

Monday, December 16, 2024

Suggestions for Attracting and New Church Visitors and Members

1. Church Welcome Ideas Visitor Parking Lots

When people visit a church, they have expectations of how they believe they should get treated. If your church doesn't have a [hospitality ministry](#), you might be missing opportunities to convert visitors into members.

One feature of a hospitality ministry to welcome visitors to church, is creating a warm and welcoming experience for visitors. Often, the first point of contact between visitors and ministry members is the church parking lot.

We've all visited businesses, and there are designated parking spaces for special circumstances. Stores have special parking for online order pick-up. Schools have designated parking for parents picking up students.

To welcome church visitors, you can adopt this same practice. Designate parking spaces based on average attendance. If you only have a few visitors each Sunday, you can post signs reserving two or three spaces near the [building](#) for visitors.

Megachurches have the luxury of designating entire parking lots for visitors.

2. Greeters

Another arm of the hospitality ministry is door greeters. These are often the first people visitors interact with when they arrive at church.

Greeters get stationed at different locations around the church campus. A greeter can be in the parking lot, at the front door, or assigned to various entry points.

Their purpose is to welcome new people to the church. A smile and friendly hello can go a long way in making a person feel accepted.

Simple tasks like opening the door, pointing the visitor in the right direction, or helping someone onto a transportation cart will be a warm touch. Each touch lets the visitor know you have a compassionate church and are happy they chose to worship there.

Churches with a youth ministry also have greeters. Teen members have the responsibility of escorting teen visitors to the youth sanctuary.

3. [Church Welcome Videos](#)

Looking for new and innovative ways to welcome visitors to your church? [Worship service greetings](#) don't have to be limited to addresses from the pulpit. One great option is to play [church welcome videos](#) before worship while members and guests gather. These videos are colorful, upbeat and accompanied by music, creating a welcoming atmosphere for all.

To make things even easier, Vanco has created a YouTube playlist filled with videos you can play on your projector at church.

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From welcomes to countdowns, prayers, offerings, and informational guides, our team is hard at work creating resources that will help turn visitors into members. [Subscribe to Vanco's channel](#) to get access to the latest videos.

By playing these videos with the volume on low, you can create an ambiance that will help visitors feel more comfortable and welcomed. This is just one small step you can take to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment in your church. So why not give it a try and see what kind of impact it can have on your congregation?

4. Welcome Center

Something to consider when planning your church welcome ideas is including a [church welcome center](#). They are a modern concept focused on welcoming visitors to the church. A welcome center is as simple as a table set up outside the sanctuary. Or your welcome center can have an office room strategically located near the entrance of the church.

If your church has a bookstore, the welcome center could have a space inside or next door.

The purpose of the welcome center is to provide answers to visitors. Questions can range from "Where is the ladies' room?" to "Do you have a nursery?"

The welcome center is equipped with information about the church and its ministries. Volunteers also have communication devices to connect with other volunteers who can answer specific questions.

It's customary for most churches only to have an operational welcome center during church services. Visitors can speak with the church receptionist or secretary during regular office hours.

5. Visitor Seating

Visitors attending your church may come with a member of the church. However, some visitors attend on their own. If you have numerous unaccompanied visitors each week, consider creating a visitor section.

You always want visitors to have a good experience. Since they're your guest, they should have the best seats in the house.

The visitor section should be located near the front of the church and close to an aisle. Have the seating designated for visitors to avoid members using the seats. You can open the available seats to anyone coming in after the service begins.

It's the responsibility of the church ushers to monitor seating. Someone is assigned to the section to provide visitors with assistance. This can include providing a hymnal, Bible, pen, or offering envelope.

6. Visitor Welcome

There's a segment to welcome visitors to the church in every church service. A designated person stands before the church and asks visitors to stand. Next, they offer scripture and thank their guests for choosing the churches as their place of worship.

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At smaller southern churches, it's a custom to allow visitors to introduce themselves and share the name of their home church. They may also add where they are from and who extended the invitation to come to this church.

