

The Complete Guide to Utilizing Apex Ministries
Or
Everything You Wanted to Know About Working with Brad & Gene But
Were Afraid to Ask
(and probably for very good reasons)

We would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to share our ministry with your community. The opportunities we have been given to share this ministry still never cease to amaze us. After working for a number of years in this context we have found that many people who are running the events we are a part of have many of the same questions. Hopefully this document will answer all the questions you have. Each section has highlight points listed first followed by a detailed explanation. We know there is a lot of information here, but it is important. Please read it all! The information below will be helpful to ensure that we are able to serve your community the best way we possibly can. As you explore this document, please keep in mind that we are very flexible in our abilities to work in different situations, but at the same time, we know what makes our ministry most effective. We can work however you need us to, we are here to serve, but we want you to get the most out of our ministry in the time we are there with you. If you have any more question please don't hesitate to call 888/522-APeX (2739) or e-mail us at apex@apexministries.com.

This letter is broken into these sections... **Time Issues** (Scheduling), effectively using our **Promotional Material**, information concerning **Lodging and Meals**, our technical **Sound** requirements, our needs in regards to the selling of **Merchandise**, what to do about **Airports and Travel Arrangements**, and identifying our **Primary Contact**.

Time Issues – Scheduling (*This is very important!*):

- Talk to us about how you envision utilizing us. Consult us on scheduling our speaking time, as well as theme of our presentation(s) before setting it in stone.
- Articulate very clearly your expectations of us (when we are to begin and end)
- If times change, inform us as soon as possible so that we can make the appropriate changes. (Don't assume we know what you are thinking.)
- We are *very* flexible and are at your event to serve your people. If things change, don't feel bad, just let us know what we need to do.

We understand that we have a very unique ministry style, because of this it is very important that we communicate about how you are going to use us over the course of your event. Most of the stories we tell are at least 20 min. With this being the case it is hard for us to get much accomplished in 30 minutes. If we are only going to be doing one keynote it is best that we have 1 hour and 15 min to work with. If we are doing multiple keynotes it is best that we are in chunks of at least 45 min (an hour would be even better). These are not hard and fast rules, but we want to be in a situation where we can use our giftedness to serve your community best. By talking through the schedule well in advanced we will be able to serve your community to the best of our ability. This can also help us ensure that the appropriate workshops and workshop descriptions, or keynote descriptions will be provided.

We also understand that when it comes to ministry, schedules are tenuous at best. To be honest we don't think we have ever started a parish family night on time. There truly is "youth ministry time". With that being said it is very important that we understand your expectations of

us. For example let's say that we are scheduled for a keynote of 1 hour and 15 minutes beginning at 11:30am. For one reason or another the day is behind schedule. It is very important that we communicate with each other to know what we are expected to do. Do you want us to end at the time we were scheduled to end at (12:45 in our example) or do you want us to do the agreed upon hour and fifteen minutes?

Because of the nature of our ministry, the sooner we know what is expected of us the better off we are. There have been instances in which we have been on stage in the middle of a story and the event sponsor is giving us a signal that we only have five minutes left. It is very difficult to wrap up a 25-minute story in 5 minutes and have it be effective. This is in no way to say that we are not flexible. We are very flexible. We can very quickly re-plan how we are going to approach a presentation. We understand that there are going to be times that we need to change what needs to happen. We know that many times you can't change the time of a meal, or that you have lots of speakers coming in to do workshops and they must start on time. It is just important that we make sure that we communicate with each other. The sooner that we have that information the more likely you are going to create the best experience for your community.

Promotional Material (and our name):

- Promotional tools of every sort can be found at APeXMinistries.com by clicking on the "Promo Kit" link.
- In all promotional material refer to us as APeX or APeX Ministries
- Describe our ministry style as Christian Vaudeville *"This includes death defying juggling, humor, characterizations (skits), story-telling, audience participation, and personal testimony,"*
- Use appropriate clip art and descriptions.

You should be able to find everything you need for promotion on our web page at APeXMinistries.com. Simply click on the "Promo Kit" link. Here you will find biographies, pictures from both print and the web, and a few sample descriptions of themes and workshops. If we are doing an event at a parish and you need signs and flyers, these are also available on our website. In promoting our ministry, there are few things that we have found helpful. If you are going to use our name in promotional tools please refer to us as APeX or APeX Ministries. In describing our style of ministry please use the term Christian Vaudeville. If definition is also needed for that term, *"This includes death defying juggling, humor, characterizations (skits), story-telling, audience participation, and personal testimony,"* works very well. We are not saying this because we are picky prema-donas. We have found that if someone has no experience with our ministry and they are told they are going to see jugglers they get the wrong impression. When most folks hear juggling, they think clowns which leads them (wrongly) to thinking they are going to a kiddy show. By using the term and description of Christian Vaudeville the audience will be more open minded to what they are about to experience.

Clip Art can really add to a flyer or announcement, but not all juggling clip art is appropriate for an APeX event. Some pictures misrepresent what kind of show should be expected. We are not clowns or mimes. Suggested clip art is currently being compiled. Please contact us for suggestions.

Lodging and Meals:

In our letter of agreement it reads:

- *“Please provide one (1) No Smoking Hotel room*
- *with two beds for __ () night(s) and*
- *all meals for the length of the stay.”*

It is not a requirement that we stay in a Hotel. Many times it is much more convenient and economical to place us with families. To be honest we enjoy staying with families quite a bit. The only thing that we require if we are staying with a family is that we are placed in a home in which we each have a bed. We are also comfortable being placed in two different homes.

When it comes to food we are very flexible. We are yet to find a type of food we don't like (though Gene does not like to eat cat dander). We are also big fans of getting to try the local fare, or the little hole in the wall that everyone loves. If you are looking for a good excuse to go to one of your favorite restaurants, we are that excuse. If at all possible we would appreciate it if we could avoid fast food meals.

