

REACHING AND KEEPING VISITORS CHECKLISTS



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Dynamic Churches are not only intentional about reaching new people, but also about connecting them to the life of the Church and a personal relationship with Christ. Many Dynamic Churches use this documented process to make sure everyone feels welcome and no one is overlooked.

o FIRST-TIME VISITOR PARKING AREA

Assimilation starts in the parking lot and that is where we will begin. The key to this process is getting as many first-time guests to enter through a particular church entrance as possible. Most churches have lots of entrances but it's best to funnel the firsttime guest through the front door. The easiest way to do this is to have a designated first-time visitor parking area.

o PARKING MINISTRY

With a well-trained parking lot ministry, you can quickly fill and exit the church parking lot in an orderly fashion. The importance of this team goes far beyond proper cone placement. The parking lot team is crucial as most people decide whether or not to return to a church within the first 6-10 minutes of entering the campus.

o SIGNAGE

The next step is signage. The first-time visitor check in area needs to have a sign so big that blind people feel its presence. "FIRST TIME GUEST CHILDREN REGISTRATION," it should shout. Why be subtle here? The first time visitor desk should be stationed directly below that sign.

o FIRST-TIME GUEST REGISTRATION CARD

The next step is getting your first-time guest registration card in the hands of visitors. The example below shows you the key elements:

Dr./Mr. _____	Age _____	Birthdate	/	/
Dr./Mrs./Ms. _____	Age _____	Birthdate	/	/
Address _____				
City _____	State _____	Zip _____		
Phone Number (home) _____				
E-Mail _____				
Name and birthdate of children living at home			Allergies	
_____	/	/	_____	
_____	/	/	_____	
_____	/	/	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Single	<input type="checkbox"/> 6:00 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> 1st Visit	Detach and keep for future reference	
<input type="checkbox"/> Married	<input type="checkbox"/> 9:30 am	<input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Visit		
<input type="checkbox"/> 11:15 am	<input type="checkbox"/> Repeat Visit			

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o GREETERS AND SUPER GREETERS

Most churches are utilizing a team of Greeters, those people who are quick with a smile and a handshake and can point people in the general direction of the worship center or the restroom. Not Dynamic Churches! They incorporate Super Greeters into the welcome equation. As you might imagine, with a title of Super Greeter, they have to be special. This is a position that people are promoted to. Characteristics and responsibilities of SuperGreeters include:

- o Super friendly
- o Super nice
- o Super knowledgeable
- o Well-versed on security procedures in the children's building
- o Know the difference between Nursery and Preschool
- o Know what the curriculum is and how it is applied in the Children's Ministry
- o Armed with church maps for each family they encounter
- o Escort visiting family to each child's assigned room
 - Introduce the family to the teacher(s)
 - Explain pick-up procedures
- o Escort visitors to the worship center
 - Help them locate a seat
 - Explain how they will be notified should their child need them
 - Introduce them to other Super Greeters who are assigned to that section



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o EVERYONE IS PART OF THE WELCOME TEAM

Does the church leadership communicate clearly and regularly to the congregation their responsibility to present an overall mindset of hospitality and an attitude of welcoming guests?

- o All members and regular attenders should feel ownership of the church and participate in creating a welcoming environment for future members and leaders.
- o This goes beyond the 'stand up and shake hands' portion of the service.

o WELCOMING STRATEGY

While the entire church should be aware of guests, the Greeting Team is on the frontlines when it comes to first-time visitors.

- o Are greeters strategically placed throughout the facility?
- o Are they recognizable and approachable?
- o Are they equipped and knowledgeable about all the ministries?

o GOOD FIRST IMPRESSIONS MAKE SENSE

o Look: Are the worship and waiting areas clean and clutter-free? This includes the parking lots and bathrooms both before and after services and classes.

o Listen: Are there areas where some ambient music would enhance the welcome experience? Are there areas where the background music is detracting from people's ability to connect with each other?

o Breathe In: What does the children's area smell like... before and after each service?

o SIGNAGE

What does your signage communicate to first-time guests?

- o You may know that "Kingdom Kids" is the ministry for 3-5 year olds, but if the sign doesn't include the ages, a guest could not only feel lost but also excluded by this 'insider' lingo.
- o Are you communicating Goodbye as well as Hello?



