

Visitor 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?
- Realize that everyone has something to offer, including you.
- Remember that it isn't about you.

II. Roadblocks to communication

- Feeling awkward and uncomfortable.
- 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

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
- Maintain Eye Contact
- Comment about Something Mutual.
- Ask Them a Question.
- Listen
- 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.

It's 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?

- Ask Basic Questions.
- Be inquisitive, but not an inquisitor.
- Be careful not to make assumptions about who the person is or why they are visiting our church.
- Be mindful of your body language. .

VII. Extra Tips:

- Be Respectful
 - Be aware of their comfort level.
 - Avoid jokes the first time you meet someone.
 - 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.
 - Others might feel neglected in you don't make an effort to know them.
- Establish Rapport
- Adopt a Positive Attitude
- Invite the Visitor to Stay for Coffee.

VIII. Follow Up

- Remember their name.

- Introduce Newcomers to other members of the congregation
- Take mental notes.
- Upon their second visit let them know you are happy they have come back.
- Take notice in different settings
- Invite them attend new member classes
- Encourage them to become connected and join in other church activities.

IX. Communication is a skill.

- Like learning to play piano or ride a bike, learning to communicate is a skill.
- Like most skills, it is difficult at first until to learn and practice it.
- Communicating with others gets easier the more often you do it.
- Like running a marathon, good interpersonal skills take time, practice and perseverance.

X. Remember that hospitality is a spiritual practice.

XI. An Overview: Wrapping it up.

- Communication is a two-way street.
- 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.
- Be sure to visit the guest again if you see him or her at the next service.

XII. Other Resources

- How to Work a Room by Susan Roane
- Complete Book of Questions by Garry Poole
- The Fine Art of Small Talk by Debra Fine

Conclusion:

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.