

## FOCUS ON RETAIL



### Retail Strategies for the Year's Busiest Shopping Days

How do you plan to take advantage of some of the busiest shopping days of the year—Black Friday and Small Business Saturday?

CRA spoke with a few independent Christian stores about their after-Thanksgiving plans and most said they will be focusing on Small Business Saturday (SBS) this year.

"We focus on Small Biz Saturday as a way to thank our customers for shopping small," said Lori Bowdoin of Blessings, A Christian Store, in Prattville, AL. "We know we can't compete with the big box stores for Black Friday, so we put most of our efforts on Saturday."



Whether you take advantage of Black Friday or Small Business Saturday this year, here are some key components to get holiday shoppers into your store.

#### Give a Free Gift

Every year at the Atlanta Gift Mart in January, Lori Bowdoin looks for a Christmas-themed tote, usually from Glory Haus, that's \$1.99 or less to use as a giveaway for the Saturday after Thanksgiving. "The customers LOVE getting their tote each year," Lori said. "And as often as not, they leave that day with the tote full of gifts they've purchased."

This year, Mike Huffstutler of Believer's Christian Gifts in Rio Rancho, NM, looked for his store giveaway at the Dallas Gift Mart in June. Starting Small Business Saturday through December 21, customers will receive an entry to win a plush bear for every \$75 they spend. Mike will also be giving away 10 Bibles that were purchased throughout the year or donated by vendors.

At New Covenant Christian Bookstore in Shelbyville, TN, Andrea Lovvorn said customers can win door prizes and receive a free ornament or seasonal gift with a specific dollar purchase during their two-day sale after Thanksgiving.

#### Offer Special Deals

In addition to catalog promotions, Lori looks for vendor deals throughout the year, typically on books, that she can offer at \$10 or under for this weekend. Several of her vendors know to keep her in mind when those types of deals are available. According to Lori, other vendors offer doorbuster deals as Christmas approaches.

Some other promotions Lori has done on SBS are mystery bags from \$1-\$5 as a way to move old inventory, discounts on regular priced products for customers who bring in an item for the food pantry, doorbuster prizes using overstock product and book signings.

Mike Huffstutler said he also concentrates on SBS with a storewide sale, typically 15% off everything (with some exclusions). This weekend kicks off their free giveaway event, which incorporates product they have gathered through the year and specials from vendors. "We literally plan for 'Shop Small' and Christmas all year long" Mike said.

At Willamette Valley Christian Supply in Albany, OR, Krista and Kevin Ferguson have early bird hours on Black Friday, with great deals every hour until noon. This is on top of sales already happening related to their catalogs.

#### Share Food Samples

"As far as refreshments, we've learned over the years to keep it simple," Lori said. Consider cookies, cocoa or cider. At Blessings, Lori offers samples of the cider mix and the food items they sell in the store. "Something easy to enjoy while shopping is best, like cookies, wrapped individually," she shared. One year, one of her employees, who caters on the side, prepared some things that the shoppers loved, plus she supported another local business. With that, Lori also mentioned that this would be a great time to partner with a local bakery.

#### Partner with Other Businesses

For SBS, Craig Hall from Arrowhead Parable Christian Store in Johnson City, NY, invites craft vendors and their store for an annual "Makers' Market," where vendors can set up and share their creation in the store's event room, complete with free coffee and snacks. The local vendors tell their friends, which brings more shoppers into the store. And shoppers are encouraged to walk through the store to get to the market. "Last year we had 10 craft vendors who joined us, and it was a big boost to store sales as well," Craig said. "Our little advertisement is 'Support local entrepreneurs at our second annual Small Business Makers' Market! Find a unique selection of handmade gifts. Follow along on Facebook for more details!"

At New Covenant, Andrea participates in her community's small business event. Holiday shoppers receive a punch card that lists all participating businesses, and they get a stamp for every store they make a purchase in. For every stamp, they receive an entry into a drawing for a shopping spree up to \$500 at the store of their choice. "It really entices folks to get out and visit the stores on SBS," Andrea said.

#### Get the Word Out

Whatever you have planned for Black Friday or SBS, make sure your customers know about it, using as many means as possible. Lori said she markets her event via bag stuffers, emails, Facebook posts/stories/ads/event and Instagram. And, a few days before the Saturday sale, Lori calls their VIP customers to remind them of the sale and let them know they will reserve a tote for them whether they are able to come in or not. Since it's right after Thanksgiving, many customers bring their out-of-town guests, making it a fun family day. Lori added, "I'm always shocked at the large percentage that do come, since we are in Alabama—and that's the day of the Auburn/Alabama game!"