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o CONNECTION TIME

Sometimes we can be hyper-sensitive to those who want to remain anonymous. Don't overlook chances to make real connections with people.

- o How many different places and formats are available for visitors to obtain information?
 - Online
 - Printed materials provided by Greeting Team
 - Weekend bulletin/worship guide
 - Information Kiosk
- o Do you provide a time and place for visitors to connect with staff?

Capturing first-time visitor information should be figured into each and every entry point to your ministry. From a contact form on your website that simply captures their name and email address, to a more complete form for seminar and class registration, capturing contact data should be incorporated into more than just children's Check-in and the 'visitor welcome' portion of the weekend service. View this as a time to create a personal connection with your future members, volunteers, leaders and faithful givers. And equally as important as the information gathering is the response.



o SOMETIMES THE LAST IMPRESSION COULD BE THE LASTING IMPRESSION.

Dr. Charles Arn is a church growth researcher who has questioned over 50,000 church visitors over the past ten years.

“What we suggest to churches now is to have after-service hosts,” says Dr. Arn. “This is not just a greeter who stands at the door and shakes peoples’ hands on the way out. These are people in the sanctuary whose ministry begins when the last prayer ends. Their job is to look for people who they don’t recognize, go up and introduce themselves, and act as a host, introducing them to the pastor, inviting them to the coffee table, and really—in the sense that we often think of the word ‘host’—to be a host.”

Of course, knowing the culture of your church and community will guide the best application of this concept. Regardless of how you greet the guest, following-up after a service or church event is a huge part of building a connection with guests.

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o DEVELOP A STAFF RESPONSE STRUCTURE

Develop a staff response structure that guarantees follow-up with each first-time guest within 48 hours of their visit. The first 24-48 hours after initial contact are the most important to follow-up.

From emails to phone calls to home visitations, finding appropriate ways to show first-time visitors that they're welcome will go a long way towards welcoming them back. All churches need to evaluate their first-time visitor policies—and the effectiveness of those policies—on a regular basis!

A SUCCESSFUL FOLLOW-UP PLAN CAN INCLUDE:

- o A quick, multi-faceted, high-touch return. Schedule staff and/or key leaders to make phone calls within the first 24 hours of a visit to your church or activity.
 - Additionally, make sure you've captured the guest's email address so you can simultaneously reach out to them with a link to a point person's contact information or the church's website.
 - If they become a fan of your Facebook page, post on their wall to let them know you recognize and appreciate them.
- o Technology utilizing a church management software system (ChMS) is key to organizing the guest's personal information and making it readily accessible to appropriate staff.
- o An email campaign that follows up after the initial follow-up. Once is not enough. Connect and reconnect, but make sure you're sending personalized, useful information and invites to other services, events & activities appropriate to their demographic.

