



How to become a welcoming church

Handout 1/8 from DIY Workshops W6

<https://www.john-truscott.co.uk/Resources/DIY-Workshops-index>

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What would a visitor make of us?

- ★ **Andy and Ali** are in their mid-20s and have lived together locally for a couple of years. Andy is a mechanic at a local garage, Ali works in a nearby Tesco's. They have no real church links, but with a baby due in a few weeks' time, they are thinking about getting married next year. They turn up this morning, somewhat reluctantly.
- ★ **Brian and Barbara** come one Sunday with their three children aged 12 to 16. They have just moved to this area from 100 miles away and Brian is about to start as head of a large secondary school in your town. Barbara led the three music groups at their last, very lively, independent church. They are looking for a new spiritual home and yours is the third church they have tried in three weeks.
- ★ **Colin** is divorced and lives alone. He is in his late 30s. He hasn't been to church for two years but he arrives today with Chloe, his 7-year-old daughter. He is ten minutes late and the service is well under way. He is very shy and looks white, thin and worried.

For whichever characters you are allocated:

How might they be feeling as they approach / enter your church building? (groups – single words)

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What are their needs just now? (groups)

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How would / should you seek to meet those needs: (groups)

before the service?	during the service?	after the service?

What do we learn from all these case studies about a welcoming attitude? (plenary)

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Handout 2/8 from DIY Workshops W5

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Does everyone here feel at home?

Imagine you are a visitor to your church and at a Sunday service you are overwhelmed by the love and care that the members of the church so very obviously have for God, and for each other.

Ignoring the welcome *you* receive as a visitor, describe some of the features that gave you this impression.

What might happen to make the following '*regular*' attendees feel **UN**welcome?

A single mum (with a screaming baby) who comes once a month or so

A key church member's 16-year-old daughter, with the skimpiest 'skirt' you have ever seen, body piercings and hair dyed green – trailing well behind her parents

An elderly gentleman who has been a member all his life, whose wife died recently

A typical 7-year-old boy whose parents bring him along each week

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Handout 3/8 from DIY Workshops W6

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God welcomes each one of us

This is based on Luke 15:1-2; 14-24

The people Jesus welcomed

The enthusiasm of God's welcome to each one of us

1: Our welcome is part of our offering back to God

2: Our welcome shows Christ's love and care to all in need

3: Our welcome needs the Holy Spirit's help to reach out to the world

So, if welcome is so central to the gospel, what does this tell us about our 'welcome team'?

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The Good Church Welcome rep arrives

1 How much do the congregation seem to love God, and each other

2 How well do people recognise strangers and offer hospitality at church / at home?

3 How well can a non-churchgoer follow the service/sermon without embarrassment?

4 What message do your buildings (in and out), signboards and grounds give?

5 What impression do your website, welcome leaflet/pack and notice-sheet offer?

6 How easy is it for any stranger to park, find their way in, and take a seat?

7 Are the congregation clearly reluctant to have to go home after the service?

8 Are all visitors followed up in an appropriate way by a church member?

9 How culturally at home would an ordinary newcomer aged 35 feel?



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Handout 5/8 from DIY Workshops W6

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Provide a take-away

Principles

However simple, it should look really good: colourful, visual and attractive, not a slip of photocopied paper.

If you want to describe your church, don't start with activities or the building – try who you are or why you exist.

Make it people-centred – that makes it interesting (so photos are important).

Include some one or two sentence commendations from members of the congregation.

Avoid any Christian or church jargon of any kind (ask someone who is not a Christian to vet it for you).

Promote your website, social media platforms, email address and other contact details.

Include a minimum of basic information: services, times, etc.

You might want to include a return slip.

Include something about membership (but not about finance at this stage).

Ensure it is all right up-to-date (as is the website).

It may not be of high importance to you, but visitors want to know about facilities for children, parking, loos, length of service, what to wear, what to expect.



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Handout 6/8 from DIY Workshops W6

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A Newcomers Team

Churches benefit from a small, dedicated team of those who ensure that no visitor or newcomer falls through the net. This is a specialist team distinct from any stewards team you already have.

Principles

Keep the team small and give it a specific responsibility (no rota if possible).

Appoint one overall leader and select members by gift/ability and enthusiasm, with a mix of ages and backgrounds.

Keep the team low-profile and do not upstage your other welcomers.

Support the team by training, encouragement and prayer.

Do not fail to give a personal welcome to children and young people rather than ignoring them.

Their task

1. To be committed to this work on a weekly basis
2. To spot newcomers/visitors and put them at ease before the service begins
3. To get alongside them afterwards and, where possible, introduce them to others
4. To remember names and faces for all who come again, whenever that may be
5. To hand out appropriate print, and to recommend follow-up whenever helpful
6. To keep good records each week and pass on information to Ministers/staff
7. To include visitors brought by regular members of the congregation in the above
8. To champion the cause of welcome to the church; to work themselves out of a job!

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Handout 7/8 from DIY Workshops V6

<https://www.john-truscott.co.uk/Resources/DIY-Workshops-index>

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Always speak to strangers

Words to use

Words to avoid

Principles to follow

Errors to avoid

Key lessons to learn from this workshop

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Handout 8/8 from DIY Workshops V6

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Resources on this website

Resources to help you further

Go to the Resources section of the website

Articles

- | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|
| A21 | The use of print in outreach |
| A31 | Helping people back to church |

Training Notes

- | | |
|-------|----------------------------------|
| TN14 | Setting up a Newcomers Team |
| TN44 | The message of your buildings |
| TN83 | The service isn't over yet |
| TN86 | Customer care for churches? |
| TN107 | A church policy on hospitality |
| TN109 | A test for your church's welcome |
| TN134 | Integrate your newcomers |
| TN137 | The message of your people |
| TN146 | Be hospitable! |