



Suggestions for developing a Welcoming Evangelism Ministry

Evangelism is. . .

- sharing the good news of God's love with people who have not heard it before,
- preparing people to make or renew their commitment to Jesus Christ,
- participating in God's mission to transform the world.

Offering Jesus Christ to the world outside the fellowship of the local church is a primary task of all Christians. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, said "The world is my parish." Besides welcoming people into the fellowship of the church and helping them become and grow as Christians, the local church must have an evangelism ministry that reaches beyond the congregation!

An important part of evangelism is welcoming new visitors to our churches. Potential members often decide in the first two minutes whether or not to return to our churches. For this reason, our manner of welcoming newcomers is of utmost importance.

Also, it is critically important that we understand that a decision has already been made by the visitor to attend our church. We do not know the circumstances by which that decision was made, but we must do our best to address any needs or concerns the visitor may have.

WELCOMING EVANGELISM THROUGH THE CHURCH PROPERTY

Potential newcomers may consider attending our churches if they see that our church property shows that members care for it. After all, church members who care for their church property demonstrate that they care for their church. Does the church property show that the people welcome newcomers? (This does not simply mean a sign that says "Welcome").

WELCOMING EVANGELISM IN THE PARKING LOT

Parking: Providing a place to park is absolutely essential. Why come if there is no place to park?

1. Are parking spaces marked with lines painted on the pavement?
2. Are parking spaces roomy (easily accessed?)
3. Are visitors (or "guest") spaces clearly marked on the pavement and with an upright "guest" sign?
4. Are these spaces close to the church building?
5. Are there handicap spaces also available (wide enough and include ramps?)

6. Are these handicap spaces clearly marked with the universal handicap logo?



Parking Attendants:

1. Does the church assign persons to assist in parking?
2. Are these persons clearly marked with bright vests?
3. Do they keep visitor's spaces available for visitors only?
4. Are they trained to "notice" newcomers (by "remembering" cars of regular attenders?)
5. Are they trained to greet everyone with a smile, wave, or a verbal greeting?
6. Are they equipped with umbrellas in inclement weather?

WELCOMING EVANGELISM AT THE ENTRANCE

Greeters:

1. Do the door greeters open the door for all those who come to worship?
2. Do they smile and welcome everyone?
3. Do they wear name tags?
4. Are they trained to look for visitors and then thank them for coming after the service ends?
5. Are they trained to watch for visitors and thank them for coming again each time they return?

Signs:

1. Are there signs directing people to the sanctuary and classrooms?
2. Are there clearly marked signs for the men's and women's restrooms?
3. Are there signs directing visitors to an information area?

WELCOMING EVANGELISM IN THE NARTHEX (foyer or gathering area)

Name tags:

1. Are name tags available and worn by regular attenders?
2. Does the church avoid using "visitor" or "guest" name tags, since most newcomers want to remain anonymous while they investigate the friendliness of the church?
3. Are blank name tags available for those visitors who wish to wear one?
4. Are 2nd time visitors invited to have regular name tags made up for them?

Information area:

1. Is there a place (booth) provided marked "Information?"
2. Is someone trained and assigned to answer questions about the church (worship, facilities, classes, emphasis, mission statement, etc.)?
3. Are brochures available explaining the ministries and programs of the church, including:

- a. Information about the pastor and staff?
- b. Information about the morning church school classes available (including their locations & times)?
- c. Information about the Vision and direction of the church?
- d. Information about mid-week activities and groups available?
- e. Are there pictures of some of the activities?
- f. Is a small map included with clear directions to the church?
- 4. Is all information kept up to date?
- 5. Are free (complete O.T. and N.T.) Bibles available for the taking (with a sign stating they are free)?
- a. persons new to the church may not have an easily understood and readable Bible (this may be an incentive to begin reading the Bible).
- b. Bibles should be desirable (bound and not paperback).
- c. Bible display should be easily accessible (persons should not have to ask someone for a Bible)?
- d. costs of the Bibles should be included in the Evangelism budget.

WELCOMING EVANGELISM IN THE SANCTUARY

Attractiveness:

1. Is everything neat and clean in the sanctuary?
2. Is the sanctuary uncluttered, avoiding too many things that might distract?
3. Is everything in order, especially music and sound equipment?
4. Are the banners and displays (including the altar) appropriate for the day, event or season?
5. Does the sanctuary look "cared for"?

Lighting:

1. Is the lighting bright enough to see the bulletin clearly?
2. Are there any glare spots (bright bulbs or windows), that may hurt the eyes, especially coming from the front of the church?
3. Does the sun shine too brightly on the congregation any time during the year?
4. Can the lights be dimmed for special effects?