Sound:

In regard to sound, our letter of agreement reads:

- *“A quality two-way or three-way speaker system.*
- *A mixing board.*
- *Two quality vocal cordless clip on lavalier microphones or cordless head-set microphones*
- *and one handheld microphone with microphone stand.*
- *One CD player and one cassette tape player for music tracks.*
- *A sound engineer to set up, direct sound check, and call the show.”*

We understand that most youth ministers are not sound technicians and this may seem like a lot. It is not. If you are doing a youth rally, more than likely you are renting sound equipment and most of this will be included. We have crafted our presentation style to use as little as possible, but there are few things which make the experience better for everyone involved. **It is very important that we have two-quality wireless clip on lavalier microphones or cordless head-set microphones.** As you are aware we use a lot of juggling in our presentation and it is difficult to juggle and hold a microphone (*we may be talented, but we are not that talented... not yet, anyway*). We understand that there are situations where these wireless clip-on mics are simply not available. We have many times in the past worked with microphones that are in mic stands. We are very willing to work like that (we are at your event as servants), but know that we are going to have to modify some of our presentation in order to do so. Finally, if you have any questions at all about sound, please ask. Lots of problems with sound can be solved days before the event starts with just a few questions. Please don't hesitate to call. 888/522-APeX

Merchandise:

In our letter of agreement it reads:

- *“Please provide a table and two volunteers to sell merchandise during the event.*
- *The sponsor and the sponsoring organization agrees to let APeX sell merchandise royalty free.”*

We ask that you also please:

- Mention in promotional material ahead of time that merchandise from the artists will be for sale.
- It is best if the table is set up near where we are presenting, where the participants are going to be eating meals, and by the door as everyone is leaving the room or event.
- Our ability to do ministry is to some degree based on the sales of merchandise. It provides a major source of our income (helping us to keep our cost to the event sponsors down)

We find ourselves trying to balance many things in our lives (like most folks who do ministry). Full time ministry is much more a life style than it is a job. For us, we are trying to balance the ministry we are called to as APeX, the vocation we are called to as a married father and single person, and feeding ourselves. It even becomes even complicated by the fact we spend some much time on the road. In order to keep the cost of our ministry down and available to as many people as possible (and still feed ourselves) we have become very dependent on merchandise sales. Very early on in our ministry we decided that the only types of merchandise that we would sell would be an extenuation of the ministry. To date we sell t-shirts, which have been designed as an evangelization tool, and family buttons, sold to balance our personal family lives with ministry. There are a number of thing you can do to help us out in this regard (thus insuring we will be able to continue this ministry).

First, it is very helpful to have someone who will sell our merchandise for us. If we are selling t-shirts we don't have time to hang out with your youth and adults. Generally, merchandise is a job that can be done by two people. In the past we have had both adults and mature youth fill the role. If you trust them then we trust them.

Second, there are times when the event is held at a location in which the venue requires that they get a cut of all merchandise sales (generally 10-15%). It is very important that if this is the case we know this ahead of time so we can talk about how to best deal with it.

Third, it is very helpful if in the promotional material you send out to the participants that you mention there will be an opportunity for them to buy souvenirs of the day. We have lots of folks tell us they would have brought money if they had known.

Fourth, it is important that there are a number opportunities for folks to buy stuff. We know from experience that you can tell people from stage that this is the only time you can buy something and it just won't sink in. There have been numbers of events in which, on the way out the door, people have asked if the merchandise was still for sale. This is partially because they don't listen, but also partially because they don't want to carry anything around all day. We have found that we sell the most merchandise right after we finish a keynote, during meals, and as people are heading home. Again, you may be thinking, "Hey I brought you in to minister to my community, if you sell anything that is just gravy." We can understand that, but it is important that we have priced our ministry based on the fact that we will be able to sell merchandise.

Airports and Travel Arrangements:

- We will book air travel, and send an invoice.
- Please meet us near the exit from security into the baggage claim area and main terminal, or at or near the appropriate baggage claim. If no one has arrived we will collect our luggage and wait there.
- Please provide us with a number to call during the day if we are having flight troubles or if we have a hard time finding our ride at the airport
- We will have two large bags plus our personal luggage. Make sure the car picking us up is large enough to accommodate.

Most of the time when we go to an event we fly. We will make our own travel arrangements based on your suggestions and schedule of the event. You will then be sent an invoice for the travel costs. At this point in our ministry, we live in different parts of the country and we will be arriving on two different flights. We do everything we can to ensure that we arrive as close to the same time as possible to make it as easy on you as we can. Generally what happens when we get to our destination, since we can no longer be met at the gate, we proceed directly to baggage claim to get our bags. We will wait there until someone finds us. When we travel we have a fair amount of luggage. We will have a prop bag (a large suit case), a bag full of t-shirts (the size of a hockey bag) and our regular luggage. You might not want to send someone to pick us up in a Chevet (Gene does not like being tied to the tops of cars anymore). You also might want to remind the person who is picking us up to call the airlines before heading to the airport to pick us up. Planes are late from time to time (believe us we know). We wouldn't want someone waiting at the airport for three hours because of a canceled flight when they could be in the comfort of their own home.

Who should we direct our questions to?

- Let us know who our primary contact is so we know who to direct our questions to first.

Each event has a little different rhythm and is run in a different way. In some dioceses the Director of Youth Ministry is in charge and in other dioceses there is a conference coordinator and the director has a limited role in running the event. At larger conferences whoever is in charge has so many details they need to take care of the last thing they have time for is to answer lots of questions from us. It is important that when we arrive we know who to direct our question to about the event. The last thing we want to do is take someone away from responsibilities they have at the event when there is someone else we could ask.