

CHAPTER 5

SURVEYS, FORMS, AND AUDITS

How Welcoming Is Your Church?

All of our churches intend to be welcoming to visitors, but not all succeed. Talk about the following questions with leaders in your church, and consider discussing them in Sunday school classes.

1. How easy is your church to find? Are there clear directions in the yellow pages? On church brochures? Signs on the street?
2. What kind of greeting or interaction do people have in the parking lot and on their way into the church?
3. What kind of interactions do people have with official greeters and ushers? Are greeters and ushers prepared to share information on child care, Sunday school classes, and special services offered (like large print bulletins)?
4. What kind of interactions do people have with those they meet in the hallways, in the classroom, in the fellowship area, and in the sanctuary?
5. Do visitors feel an immediate acceptance or a conditional acceptance from those they encounter? Can a single parent make it through Sunday morning without being asked where his or her spouse is?
6. What message do people receive from the physical facilities, including the restrooms?
7. Do the persons in charge of child care convey security and warmth both to the children and their parents?
8. How much are people helped to feel at ease in classes?
9. How easy is it for a stranger to follow the order of worship?
10. Do announcements and other sharing during worship cause the stranger to feel included or excluded?
11. What does the worship service convey to persons who did not grow up in a church?
12. How are people greeted at the end of the church service or Sunday school class? Are there people who come across as potential friends to new people? Are lunch or brunch invitations frequently extended to visitors?

Also see the Hospitality Audit in the New Life Ministries Report, "Hospitality and Public Relations."

A Hospitality Audit

also available as a Microsoft Word document

Have a task force do a complete hospitality audit of your church, looking at it from the perspective of a person driving by on the street or visiting for the first time. Consider matters such as these:

Is your church easy to find? Do you need new signs on major roads near your church?

Is your church's name easy to read from the road?

Is it easy to tell which entrance to use for the church office? For the worship center? For Sunday school and evening programs?

Does the exterior and overall appearance of your church look well maintained and attractive?

Does the landscaping need attention?

Are there a few parking spots close to the building which are reserved for the disabled? For guests?

Are the sidewalks, the entrance, and the interior spaces of the church easy to navigate for persons in wheelchairs or with other mobility concerns?

Are the restrooms all clean? Without rust or mildew? Do you have lotion and tissues available?

Are all rooms in the church clearly marked? Are there clear directional signs to classrooms?

Are there stacks of old bulletins, old magazines, or out-of-date church brochures which should be discarded?

Are there current, attractive handouts or brochures to give information about your church which would be helpful to guests?

Are the bulletin boards current? Guests are in fact more likely than regular members to read the bulletin boards!

Are there any rooms which need to be cleaned? Painted? Do some rooms look too institutional? Do you have old linoleum or tile that should be replaced with carpet?

Do you have adequate lighting in hallways, classrooms, and the worship center?

___ Are the rooms for infants and toddlers both attractive and clean? Do you have older bedding and toys which should be replaced?

___ Are extra copies of curriculum and Bibles in the classrooms? Are teachers prepared and trained to welcome guests?

___ Are the instructions in your bulletin and worship service clear to guests? Remember that you could have guests who have not been to any church before coming to yours.

___ Are large print bulletins available? Is hearing amplification available?

___ Do you have mints available for persons who experience coughing or a dry throat during the service?

___ Do the announcements and/or joys and concerns time contain "insider" references which would make a guest feel excluded? Do people identify themselves before sharing?

___ Do you have a name tag system that is current and that is utilized?

___ Do you have greeters positioned at the entrances to the church? Are greeters and ushers prepared to welcome guests? Do you offer training in hospitality for greeters and ushers?

___ Are all members of the congregation prepared to welcome guests? Have you provided training in hospitality?

___ Are refreshments available at a fellowship time and/or during Sunday school classes?

___ Do you have members who go out of their way during the fellowship time to greet guests and introduce them to others?

___ Are members of your church prepared to extend brunch or dinner invitations to your guests?

___ Do you have a system in place to respond to guests within 48 hours of their attendance by leaving a small gift at their homes? Freshly baked cookies or bread, a devotional booklet, flowers, or a mug with your church's name are all possibilities.

___ Have you interviewed people who have recently visited your church and asked them for feedback on their experience? Have you talked both to people who have continued to come and to some who only came once?

___ What other areas should you consider?

Also see the How Welcoming Is Your Church discussion questionnaire.

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Prepared for Visitors to Your Sunday School?

Use this checklist to help determine how prepared your church is to welcome and involve visitors through your Christian education program.

- Are teachers prepared to greet new students as they enter the classroom?
- Are teachers of children comfortable introducing themselves to the parents of visitors? Do teachers know whether or not visiting children should remain in the room until their parents return?
- Are the rooms all neat, including updated bulletin boards?
- Are class members encouraged to hang banners, posters, and other results of class activity?
- Are teachers comfortable introducing visitors to the rest of the class?
- Do teachers provide opportunity for some sharing to help visitors feel more at home?
- Is there a procedure to record the name, address, and phone of any visitors to a class or group?
- Is there a procedure for sharing information about visitors with the church office?
- Do adult classes have coffee and tea available?
- Do youth classes have juice and donuts?
- Are extra copies of curriculum and other study resources available for visitors?
- Are visitors informed of any coming social events and encouraged to participate?
- Is there a procedure for follow-up on anyone who visits a Christian education class or event?
- Do students in the class or group take a part in that follow-up process rather than leaving it all to the teacher or leader?
- Are the classrooms all attractive, comfortable places to meet?
- Are there greeters who can direct visitors to the appropriate classes?
- Are class or group members encouraged to invite friends to the group?