Odor:

1. Is the sanctuary odorless with no particular smell, such as air fresheners, cleansers (Pine Sol, etc., since these emit chemicals that can make people ill)?
2. Is the congregation occasionally informed not to wear perfume or cologne as these chemicals are now known to make many people ill?
3. Is new furniture or carpeting allowed to "gas off" before use?
4. Is the sanctuary "stuffy" (not enough fresh air)?
5. Are the restrooms clean and odor free (no air fresheners and adequate exhaust ventilation)?

Ushers:

1. Are the ushers trained (and re-trained) on a regular basis?
2. Do the ushers greet each person as they enter the sanctuary?
3. Do the ushers make a point to remember new people when they return?
4. Do the ushers ask newcomers if they have any special needs, like hearing aid units, larger print bulletins or seats closer to the front for those who have vision difficulties?
5. Do the ushers assist persons with handicapping conditions (wheelchairs, walkers) to

their seats?

6. If seating is limited, do the ushers "ush" people to available seating?
7. Do all ushers wear "usher" name tags, so visitors can locate one quickly if needed?
8. Do the ushers give worship bulletins to each person who enters the sanctuary?
9. Do the ushers have children's bulletins or activity packets to give to the children?

Seating:

1. Are the seats (or pews) comfortable?
2. Are the seats (or pews) positioned in such a way to allow persons to walk forward between them rather than slide sideways?
3. Do the seats have racks for hymnals and bibles (with at least one each for every two persons)?
4. Do the seats have pockets for brochures and/or offering envelopes?
5. Are there specific areas adjacent to the seats (pews) to allow for wheelchairs?

Worship bulletins:

1. Are the bulletins "user friendly," providing all the information needed to follow the service in order to avoid excluding newcomers?
2. Do the bulletins clearly show when to stand or be seated?
3. Are the words to congregational prayers (such as the Lord's Prayer or Holy Communion responses) printed in the bulletin?
4. Are the words to the songs printed in the bulletin (especially if they are not in the hymnal)?
5. Are all the announcements included in the bulletin?
6. Are larger print bulletins available for those with vision difficulties?

Registration of attendance:

1. Are registration pads available for everyone to sign in each week?
2. Or, are detachable or inserted registration forms enclosed in each bulletin?
3. Are there spaces to check off needs (prayer requests, etc.)?
4. Is everyone asked to fill these out every week, especially the regular attenders?
5. Is everyone asked to fill out their full address and phone number also?
6. Are these passed to the inside aisle and then back, so that everyone can greet each other by name in their row?
7. Are these sheets collected and taken immediately to the office following the service (for the follow-up ministry)?
8. Or, are the attached or inserted registration forms placed in the offering plate?

Multi-media:

1. Is the projection, bright, clear, and viewable from all seats?
2. Are all activity announcements (especially with pictures) included on the projection screen?
3. Is every attempt made to include the visitor in the "family" announcements? (This would include pictures of those celebrating anniversaries, special birthdays or special events, and especially pictures of those who need on-going prayer, such as those serving in the military).
4. Are the words of all songs projected on the screen?
5. Are the words large enough for those with vision difficulties?
6. Is the church licensed to copy/project hymns and music (C.C.L.I.)?

Worship through music:

1. Is the worship "user friendly," leaving no one out, especially those unfamiliar with the

worship format?

2. Do the song leaders (and/or choir) "lead" the congregation in singing rather than perform?
3. Is the music a singable tempo (not too slow and not too fast)?
4. Does the music include familiar hymns as well as contemporary songs (blended music)?
5. Is some of the music a genuine celebration and praise of Jesus Christ?
6. Is some of the music "invitational," inviting people to a deeper relationship to Jesus?
7. Is some of the music an acknowledgment of our need for Jesus?

Greeting Time:

1. Do you have a time in the service for greeting one another (Passing the Peace)?
2. If so, are the people encouraged to greet someone they may not know?

Worship through the spoken word (sermon):

1. Are the spoken words "user friendly," avoiding unexplained words or phrases that might not be familiar to a non-church person?
2. Is there a clear proclamation of the Word of God (focused on God's truth revealed in scripture)?
3. Does the message challenge the listeners to become Christians, grow as Christians and to serve as Christians?
4. Does the message include the person speaking (since we all are sinners in need of a right and deeper relationship with God through Jesus)?
5. Does the message speak to the visitor or non-Christian, as well as the regular attenders?
6. Is the message (or music) clearly heard in every area of the sanctuary?

