an amazing week of showing radical generosity in Jesus' name to your community during Love Atlantic. You've heard inspiring stories of how God moved as your church—and churches all over Atlantic Canada—gave their time, their talent, and their treasure; as Love Atlantic wraps up, how can you celebrate all that God has done in and through your people?

This is a great question! And it's the right question, because what gets celebrated gets repeated. Celebrating what God does this year can ensure it happens again next year, the year after that, and on and on. It can even ignite a habit of expressing the love of Jesus all year long! Here are some ways you can help your people see and celebrate the impact of their radical generosity during Celebration Sunday.

### **1. Collect the information**

As your church gives and serves, do everything you can to get your people to keep track of the hours served and the dollars given. The Love Atlantic website has a convenient "Report my time" feature where you can encourage all of your people to record their own hours of service. This total will then be available for you to celebrate at the end of the week.

Remember—and remind your volunteers—that volunteer hours given in service of regular church programs and services are also given in service of your community, and should be recorded, too.

### **2. Capture the stories**

Scripture tells us that we overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. "God stories" matter in a big way, we believe the Lord will move people in very special ways as your church steps out in radical generosity. Do your very best during Love Atlantic to capture these stories so you can share them with your people and encourage each other as you celebrate! You don't need a media team or sophisticated video gear to make this happen; many of the phones we carry in our pockets every single day include amazing cameras that can be used to capture a few photos or a quick video to help tell each story. Before your people head out to make that donation, bless that server, mow that

lawn, or serve at that food bank, remind them that they should snap a few pics or grab a quick video of love in action. This is not to make much of ourselves, but all to make much of the transforming love of Jesus through His people.

Again, the Love Atlantic website has a place to upload these photos and videos as your volunteers report their time. As part of your Celebration Sunday, you may want to highlight a couple of these stories. How you do this is really up to you, but the point is to be of the mindset that, within the limits of tact and sensitivity to the people involved, we want to capture as many moments as possible so we can celebrate them together as we gather.

Also, keep in mind that our Love Atlantic media team will be compiling a 5-minute highlight video of all that God did across our region for you to use in your service as you celebrate. This will contain region-wide statistics as well as photo and video clips from participating churches, so if you want your church represented in this video, we highly encourage you to upload some pics and video to the website.

### **3. Celebrate Jesus**

This is what it's all about. This year, the final Sunday of Love Atlantic falls on Thanksgiving Weekend. What better way to create a spirit of thanksgiving in our people than to celebrate the love of God through Christ Jesus, poured out upon the communities He's called us to serve and bless! You will be armed with whatever local stories and highlights you are able to collect and want to share, plus the 5-minute highlight video provided by our Love Atlantic team. Use these to celebrate! Jesus is amazing, and His love changes everything.

Celebrate that as you worship, celebrate that as you pray, celebrate that as you preach and testify. How you do this is completely up to you, but we encourage you to do it!

Direct the glory toward Him and give Him thanks for all He has done. Praise Him for the lives that have been impacted, and pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to work in the lives of those who have been blessed during Love Atlantic.

## **TIMELINE**

The following is a recommended timeline to help you best prepare and participate in Love Atlantic. If some of the dates have already past, that's fine; simply do what you can with the time remaining. Even if you're not able to prepare everything perfectly, we're excited that you'll be participating in Love Atlantic and we're looking forward to seeing what God does through you.

## **August**

Register your church at [loveatlantic.ca](http://loveatlantic.ca) and begin to build your team. Start to plan some of your organized projects and encourage ministry leaders to select projects for their own ministries and/or volunteers.

## **September**

Announce the event early in the month, show the promo video (available through your account on [loveatlantic.ca](http://loveatlantic.ca)) and begin to build excitement.

Prompt any small groups and Bible study groups to plan projects they can do on their own.

Finalize the details for your organized events.

Also, if you'd like to get a head start on receiving donations and collecting sign up for projects, you could start these during the last couple weeks of September. (Many churches will be waiting to do these on October 2 to kick off Love Atlantic.)

## **October 2**

Cast the vision, receive your Love Atlantic Offering (if applicable), and collect sign ups for the projects happening throughout the week.

