What do I need to know to hold a religious activity in the street?

I am a religious organisation...
Can I conduct activities in the street?

The City Council, as a government organisation committed to defending human rights, aims to guarantee that religious and non-religious freedoms may be exercised. All acts of conscience (religious or otherwise) have the same rights and opportunities and may coexist in equality and respect. This is why the Government Measure on guaranteeing equal treatment of religious organisations holding occasional activities in public places has been published, along with a protocol created to facilitate its use.
What activities
am I allowed
to carry out?

The government measure establishes the use of the city’s streets and squares by religious communities in the following cases:

- Open air worship, normally to bring together an exceptional number of people from different territories.
- Festivities that must follow a certain route along the city’s streets.
- Use of the city’s streets and squares to set up temporary informative installations.

Other activities involving use of streets and squares follow the same procedures and criteria as for non-religious organisations.

The authority responsible for permit authorisation is Barcelona City Council.

What application procedure should I follow?

Activities in the street (including informative stands) require a permit whenever they involve occupation of public areas.

Your application must follow the steps below:

1. Print two completed copies of the licence application form for holding an activity in a public area, which can be found here.
2. Remember to attach the requisite documents.
3. Submit the application through a public office (citizen help and advice offices or others) and keep a stamped copy.
4. Send a copy to the Religious Affairs Office (oar@bcn.cat) for monitoring purposes.
Before submitting a request, what should I take into consideration?

- You must submit your request as far in advance as possible. We recommend that you send your application two months before your chosen activity date.

- For annual activities, it is advisable to let us know at the beginning of the year and agree the date, location and details with the Religious Affairs Office and the corresponding District.

- To be able to hold an activity in the street, the organisation must have public liability insurance.

- The security measures established in the protocols for similar activities must be guaranteed.

- Activities that threaten human rights, gender equality or acceptance of democratic values will not be authorised.

- Activities conducted by religious organisations in exercise of the right to convene (religious meetings or ceremonies open to shared participation by citizens) will not be subject to taxes.

- Worship activities that require the private use of a public area (i.e. street activities not open to passers-by) will be subject to taxes, except for non-profit associations or organisations, which may be exempt (Article 3 of Tax By-law 3.10.).
And when I have received a reply?

If the reply to your request is positive:

• Notify the Religious Affairs Office (oar@bcn.cat).

• Submit any remaining documentation requested and payment of the corresponding taxes, where applicable.

• On the day of the activity, remember to bring a print-out of your request and the reply you received.

• The people in charge who are named in the application must be present throughout the whole activity.

If the reply to your request is negative:

• If the reply to your request is negative, the City Council must explain why.

• Inform the Religious Affairs Office of the negative response in order to assess with the District if the request may be adjusted in order to change the decision (e.g. by changing the date, location or itinerary, or altering the activity’s duration or conditions).

You can find the complete text of the Government measure on guaranteeing equal treatment of religious organisations holding occasional activities in public places at this link.

More information at: barcelonacat/oficina-afers-religiosos