Worship with Holy Communion:

1. Is the reason for Holy Communion (Lord's Supper, Eucharist) clearly explained each time it is celebrated?
2. Is a clear invitation given to all to receive Communion? If not, is it made clear who may receive Communion?
3. Is it made clear that Holy Communion is an opportunity to confess sins and renew (or make) a commitment to Jesus Christ?
4. Do all Communion servers wash their hands with a disinfectant (such as Purell) before serving?
5. Are clear instructions stated verbally concerning how to receive Communion (if intinction, to dip the bread or wafer in the chalice)?
6. Do ushers give directions on which row is to come forward when?
7. If the people are asked to come forward to receive Communion, are they instructed to come forward by the center aisle and return to their seats by an outside aisle (or some other arrangement)?
8. If the people are to go to "Communion stations", are instructions given as to where they will be located?
9. If it is traditional to kneel at a rail, are they also invited to stand (in case they have difficulty kneeling)?
10. Are the persons handed the bread by the server, rather than asking the person to take their own from a plate or break off their own from a loaf? (It is unsanitary to ask persons to choose their own bread or wafer, possibly contaminating the rest!)

WELCOMING EVANGELISM AFTER THE SERVICE

Greeters and Ushers:

1. Are the Greeters and Ushers instructed to seek out the visitors to visit with them, ask if they have any questions about the church and thank them for coming?
2. Have the regular attenders been notified/trained to greet and connect with the visitors? (This can be accomplished with a letter to the regular attenders to explain the importance of everyone participating in ministry to one another in the church body, especially to visitors.)

Secret greeters:

1. Besides recruiting greeters at the door, does the church also recruit a roving greeter who is not known as an assigned greeter (no name tags, etc.)? This person helps make sure no one is left standing alone, including newcomers.
2. These persons are to serve for a month at a time, spending only a short time with friends, aware that they are "on duty" to connect and listen.
3. The secret greeters serve before and after the service.

Fellowship and refreshment time (called the "coffee hour?"):

1. Does the church invite everyone to fellowship with refreshments after the service?
2. Are the visitors especially invited and given an opportunity to meet people informally?
3. Are the regular attenders encouraged to invite the visitors to join them at a restaurant following the service? (Regular attenders can be informed by letter of the importance of helping newcomers connect. If they regularly go to a restaurant, a simple invitation to join will go a long way to help them feel welcome.)

WELCOMING EVANGELISM FOLLOW-UP

From the Pastor:

1. Does the pastor make a point of noticing and greeting the visitors before and after the service? (This does not mean calling attention to them during the worship time.)
2. Does the pastor make a Sunday afternoon phone call to the new visitors inviting them to return and to ask if they have any comments or questions about the service? Also, the pastor should ask the visitors if there is anything the church might do for them.
3. Does the pastor write a follow-up letter to the visitor?
4. If the visitor comes for a second Sunday, does the pastor attempt to call and make an appointment to visit the newcomer?
5. If the visitors attend a number of Sundays, does the pastor call and say that he or she appreciates the newcomers attending the services and then use the opportunity to ask if their needs are being met?
6. Does the pastor invite visitors to an "Inquirer's Class" (A class to provide information about the church and the meaning of membership.)

From the office:

1. Is an accurate attendance record kept of all attendees, especially visitors?
2. Do visitors receive a follow-up letter and information packet from the church, signed by the pastor?
3. Are the visitors' names, addresses and phone numbers given on Sunday to the Evangelism Team?
4. Do the visitors who return for a third visit receive a second letter from the church, signed by the pastor?
5. Are third time visitors put on the church newsletter mailing list?

6. Does the office maintain an up-to-date data file on members and regular attenders, such as birthdays, anniversaries, interests, involvement, etc and dates of visits by the pastor or evangelism team member?
7. Do the office staff immediately forward information checked on the weekly attendance sheets, especially those that would be of concern to the pastor?

From the Evangelism Team:

1. Does the church have an Evangelism Team to coordinate a "Welcoming Evangelism ministry", an "Inside the Church Evangelism ministry" and an "Outside the Church Evangelism ministry?"
2. Does the Welcoming Evangelism Team seek to connect with new church visitors?
3. Does the Welcoming Evangelism Team have a list of people willing to deliver a gift



and an information packet to new visitors on Sunday afternoon? This could be something like baked bread, a coffee mug, a plant, etc. to express our appreciation for their attendance at church? (If no one is home, the gift can be left on the doorstep).

4. Are there on-going recruiting and training sessions for the "muggers" (those delivering gifts to the visitors)?
5. If a personal contact is made on Sunday afternoon (rather than just leaving a mug), is an effort made to gather information, such as prayer requests, etc?
6. Are the welcoming Evangelism Team members trained to attempt to connect with the visitors when they return to church the second time?

All the questions are to be seen as suggestions. The local church may not be able to do all of the above welcoming evangelism suggestions, but the more they actually put into practice, the greater the likelihood that the visitors will return!