You may also see some churches encourage members to greet visitors with a hug or handshake. Of course, this practice may be on hold due to the pandemic. Otherwise, the choir sings an uplifting up-tempo song to set the tone.

During the formal visitor welcome, the pastor can invite visiting clergy members to join them in the pulpit. Failure to do so can get misconstrued as a sign of disrespect for visiting clergy to sit in the pews.

7. Visitor Packet

It's customary that the ushers pass out a visitor [welcome packet](#) during the visitor welcome. The purpose of the packets is to gather information about the visitor and share information about the church. This is a must to add in your church welcome ideas.

Important items for the visitor packet include:

Visitor Card

The visitor card is an index size card that solicits demographic information about the visitor. A popular way churches entice visitors to complete the card is to say they will send end-of-the-year contribution statements.

If your church utilizes [church management software](#), you'll want to enter information about church visitors. One, it makes contribution reporting easier. Two, it allows you to stay in touch with visitors.

Tithe Envelope

Churches use tithe envelopes to collect offerings. Design the envelopes with a section for contact information. It also allows the person to identify as a member or visitor.

Prayer Card

Often, people visit churches when they're experiencing a life crisis. They only give their name and contact information to receive personal prayer or a follow-up call. Offering a prayer card is a discreet way for the visitor to solicit prayer.

Scripture Bookmark

Include a bookmark with an encouraging scripture as a small token of appreciation. Popular scriptures include:

- 1 Peter 4:9
- Hebrews 13:2
- Leviticus 19:34
- Psalm 122:1
- Romans 15:7

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The bookmark should also include the church's contact information, website, and number for the prayer line. As an added touch, include a customized ink pen and mints or chewing gum.

8. Swag Bag

Is your church big on branding and has a large budget for converting visitors to members? If so, you should consider providing first-time visitors with [swag bags](#) as one of your church welcome ideas to help grow your congregation.

Swag bags are different than visitor packets because they include welcome gifts. They have branded gear to promote your church. Consider items from your church book store like a small journal, custom t-shirt, or a branded bottle of hand sanitizer.

You could also include a bottle of water and a bag of chips. Or a coupon for one complimentary item from the bookstore with a maximum purchase price.

The goal of swag bags is two-fold. You want to make first-time visitors feel appreciated. Second, it is a way to market your church.

Cut expenses by providing visitors with a redeemable coupon for the swag bag. They can redeem the coupon at the bookstore or welcome center.

Since swag bags are for first-time visitors, you'll need a process to document when someone receives a bag. You can also include an expiration date for the swag back and make them non-transferrable.

9. Visitor Reception

After you welcome visitors to the church, invite them to a welcome reception immediately following church service. The reception is an opportunity for the pastor to greet visitors formally.

The new member's ministry will have representatives to share information about joining the church and attending new members' classes. They can also answer questions about the church and various ministries and services.

The kitchen ministry can prepare light hors d'oeuvre and punch for attendees.

10. Invitation to Join

And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." - Mark 8:34

The invitation of discipleship is a very important stage of the church experience and are great church welcome ideas. Every time the church doors open for a service, prayer meeting, or ministry meeting, the invitation to join should be extended.

One may think this is redundant behavior. However, you never know when visitors or the unsaved are among you.

The invitation doesn't have to be a long and drawn-out process, especially at meetings. Ask those in attendance if they are saved and want to join the church. Gather their contact information and pass it on to the new member's ministry.

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Of course, it is more formal to give the invitation during Sunday service. During church services, people get asked to come forward. The pastor says a prayer, and they are then escorted to the new member's room to complete paperwork.

11. Email Marketing

As you've noticed, every time you welcome visitors to the church, you should get their contact information. The purpose of doing so is to help your teams engage in welcome activities. One activity is [email marketing](#).

Whenever you ask someone for their email, you need a disclaimer letting them know that they're consenting to receive emails by giving the email.

Do not bombard visitors with too many communications. Start with a simple thank you for attending service today message. Ensure the email also includes an open invitation to visit any time.

Include the church's contact information, service times, and business hours. If you have a prayer line or support email, give a brief explanation of why it's useful.

