

Vistor Training Powerpoint Outline 2012

Tips for Chatting With Newcomers

What To Say After “hello”

I'd like to welcome you to our Hospitality Workshop. I'd like to thank all of you for coming and congratulate you on your desire to help the church project a favorable impression on visitors.

The ability to connect with people in short, casual conversation can make or break careers, friendships, and other relationships. It's how we gather information and, we hope, make a connection and favorable impression.

People, even really shy ones, like to talk about themselves and will if you know how to draw them out. You have to be genuinely interested. You have to check your ego. And, you have to listen. If you can do all of that you can attract friends and give Newcomers to the Church a place to feel at home.

I. Getting up the Courage to Approach Someone

- What's the worst that can happen?

Face your fears and the less-than dreaded consequences. It is possible that they won't want to talk to you. You can't take this personally. Sometimes it has nothing to do with you. It could be that you've chosen a bad moment or that their personal issues are uppermost in their mind.

- Realise that everyone has something to offer, including you.

This is an opportunity to make a new friend. You should give them a chance to make a new friend in you.

- Remember that it isn't about you.

To make the best impression, it usually works to concentrate on them. Listening and being there is a form of service to others.

II. Roadblocks to communication

- Feeling awkward and uncomfortable.

The best way to deal with feeling uncomfortable is just to practice. If you spend a lot of time working on communicating, you're bound to develop skills you can feel confident of.

- Feeling insincere in making conversation.

- Not knowing what to say to start a conversation

- Ingrained behaviors such as “don’t talk to strangers.”
- Don’t want to be perceived as pushy or needy.
- Risking rejection

III. Make a Good First Impression

- According to Barna Research, 40% of visitors make up their mind about a church before they even see the Minister. You are the first contact they’ll have with the church. Try to make it a positive contact.
- In other words, making a positive first impression is important to building rapport with newcomers.
- Imagine your first visit to the church. Who spoke to you first? What did they say? What made you come back a second time?

IV. Where Do I Start?

- Make Eye Contact
- Smile 😊
- Center Yourself

Take a deep breath and calm yourself.

V. I’ve Said “Hello” What’s Next? What makes a positive interaction?

- Introduce Yourself
 - a. Show sincere interest in the other person.
 - b. Be friendly and courteous

- Offer Your Hand and ask them their name.

- Evaluate the Situation

So they seem shy or confident? Are they feeling welcome?

- Maintain Eye Contact

Don’t make a staredown contest. Just glance that way now and then. Just don’t hang your head and loo at the carpet when you talk. It gives the impression that you aren’t interested in them or what they have to say. If you look them in the eye, they’ll know that your interested in them and are listening to what they’re saying.

- Comment About Something Mutual.

- Ask Them a Question.

Everyone has something to offer. This is an opportunity to learn about someone new and perhaps make a new friend. Gracious people make others feel like the center of the world so do ask questions.

- Listen

Listen in a way that shows you've been listening. Acknowledge what you hear by nodding or affirming. Often listening is used to wait until its time to talk again. Instead ask a follow-up question or repeat back some of the information you've been given and then add some information you have in common.

- Answer Any Questions They May Ask

VI. Asking Questions

- Try to ask open ended questions.

This enables the visitors to talk about the things they're interested in and gives you information to ask more questions.

Its OK to have a few standard questions memorized to make you feel more confident in approaching new people. Some suggestions:

- i. Have you ever been to a UU Church before:?
- ii. What brought you to the service today:
- iii. Are you originally from Lincoln?
- iv. Do you live close by?
- vi. Do you have any children?
- vii. Do you have any pets?
- viii. Have you taken any vacations lately?
- ix. Is this your first visit or have you been coming for while?
- x. Do you have any questions about the Church?
- xi. How did you find us?

People really appreciate validation and it helps to build rapport. Make people feel listened to and valued really helps build a sense of being part of a community. Find out what their skills are.

Most people are quite skilled at something. Sometimes its something valuable or something obscure, but everyone has something they do that's interesting.

- Ask Basic Questions.

As the guest answers questions , provide food eye contact and follow-up with leading questions. Share your own experiences. Be careful of taking over the conversation. Make it about them.

- Be inquisitive, but not an inquisitor.

Be interested, but not overbearing. If they don't want to talk about one topic find another.

- Be careful not to make assumptions about who the person is or why they are visiting our church.

You'll have a variety of people walking through the door (we hope). Be welcoming to all people. Don't overemphasize difference. Focus on how we're the same. Verbally greet visually challenged people. Offer to help seat anyone with mobility issues. Try to accommodate any special needs a new vistor might have.

- Be mindful of your body language. .

Avoid closed body messages such as crossing your arms, looking around the room while visiting with someone, or frowning. Be open, look friendly, have a genuine smile. Keep your gaze up and focused. Hold your arms in an open, welcoming position.

