

INTRODUCTION TO WELCOMING

A PRACTICAL WORKSHOP TO
BECOMING A WELCOMING CHURCH

1

What & Why?

Why?

#1 It's Biblical (hospitality + more)

- Images of the kingdom regularly symbolised by food and drink.
- Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. (cf. Romans 12:9-13)
- Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13:2)
- Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20)

#2 It's critical for growth

- NCLS and connections between 'Inclusion & Belonging' and church health.

#3 It's an inherent part of our mission

- Loving and serving *you* because of Jesus.

What? More than one role



It really, really is. If you're here, and you're not visiting, you're a welcomer.

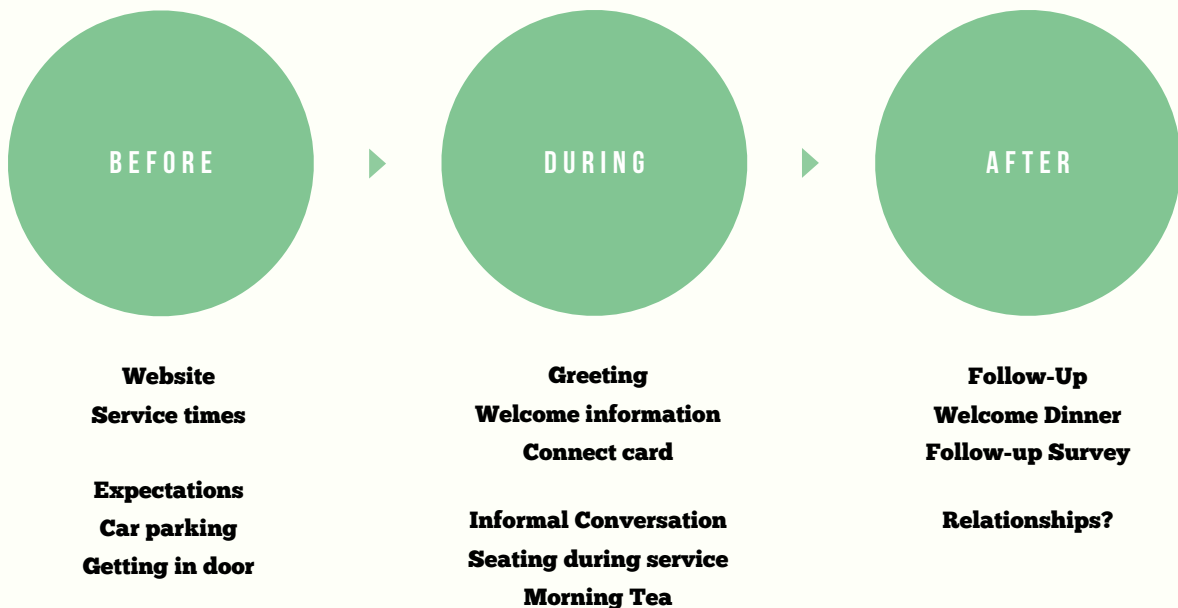
More than just what happens at the door! It's an opportunity to make people feel included and have a sense of belonging. No pressure. But people don't want to feel like an outsider.

- People ignored me.
- I didn't know what to do.
- I didn't know where to go.
- I stayed alone and didn't want to.
- I didn't know who the greeters were.
- There was a welcome table?

*Bellamy, J., & Castle, K. (2004). *2001 Church Attendance Estimates* (pp. 1-14). NCLS Research.

What's your worst welcome experience?

What? More than one day



Individually it's an attitude

Individually it's an attitude Corporately it's a culture

Are you a guest or a host?



What are the characteristics of a **great host**?

2

How to improve?

We can improve by...

#1 Present

- Early and regular.
- Opportunity to talk.
- Get to know regulars, so that you also can recognise visitors.
- Wear name tag.

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- Be sensitive to people's needs.
- Don't make them feel uncomfortable.
- Be helpful (and practical).
- Watch language.

What happens in church?
What should I wear?
How long?
What demographics?
Will I have to participate?
Will I be asked questions?
Do you sing?
Why?
Where should I park?
How much does it cost?

I might visit your church this Sunday...

- Remember that I don't know what to expect and am probably a bit nervous about your church.
- A friendly "Hello, it's good to see you today" goes a long way.
- Thanks for reserving a few parking spaces for visitors.
- If my children are with me, I need to know two things. Where are the bathrooms and where do I take my children?
- Be friendly but don't overdo it. Don't smother me, follow me around, or invade my space.
- It's easy to get lost in a new church. Signs help a lot.
- A greeting at the beginning of the worship service helps me know what to expect.
- I might attend a visitors reception after the service if it doesn't last too long, if the location is easy to find, and if I'm not the only one there.
- It's a good thing if you offer a free CD of the sermon that I can pick up before I go home.
- If you see me but don't recognize me, go ahead and say "Hi." It will do us both good.

- Don't be surprised if my first impression comes not from what happens on Sunday but from your church's website. You do have a website, don't you?
- Treat me as a person, not a prospect. Are you glad to see me even if I don't visit your church again?
- Don't be offended if I don't give you my personal information the first time I visit. If I like the church, I'll come back. When I come back a second or third time, I'll give you my address and phone number.
- Please don't single me out during the service. It's hard enough to visit a new church without being made to feel strange.
- I'll be glad to meet the minister as long as I don't have to make any promises to return.
- If this sounds like I don't like your church, that's not true. I probably will enjoy your church very much, but I'm not going to decide where to go to church lightly or quickly. I'll need to go home and think about it and perhaps talk it over with a friend.
- I need to worship God. That's why I'm coming this Sunday. If your church is filled with God-worshippers, I will no doubt feel drawn to them and to the God they worship.

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#3 Seek

- Seeking, not hounding :-)
- Ask questions not an inquisition.
- Invite for coffee.
- Share information about the church.
- Connect people.
- How can they find out more?

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- If you have a natural connection.

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#5 Pray

Our biggest fears...?

#a What do I say?

#b What if I've met them before?

#c What if they've already been 'welcomed'?

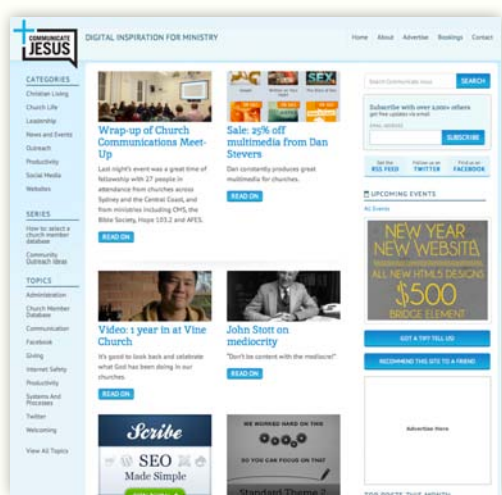
#6 invite

One thing you can do over the next few weeks to be a **better host?**

How can we improve as a **whole church?**

Ship of Fools...

Some resources



communicatejesus.com

Thanks!

Questions?