Reaching Inward: Welcoming and Including Visitors

What do we do when those we have reached out to join us, either at a community outreach, a church event, or worship? How do we welcome those who join us digitally? How do we express our hospitality in ways that encourages visitors to return?

Here are some suggestions:

-Offer visitors a Welcome Packet with information about the church including the church's website and pastor's contact information.
-Invite visitors to share their prayer requests on a prayer card or online form.
-Have a station outside the sanctuary with volunteers specifically for welcoming visitors and to offer prayer.
-Invite visitors to be greeted and recognized (if they are comfortable doing so) in the worship service.
-Give first-time visitors a welcome gift such as a mug or pen with the church's name, logo, and website.
-Consider having a digital usher who can reply to comments in the livestream and a link for contact information.
-Invite visitors to fellowship after worship.

Children and youth often invite their friends. Make sure they are warmly welcomed and included. Some churches provide age appropriate materials such as children's bulletins, coloring pencils, or other activities specifically for use in worship.

Have questions about making your church space, both physical and digital, more inviting to visitors? Check out the Hospitality Project: https://www.abcofwi.org/2024/09/10/is-your-front-door-inviting-and-hospitable/

Reaching Out With Your Style of Evangelism

A project of the
American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin
Commission on Congregational Mission

Sharing the Good News of Jesus

We all are made in the image of God, but we have a diversity of spiritual gifts. Some are comfortable sharing the Gospel using traditional language with strangers. Others find it more natural to share God's love through action in caring for their neighbor's needs. Some of us are more comfortable with the word outreach instead of evangelism due to negative connotations. Regardless, we are sharing the Gospel: the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Resources

LEARN ABOUT YOUR STYLE OF WITNESS

Discover Your Witness Style: The 9 Styles Explained
This questionnaire assembled by InterVarsity focuses on nine styles of witnessing, rooted in Biblical teaching, and also focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of each style. Take the quiz, discover your style, and see if this resonates with you.
https://evangelism.intervarsity.org/resource/discover-your-witness-style-9-styles-explained

USE YOUR PERSONALITY!

Got Style? Personality-Based Evangelism (Revised Edition)
by Jeffrey A. Johnson
All personalities are gifted in sharing the good news with others—not just the stereotypical "evangelist" personality. Have fun discovering your specific personality traits through the "Discover your Style" inventory and learning about the many ways you can use those strengths to invite others into a faith relationship.
https://www.judsonpress.com/Products/J313/got-style.aspx

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Sharing Jesus Without Fear (Revised Edition)
by William Fay and Ralph Hodge
A simple and relational approach to witnessing that underscores the dependence of God's power for the results. Separate leader guides and Bible study guides available.
https://www.sharejesuswithoutfearbook.org/

Questions to Ask As You Begin:

- What does your church currently do for evangelism/outreach?
- How connected is your church to the neighborhood?
- What needs are in your community and how are they currently being met? Are there opportunities for partnership with other organizations?
- What needs are *not* currently being met? Is there a niche opportunity for the church?
- What justice issues are of concern in the community?
- How often are current church members encouraged to invite friends and neighbors?
- How do you utilize your digital space for evangelism/outreach (i.e. social media, website, video ministry)?
- What other opportunities in church life are there for invitation besides worship?