

5 Religious Guinness World Records Smashed in 2014

Some churches conduct pageants. Some temples host dinners. And others spend weeks or months meticulously planning how to break a Guinness World Record.

Sure, 2014 was the year that records were beaten for “Fastest marathon wearing chain mail (upper body)” and “Most sticky notes on the body in five minutes.” But several faith-based Guinness World Records were set over the course of the year as well. Here are five that were smashed in 2014:

1. Most living figures in a Nativity scene

More than 1,000 angels, shepherds and worshippers—along with the requisite camel, donkey, sheep and tiny baby Jesus—joined together in Provo, Utah, to set a record for the most living figures in a Nativity scene. The event’s 1,039 participants breaks the previous record of 898, set in the United Kingdom in 2013.

Want to see it in action? The “Angels We Have Heard on High” #ShareTheGift video was created during the event, with music provided by the Piano Guys, Peter Hollens, David Archuleta and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Check out this video below.

2. Largest gospel choir

Not one, but two Guinness World Records were set when the Iglesia ni Cristo (Church of Christ) hosted its centennial celebration on July 27, 2014, in the Philippines: largest gospel choir and largest mixed-use indoor theater. It took 4,745 participants singing hymns together in tidy, white sections in a 55,000-seat stadium to break the record once set in February 2014 in New Jersey by the current and former athletes who make up the NFL Players Choir.

3. Most people reading aloud simultaneously (single location)

You would need to gather nearly 47,000 to break the record for most people reading aloud simultaneously (single location), set at the Vadakkunnathan Temple in Thrissur, India, in February this year and organized by the Art of the Living Foundation. Participants recited, in unison, a Hindu devotional poem called “Jnanappana” by the famous Lord Krishna devotee Poonthanam.

4. Largest Day of the Dead offering

Traditional celebrations for Mexico’s Day of the Dead holiday involve constructing altars at gravesides to honor loved ones who have died. This October, an altar unveiled at the Fiesta Cala de Veras in Mexico City measured 558 meters square, creating the first Guinness World Record for largest Day of the Dead offering.

5. Largest potluck party

Aunt Helen’s annual covered-dish dinner has nothing on Chandler Christian Church’s record-setting potluck party, held on April 6, 2014. Approximately 1,275 people attended the event at the Arizona church, breaking the previous record of 860.