For the special offering, it's recommended that you conduct this toward the end of the service and offer a variety of ways for people to give. These could include passing an offering plate, inviting people to come forward to deliver their gifts to a designated location, using a text-to-give option, giving through your website, setting up a terminal for donations via debit or credit, etc.

You can also choose from a variety of ways to have people sign up for projects. If possible, include a sign-up option on your website. You could also have a pen-and-paper option available Sunday morning, provide an email or phone number for people to contact, have a computer station set up to receive names and contact info on a spreadsheet, conduct personal invitations, etc. Choose whatever method(s) will work best in your setting and mobilize as many people as possible.

## **October 2-8**

Distribute financial gifts, conduct Love Atlantic projects, and seek to express radical generosity in Jesus' name.

## **October 6**

Go to [loveatlantic.ca](http://loveatlantic.ca) to report the total amount received through your offerings (or given from your budget), and also report the total number of volunteer hours from your official projects. This is a vital step to allow the numbers to be compiled and communicated to all the participating churches in time for Celebration Sunday. Estimate the hours as best you can, and include your projections for projects happening toward the end of the week.

## **October 9**

Celebration Sunday! Give thanks to God for all He has done.

## **THE LOVE ATLANTIC WEBSITE**

The official [loveatlantic.ca](http://loveatlantic.ca) website is the hub for Love Atlantic. On the site, you'll find details about the event, promotional tools, training videos, and more. It's also the place where you will share details about how you've expressed radical generosity in Jesus' name during Love Atlantic.

### **Registering Your Church**

Go to [loveatlantic.ca](http://loveatlantic.ca) and click on "Sign Up" in the menu bar. You'll be taken to a page where you will find two forms: the first to register your own name, and the second to register your church. Then, during the week of Love Atlantic, you'll be able to track all the gifts and projects reported by people who are part of your congregation.

### **Registering Team Leaders**

If you would like to add additional administrators to your church profile, and if your church has already been registered, the additional administrators would only need to complete the top form on the registration page. Simply include the name of the church in the "Join a Church" field.

### **Promotional Tools**

Once registered, you can login and proceed to the Resources page where you will find downloadable graphics and videos that you can use to promote Love Atlantic within your congregation.

## **Training Videos**

Also on the Resources page, you'll find a growing library of training videos, providing helpful tips and guidance as you prepare and participate in Love Atlantic.

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Social Media**

Your social media channels are a great place to use many of the promotional tools provided on the loveatlantic.ca website. More than that, though, your social channels can be used to celebrate what God is doing within your own community. Throughout the week, you can gather stories from within your congregation, then post comments, quotes, verses, photos, and videos online to highlight what God is doing. As you do, use the hashtag #loveatlantic. (Encourage your congregation to use this hashtag as they post, too.)

Remember, however, that the intent is to represent Jesus and direct the glory toward Him. Whenever possible, avoid using the names of individuals or allowing church members to promote their own business interests in the posts.

Also, use some discretion. You will likely hear about some things that should be kept private, not broadcast over social media. Respect confidentiality, and show honour toward those going through difficult situations.

### **Prayer Emphasis**

Love Atlantic is about more than just performing good deeds or "paying it forward". It's about radical generosity in Jesus' name. Be praying for the people who will be blessed and impacted through the gifts and projects you perform.

Again, a prayer emphasis can take different forms. Teams can gather to pray before setting out to perform a project. A special night of prayer could be organized before or during Love Atlantic. Or daily prayer times could be hosted over social media. However you choose to incorporate prayer within your congregation, invite the Holy Spirit to work and move, to the glory of God.

### **Safety**

A word of caution. As you plan projects and encourage your congregation to find ways to serve, avoid needlessly placing people in dangerous or compromising positions. Take

precautions, avoid unnecessary risks, and refrain from placing your staff or volunteers in positions where they could be accused of improper behaviour.

## **WHAT WE BELIEVE**

Love Atlantic includes believers representing a range of branches of the Christian Church. We may have differences in the details of our doctrines, but we all hold to the beliefs of orthodox Christianity as found in the Apostles' Creed. We agree together with the mission of Love Atlantic to show radical generosity in Jesus' name.

### **The Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day He rose again;  
He ascended into heaven,  
He is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.  
Amen.