VII. Extra Tips:

- Be Respectful

- Be aware of their comfort level.
- Avoid jokes the first time you meet someone. Humor is so subjective a topic that you may unwittingly insult them. Once you've felt out their sense of humor and personality, you can bring out best your humorous stories.
- See who's around them. If they've brought other people show some interest in them. Ask children's names and ages. Introduce yourself to their partner.

- Avoid "swarming" Newcomers

- Don't mob newcomers with unwanted attention. Some people want to be in the background and not be noticed too much on their first visit to the church.
- Others might feel neglected in you don't make an effort to know them.

- Establish Rapport

Find common ground between you. In what ways are they similar to you? Do you have common interests? Do you in similar fields of work or education?

- Adopt a Positive Attitude

Being positive and life and the Church can work wonders. No one wants to hang out with a grump or a grumpy Church. Try to put your cares aside and focus on the positive aspects of the day. Projecting a positive attitude is one of the most important parts of making a good impression.

- Invite the Visitor to Stay for Coffee.

Show them where the coffee or tea is. Introduce them to the red mugs. Encourage other people to talk to them.

VIII. Follow Up

- Remember their name.

Its ok if you don't remember. Just politely ask them. Its difficult to remember multiple people or a name if you're concentration on a conversation.

- Introduce Newcomers to other members of the congregation

Please try to introduce each vistor to one other person so they will have met at least two people. And if Fritz is around, a board member, or service leader is around, make an introduction to them as well.

Let them meet a variety of people. If they meet enough people they're bound to find someone they have something in common with or even someone they already know. Lincoln is an overgrown small-town and its amazing how many people you'll run into if you go somewhere.

Introduce them to Karen if you get a chance. She's very good a directing and getting to know Newcomers.

- Take mental notes.

You'll want to remember as much as possible if they come back so you can talk with them again.

- Upon their second visit let them know you are happy they have come back.

- Take notice in different settings

If you see a Newcomer in another place such as Game Night or Open Circle, welcome them, and remember their name or something else about them. Tell them how happy you are to see them. Try to renew your conversation with them.

- Invite them attend new member classes

- Only after they have attended about 3 times
- Encourage them to become connected and join in other church activities.

Suggest Open Circles, Game Night, Book Club , etc. as activities they might be interested in. Give them an information packet.

IX. Communication is a skill.

- Like learning to play piano or ride a bike, learning to communicate is a skill.

It really is a skill that can be learned. People really don't expect that much from you in a conversation. They expect for you to ask questions and listen. If you work on developing those abilities, most people will respond. Making an effort toward someone's comfort is usually appreciated and goes a long way towards being accepted.

- Like most skills, it is difficult at first until to learn and practice it.

One of the things that I did as a shy person was to set a goal of the number of people I to talk to before I could run away. "I will have a five minute conversation with four people before I leave today" or "I will talk to three new people that I haven't talked with before."

- Communicating with others gets easier the more often you do it.

It really does. I've often said that I'm the world's shyest human being. I've worked very hard a learning how to talk to people. I certainly haven't mastered it, but I don't feel a little more comfortable talking with people one-on-one. I'm still working on the giving speeches in front of group of people yet <Lol>

- Like running a marathon, good interpersonal skills take time, practice and perseverance.

X. Remember that hospitality is a spiritual practice.

In the Buddhist tradition, our connections are real; our separations are an illusion. When we believe in the illusion of separation, not only do we deceive ourselves, but we follow a path that will bring us great suffering. If you and I are ultimately connected, you cannot be other. You cannot be alien, a foreigner. You cannot be alien, a foreigner. If I do not know you, I do not know a part of myself. When you and I are separated, neither of us is whole.

XI. An Overview: Wrapping it up.

- Communication is a two-way street.

Ask questions and follow-up on the answers to show your genuine interest. Offer your own information too, so that you are sharing in the exchange with them.

- When you sense that the conversation has run its course, exit gracefully. Let the visitor decide the length of the conversation.
 - Thank you for visiting with me. I really enjoyed getting to know you a little bit and hope to see you again.
 - If the visitor has indicated an interest in a particular aspect of the church or has questions, offer to help them. Feel free to grab information on the church activities or an information packet to hand them. Have them fill out an address form to put them on the mailing list.
- If the visitor seems open to meeting others, introduce him or her to other church members, especially if you discover they have similar interests to someone.

If they enjoy music introduce them to Julie Enerson. If they like archery or airplanes introduce them to Tom Winter.
- Be sure to visit the guest again if you see him or her at the next service.

XII. Other Resources

Somes of the books that I've found to be helpful are

Conclusion:

I think I've gone over the basics. I'm sure I've left things out and duplicated others.

Welcoming people to the church is about building community and relationships. All of you have relationships in your life so you've got some skills in building those. If you bring all of that to Newcomers at the church you'll make them feel like part of the community—one they'd like to have a relationship with.

Just remember the most important things. Be positive and welcoming. Be open. Be respectful. Ask open ended questions. And listen.

Questions?