From New Life Ministries Report 3: "Healthy Sunday School – Growing Church."

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Rate Your Church's Young Adult Friendliness

Many North American congregations have far fewer young adult members than they want. Some others find that the young adults they have as members are not heavily involved in congregational life. How friendly and welcoming is the atmosphere in your church for young adults? **Churches which are successfully reaching young adults often check 13 or more of these items.**

1. Our church has young adults on the board, council, or other primary administrative body of the church, so that we remain sensitive to young adult issues.

2. Our church offers child care at any events at which we hope for young adult participation.

3. People in our church accept the fact that many young adults may only attend two or three times a month and don't make them feel guilty for not coming every Sunday.

4. People are welcome to dress informally for worship, and that is modeled by ushers and greeters.

5. If a single parent comes to our church, that person can go through an entire morning without being asked where his or her spouse is.

6. Our church can make decisions quickly and doesn't frustrate people with slowness to change.

7. Our church has a caregiver system so that there is quick follow-up when persons who have been regular in attendance stop coming.

8. Our worship services are child-friendly.

9. Our church programming doesn't constantly assume that everyone who might participate is married or part of a family.

10. Our church recognizes in its programming that most young adults would rather DO something (feed the hungry; remodel a house for the poor; work with youth) than TALK about doing something in endless committee meetings.

11. Our worship services move quickly and offer a healthy variety of activities.

___ 12. Our worship services offer contemporary music as well as traditional music.

___ 13. Our pastor(s) is(are) comfortable relating to young adults.

___ 14. Our church can truly welcome a couple who are living together but are not yet married, feeling grateful that they want to be involved in the church.

___ 15. Older members of our church are comfortable reaching out to young adults.

___ 16. Our church offers one or more class or group opportunities for young adults.

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Identifying the Forgotten Checklist

The exercise which follows is designed to help you think about various categories of persons relative to their activity or potential activity in your congregation. Use the symbols to describe each of the categories. Those which you mark NC are the ones who may have been forgotten or overlooked in past outreach efforts of the congregation. (Click here for a [reproducible Microsoft Word document of this checklist.](#))

IC - Persons who are already active in your church.

NC - Persons who are present in the neighborhood or ministry area of your congregation but who are not in your church or at least not in numbers proportionate to their community presence.

NF - Persons not found in your church or in your church's neighborhood or ministry area.

___ Retired persons

___ Divorced persons

___ Young married couples

___ Teenagers

___ The deaf

___ Persons with impaired mobility (confined to wheelchairs, severe arthritis, etc.)

___ Persons with learning disabilities

___ Single male adults

___ Single female adults

___ Persons who are wealthy

___ Persons who are poor

___ Persons with advanced degrees

___ Persons with little formal education

___ Children in foster care or institutions

- ___ Parents of infants and small children
- ___ Parents of teenagers
- ___ College students
- ___ Members of the military
- ___ Voluntary service participants
- ___ White people
- ___ African Americans
- ___ Asian Americans
- ___ Hispanic people
- ___ Native Americans
- ___ Childless couples
- ___ Persons who have to work on Sundays
- ___ Persons who have obvious physical disfigurement
- ___ Persons who drink and/or smoke
- ___ Persons suffering from terminal illness or other serious health problems
- ___ Persons caring for someone who suffers from terminal illness or other serious health problems
- ___ The hungry and the homeless
- ___ Persons who dislike traditional worship services
- ___ Persons who dislike contemporary worship services
- ___ Persons who are afraid of crowds
- ___ Persons with serious emotional problems
- ___ Persons with a loved one having serious emotional problems
- ___ Persons recovering from alcoholism or another drug addiction
- ___ Persons with a loved one who is recovering from alcoholism or another drug addiction

- ___ Persons who want to participate in social activities which will help them make new friends
- ___ Young parents who need child care in order to participate in worship services or Sunday school
- ___ Single parents
- ___ Persons who are concerned about the welfare of animals
- ___ Persons who have been to prison
- ___ Persons who have family members in prison
- ___ Persons who have been victims of crime
- ___ Persons who have been hurt by the church
- ___ Your addition: _____

Visitor Evaluation Form

Use this form as a way to record your impressions of the friendliness and welcome you receive when you visit another church. See the Ideas That Work page on [Team Visit to Another Church](#) for how to use this form to help your congregation become more welcoming.

Does the church have:

Yes No

Attractive, well-placed signs that welcome the public and show times of services?

Parking lot attendants?

Clearly marked visitor parking spaces?

Greeters by the outside entrance doors?

A welcome packet or brochure that gives more information about the church?

Adequate signs for restrooms, nursery, etc.?

Friendly, outgoing, accommodating ushers?

A method for getting visitors' names?

Refreshments before or after the service?

Tell about your acceptance by the other worshipers:

1. How many people initiated a handshake or conversation with you?
2. If the church had a time of visitor recognition during the service, how did you feel about it?
3. Were you introduced to other people?
4. If Sunday school followed the worship service, did you easily find a class that you fit into?
5. How did you feel overall about the friendliness of the people?

Tell about how the church followed up on you (letter, visit, etc.):

List three things that were most positive about your visit:

List three things that were most negative about your visit:

If you were looking for a church, would you visit that congregation again?

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