You can also include promotions for any upcoming [church events](#).

12. Welcome Letter

The day following the church visit, get a list of all visitors from the Sunday service. Sort the information based on first-time, repeat, and youth visitors. This exercise is why it's important to invest in a church management system.

Each category of visitor needs a [welcome letter](#) appropriate for their situation.

First-Time Visitors

The welcome letter for first-time visitors acknowledges their choice to choose your church as the place they worshipped on Sunday. You want the text to encourage them to come again.

Remind the visit to look over any information provided to them during their visit. If you gave them a coupon for a gift from the church bookstore, encourage them to use it.

Repeat Visitors

In the repeat visitor letter, you want to acknowledge their commitment to attending the church. Ask if there is anything the church can do to seal the deal to get them to become a member. It's also a good time to include a brief survey to see what they like most about your services.

You can also include a couple of questions about why they haven't joined. Also, insert a list of ministries the church offers. Sometimes repeat visitors searching for something won't ask if it's something you offer.

Youth Visitors

Hopefully, your church's visitor cards for youth include contact information for the parents. For younger children and toddlers, you should be utilizing a sign-in app to capture the parent's information.

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Direct all correspondence to the parent or the person with [legal guardianship](#) of the youth visitor.

Share the wonderful programs your church offers for youth. In the letter, thank them for allowing the youth to visit. If you have an upcoming event like Vacation Bible School, include a promotion piece.

Provide the contact information for the youth pastor and their team. Close the letter by letting by encouraging the entire family to come out for Sunday service,

13. Acknowledgement of Offering

Another church welcome idea is to send a letter to visitors acknowledging their donation during the [church offering](#). Let them know the wonderful things the church is doing in the community.

There is often a misconception that the church is misusing funds. This opinion comes from a lack of transparency. In the letter, list recent projects made possible due to their contribution.

If you have any upcoming community outreach projects like food giveaways, COVID testing, or a Habitat for Humanity house build, invite them to join you.

Younger generations want to see the church at work outside the church's walls. If you're going to grow your congregation, you must appeal to the next generation of worshippers.

14. Nursery Often people are reluctant to come to church if they have an infant. They don't want to be a distraction or inconvenience others if the baby starts to cry.

There are different ways to welcome visitors to church that isn't about a swag bag or a handshake as they exit the building. Sometimes people just want to know you acknowledge their presence and have accommodations to enhance their worship experience.

Church nurseries are an opportunity for childcare workers and people that love babies to get involved in ministry.

Consider investing in an alert system. These apps notify the parent if they need to check on the baby. It avoids the embarrassment of a message going across the church monitors or an usher beckoning the parent to come here.

15. Children's Ministry

Children's ministries are more common than nurseries in smaller churches. As one of your church welcome ideas, be sure to cater to families that know the importance of a strong spiritual foundation.

One day, the youth will be the future church, so you want to invest in your youth ministries. To convert them and their families into new church members, create a strategic plan that focuses on the youth.

Proverbs 22:6 speaks on bringing up children in a Christian environment. Whenever the church hosts a service, the children and youth ministries should also have a version of the program.

16. Church Management Software

We've mentioned church management software several times, and you may be wondering what it is and how it benefits your church.

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In business, companies use customer relationship management software. The CMS systems in churches have the same functioning aspects. You're using it to maintain members' records and create a better experience for increased engagement.

Individual ministries also use the CMS software to engage new church members and keep track of the ministry's activities. The system is also a great asset to the media ministry, increasing content that welcomes new people.

17. Touch Team Ministry

The concept of a touch team ministry is new to some churches. The concept behind the ministry is to create touches, or interactions, with new and existing members regularly.

It's common in churches to hear people say the church forgot them once they joined. The focus of the touch team ministry is to connect with church members at least once a month. If the member has no record of attendance across multiple weeks, their responsibility is to make multiple attempts at contacting the person.

You can also utilize the ministry to contact church visitors who expressed an interest in joining the church but didn't return. It's a simple follow-up call to see if they need anything from the church, like information or services.

