What do I need to know to conduct a religious activity in a public facility?

I am a religious organisation...
Can I use a public facility to carry out my activities?

Various municipal facilities in Barcelona have places where the city’s religious and non-religious organisations can carry out activities.

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 in terms of holding occasional activities in public places has been published, along with a protocol created to facilitate its use.
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What activities can I hold in a facility?

- Occasional or special activities may be held in a public facility. As these facilities are shared by all the city’s organisations and residents, we are unable to accept regular or continued use of a public facility.

- The booking request must be compatible with regular activities in the facility. If the venue is occupied, a change of date or place must be assessed. You should therefore plan ahead and give as much notice as possible.

- Activities may be of a religious, cultural, training or teaching nature, among others, but each facility has its own conditions and regulations of use (with regard to capacity, schedules, prices, types of activities allowed in each place, etc.), which must be respected.
Okay. I would like to use a facility for an occasional activity. How do I do that?

A. If you already know which facility you would like to use:

Request a venue booking form from the facility or download one from its website.

Fill in the form, indicating the date and time of the activity you would like to carry out, a brief explanation of the activity, the number of attendees expected and what materials or infrastructures you will need (microphones, seats, etc.).

Send the completed form to the facility and send a copy to the Religious Affairs Office (oar@bcn.cat) for monitoring purposes.

B. If you do not know which facility you can use for the activity:

Contact the Religious Affairs Office, explaining the type of activity you would like to carry out, the date, the time and your preferred area, the estimated number of attendees and your particular needs.

The Religious Affairs Office will assess the available centres that have the characteristics you are looking for.

Decide which facility you would like to use and follow the steps in section A.
Before submitting a facility application, 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. That way, the place is more likely to be free or, if it is not, you will have time to look for an alternative.

• To be able to use facilities, the organisation must have public liability insurance.

• You must pay to hire a venue within a municipal facility. Venue hiring prices are public and periodically updated. *Find out if there are any discounts or free places for neighbourhood organisations or other reasons.*

• If you do not know exactly on which day the activity will take place, you can *pre-book the venue for more than one day.* If you do so, you will need to pay a deposit for each day you pre-book, but the full hiring fee will only be paid for the day the activity takes place. You must inform the facility as soon as possible when the final date is confirmed.

*Bear in mind that you can also apply for a subsidy to carry out your activity, provided you meet the criteria established in the subsidy’s terms and conditions.*
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According to the type of activity:

- Each facility has its own regulations of use, which you must comply with.

- You may use the facility's own infrastructure (microphones, seats, tables, projector, etc.) under the conditions laid down in the rules of use for each specific location. If you need anything else, you will have to organise this yourself, in coordination with the facility.

- If a large number of people are going to take part, the facility may request the presence of private security personnel to control capacity. This will guarantee the safety of all those who take part in the activity.

- You will only be allowed to eat in the facility if the consumption of food is ritual in nature or forms part of a religious ceremony.

- If this is the case, you will need to pay any additional cleaning fees arising from people eating in the facility. You will also need to bring any documentation that may be requested, in order to guarantee the safety of the food to be consumed.

- You may not cook in the facility under any circumstances.
And when I have received a reply from the facility?

If the reply to your request is positive:

• Notify the Religious Affairs Office (oar@bcn.cat).
• Coordinate with the facility’s contact person to finalise specific aspects relating to the activity (room opening and preparation, payment...).

If the reply to your request is negative:

• If the reply to your request is negative, the facility must explain why.
• Assess whether it is possible to alter your request in order to obtain a positive response (e.g. by changing the activity's date or conditions).
• Inform the Religious Affairs Office about the negative response so that you can assess alternative locations together.

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: barcelona.cat/oficina-afers-religiosos