## FOCUS ON THE INDUSTRY



### DaySpring and Pray.com Announce 2023 Partnership



DaySpring, the world's largest Christian-message product provider, and Pray.com, the world's number one app for daily prayer and faith-based content, announce a new publishing partnership beginning in 2023 for three book projects.

Based on the most popular downloads within the Pray.com app, these books will feature the "best of" content which has now reached over 12-million users worldwide. Each is a collection of stories, devotions, Bible verses, and practical tools for everyday Christian living.

The first book will be released in May and is called *Sleep Psalms: Nightly Moments of Mindfulness and Rest*. This partnership will be an opportunity for Pray.com users to experience the content they love in a fresh new way while introducing DaySpring's core audience to the Pray.com brand and message.

"It is my pleasure to announce our partnership with Pray.com," said DaySpring President James Barnett. "We are grateful to be a part of a project that will inspire and cultivate the walk of Christians around the world."

"Pray.com is expanding its original content offering into the written format. With tens of millions of streaming audio consumers, we are going to help even more people make prayer a priority through print," Pray.com founder and CEO Steve Gatena said. "Pray.com appreciates DaySpring's vision for this partnership and their support of our mental health and wellness initiatives, and we look forward to serving people around the world together."

#### About DaySpring:

DaySpring®, the world's largest Christian-message product provider, was founded in 1971 with a single Christmas card. Today DaySpring offers more than 6,000 products—from greeting cards to home décor, specialty gifts to devotional books. In 1999, DaySpring was acquired by Hallmark Cards, Inc. DaySpring products are sold in Christian retail outlets, mass retail stores, card and gift shops and other outlets in the United States and 60 foreign countries. DaySpring is based in Siloam Springs, Ark., and employs a staff of more than 220 people. Visit [www.dayspring.com](http://www.dayspring.com) for more information about the company, to find a local retailer, and to send a free e-card.

#### About Pray.com:

Pray.com helps people make prayer a priority in their life. Pray.com is the world's #1 app for daily prayer and faith-based media content. The Pray.com app helps people improve their mental and spiritual health with daily prayers, inspirational sermons, and bedtime Bible stories. Launched in 2017 by Steve Gatena, Michael Lynn, Ryan Beck, and Matthew Potter, Pray.com is a social impact company driven by a mission to grow faith, cultivate community and leave a legacy of helping others. See more at [www.alarryross.com/pray-com](http://www.alarryross.com/pray-com).

## FOCUS ON CPE



### Make Your List and Check It Twice

As you head into the Christmas season, take note of what sold the best, what did not sell, what product you should have had in your store and how much time it took to set up your Christmas displays.

With Christmas fresh on your mind, you'll be better prepared for the Christmas 2023 shopping season when you order at the CPE Winter show in February. Ordering for Christmas at the beginning of the year not only helps you get ahead of the game but also guarantees you'll have the product you want, when you want it. And when you order for Christmas at CPE, you won't pay for it until everything ships.

Be sure to visit [www.cpeshow.com](http://www.cpeshow.com) for daily updates, the list of exhibitors and to register for CPE Winter 2023 in Columbus, GA, February 5-7. Registration is FREE for all retailers.



[Register Here](#)

## FOCUS ON PRODUCT

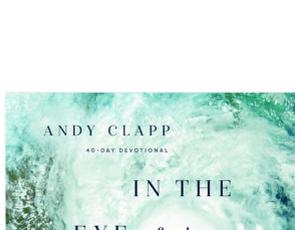


### In the Eye of the Storm

by Andy Clapp (End Game Press)

In this unique devotional, award-winning author and pastor Andy Clapp shares a lifeline with readers by relating truths from Scripture to lessons learned from the physical and figurative storms of life that come in all shapes and sizes. Each of the 40 devotions are encouraging and easy to read, yet powerful when combined with the vivid photography at the beginning and the application questions at the end of each vignette. Weather enthusiasts and those weathering a personal crisis will find hope and help sprinkled throughout this fascinating book.

**How this book helps readers:** *In the Eye of the Storm* reminds readers that the Lord is with them in the midst of life's storms.



**To order now, contact your End Game Press rep by calling 901-590-6584**