o FOLLOW UP AGAIN

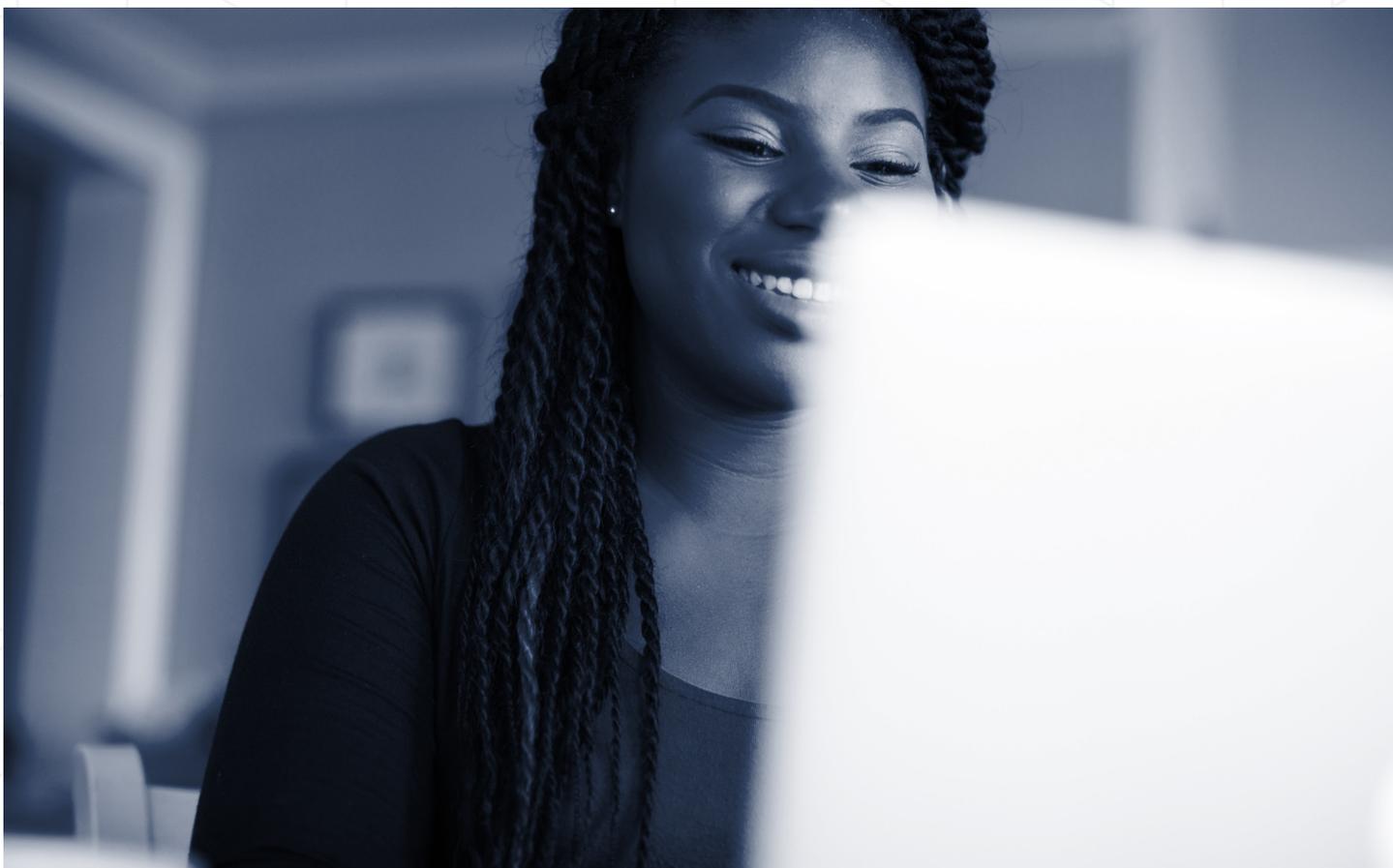
Staff must also be prepared to follow up multiple times. So many variables are in play with first- and second-time guests that you should not assume a single follow-up really answered all of their questions or showed them the sincerity and friendliness of the church.



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o INSIST THAT YOUR STAFF IS SHARING THE INFORMATION

It is imperative that your staff shares the information they learn at each touch-point with every visitor. Capturing the information from each follow-up is important because, when shared conveniently, securely and quickly through the right church management software, it allows other staff, and even key lay leaders, to know how best to connect, relate and reach out to these future members. Over time, a history of connections, conversation topics and personal needs can be compiled and understood, allowing a church to be far more effective in ministering specifically to individuals, instead of generically, to a crowd.



o MAKING VISITOR FOLLOW-UP A HIGH PRIORITY

Making visitor follow-up a high priority means high-tech, high-touch must be important to you and your church. Using church management software and reviewing weekly snapshots of how staff responded the week before are just two steps in a successful follow-up strategy.

o MAKE YOUR FOLLOW-UP PLAN CONSISTENT AND SCALABLE

Additionally, you'll need to be consistent in following up with visitors. Your members will think twice about inviting new people to visit if they hear from those they previously invited that the church never reached out to them.

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Dear _____,

I personally want to send you a note to say thank you for visiting with us this past Sunday at _____ Church. It was great to have you and _____ worship with us and I hope you felt truly welcomed. I know that visiting any new church for the first-time can feel awkward. I think you will discover many wonderful people here and as a small church you & _____ can fit in quickly if you decide to return. Our pastoral & ministry staff are here to serve and we would be honored if there is any way _____ Church can pray for or minister to you and your family. We welcome you back next Sunday at _____am. For more information about our church, activities, staff, ministries or services, you can check out more about us at _____website _____or call, email or text me. I look forward to seeing you again soon!

Sincerely,

Pastor, _____ Church

Email

Cell Phone (you can make this a designated church cell # not the pastor's personal cell #)

PARTNER WITH US

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