18. Call From the Pastor

Have you ever had a visitor make an emotional plea during their church visit? Instead of sending a thank you letter or campaigning for the person to join the church, and a personal touch.

Have the pastor or associate member reach out to the individual to see how they are doing. Following the pastor's call, have the touch team ministry follow-up at random times.

The display of empathy for their situation can lead the person to become a member. It's all about how you welcome new people.

19. Church Banners

Church banners are an inexpensive investment to help welcome visitors to the church. Use banners to help visitors navigate the campus. They are also useful in promoting upcoming ministry series and events.

Church welcome ideas are limitless when you have the right people on your team. If you want to capture people's attention stopped at a traffic light or stop sign, use [feather banners](#) to display an invitation to visit the church.

Banners are often more effective than digital displays because they are bright, colorful, and have eye-catching designs using large fonts.

20. Prayer Ministry

Prayer ministries have a lot to offer new church members. We already shared various ways to incorporate the prayer ministry in church welcome ideas. Their mission doesn't stop when people become new church members.

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Prayer ministries pray over the church so that it can grow your congregation. They host prayer meetings that are open to the public.

How to welcome visitors to church is sometimes incidental.

At your watch night or New Year's Eve services, increased numbers of visitors usher in the new year with a renewed mind. New year goals cards are encouraged, and the prayer ministry prays over the cards throughout the year.

They randomly choose cards to contact the individual every quarter throughout the year. Sometimes the person was a visitor praying for a new direction in life, and the call encouraged them to return to the church.

21. Photo with the Pastor

If a visitor asks to take a picture with the pastor, you should oblige. It may sound vain, but the reality is pastors get held in high regard. Some pastors are even treated like celebrities in their churches, communities, and the country.

Don't hold up the exit line. Instead, have a designated area where the pastor can take photos after greeting congregants and visitors following the service.

The delay could deter some people, cutting down on the number of requests. You may also want to create a backdrop for [church marketing](#) purposes.

22. Transportation Service

Church transportation services shouldn't be limited to church members. For this church welcome idea, extend transportation services to visitors.

Notate on the church website, bulletin, and voice message to encourage potential visitors with transportation needs to contact the church.

23. Church Video Countdowns

Imagine if you could effortlessly welcome church visitors and transform them into devoted members. The secret lies in [church countdown videos](#)! These captivating masterpieces build anticipation and unity, leaving a lasting impression on every newcomer.

With each tick of the clock, stunning visuals and inspiring music, these videos create a warm, irresistible atmosphere that speaks to the hearts of visitors. Church countdown videos bridge the gap between first-time guests and committed members, making them feel like they've found their new spiritual home.

Don't let another visitor slip away. Embrace the power of these extraordinary videos and watch your congregation grow like never before by using Vanco's [church countdown videos](#).

Stream these captivating visuals before every service and witness the mesmerizing effect on your attendees. Choose from an array of timeframes – one, two, five, ten, fifteen, twenty or thirty minutes – to perfectly suit your church's unique needs. Each video comes alive with inviting melodies and breathtaking visuals, creating an unforgettable experience.

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Seeking [captivating videos](#) for church services or expert guidance on stewardship, church growth, and marketing? Look no further! [Subscribe to our YouTube channel](#) and unlock a treasure trove of invaluable content, designed to propel your church to new heights. Our dedicated team tirelessly crafts cutting-edge videos to empower your congregation's journey.

24. Holiday Gift Baskets

More than ever, people need community outreach. These are people in the neighborhoods where their church is located. The church should partner with local organizations to assist the less fortunate.

The holidays are when people are more likely to come to the church for help with food and toys for their children. Consider in your church welcome ideas to include welcome activities and [church outreach](#) programs to attract new members.

25. Host a Revival

Psalm 51:10 says, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Welcome new people to the church by hosting a Spring or Fall revival.

Revivals are how to welcome visitors to church. They attract more visitors than weekly church services. Plus, revivals are a call to existing members to be a beacon of light for those seeking salvation. It's then up to the church to utilize welcome activities to convert visitors to new members.