

# **GUEST SERVICE TRAINING**

## **NEW LIFE COMMUNITY CHURCH – PASTOR JOHN PALMIERI**

**Why is this so important? Because people matter to God and what matters to God should matter to us.**

### **WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO NEWCOMERS?**

#### **#1 FRIENDLINESS**

Most church members believe they are friendly when in reality they are friendly only to others they already know.

*Ideas: practice the 3x3 rule. For 3 minutes after service seek to identify and greet three newcomers.*

#### **#2 NICE FACILITIES AND ADEQUATE SPACE**

"Efficiency is getting the job done right. Effectiveness is getting the right job done. Excellence is getting the right job done well."

- A. Clean rest rooms are essential.
- B. Adequate parking was mentioned as an issue.
- C. Climate control and adequate seating.
- D. Neatness and safety of children's area was a big concern.

#### **#3 NURSERY, PRESCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S ISSUES**

Safety is the number one concern:

- A. They want to make sure that there are no dangerous toys or items.
- B. They want to be certain that only parents can get to the child.
- C. They want some identification system to pick up the children
- D. They want to be certain sufficient adult workers are present.
- E. They want close access to be able to check on their children.
- F. They want to be able to be notified if needed. Pager or numbering system.
- G. They watched closely the attitude of the children workers.
- H. They want a clean environment for the children.

#### **#4 ORGANIZATION INSTEAD OF CHAOS**

A visitor's impression of a church he visited: *"It was a mad house. The service started late, the music was messed up, the person running the sound system was incompetent and many of the people leading the worship service seemed clueless".*

#### **#5 GREETERS AND WELCOME CENTERS**

Insights about Ushers and Greeters:

- A. Ushers who hand out bulletins are not always good Greeters.
- B. A good Greeter Ministry requires good training.
- C. A good Welcome Center keeps current information about the church, a map of the church, and gives away items.
- D. Effective churches seek the friendliest members to be Greeters.

RESEARCH COMPILED BY BARNAS RESEARCH "SURPRISING INSIGHTS FROM THE UNCHURCHED".

## Guest Service Top Ten Mistakes:

1. Ushers or greeters that do not take initiative or are not proactive.
2. Greeters that hand out bulletins but don't smile.
3. Ushers or Greeters that dress like they just got out of bed or are going to a picnic.
4. Greeters with bad breath.
5. Ushers that let babies or infants cry and make noise in the service without taking action.
6. Usher that say "I don't know". If you don't know then go find out.
7. Ushers or greeters that ignore new comers that look lost.
8. Ushers that think they are security guards or bouncers.
9. Ushers that can't seem to be found when something unexpected comes up in the service.
10. Ushers that "bark out" commands like a sergeant. Friendly but firm should be the motto.

**What bothered first-time visitors:** These 15 items listed were generated from multiple conversations with first-time visitors across faith traditions:

1. No welcome from the parking lot to the pews.
2. Finding the right door to sanctuary appeared difficult.
3. Members in the pews held on to their "good seats."
4. Too many words seemed like "churchy insider words" throughout the worship experience.
5. No safe, clean nursery for the babies and little ones.
6. No welcoming and sincere greeting extended by pastors or members.
7. No warmth or hospitality extended.
8. Missing joy and a spiritual atmosphere.
9. No sense of Christian love and family in the church community.
10. Very limited reaching out to people who are not members or strangers.
11. Very few ministries or activities for youth or children.
12. Public recognition of worship service visitors that left them feeling uncomfortable or awkward
13. Appears to be no obvious vision or purpose for the congregation.
14. On Sunday morning, members and ushers seem focused on "in-house, member only" conversations.
15. No one invited them back.

By Lynetter Hawkins

## "What is your biggest challenge in your church hospitality ministry?"

By Evangelism Coach

The answers fell into 5 common barriers where church's struggle with their hospitality ministry.

### 1. Cliques

Respondents described their congregations as having people who

- A. don't notice church visitors,
- B. friendly with each other,
- C. don't care about welcoming outsiders,
- D. too busy fellowshiping with themselves.

### 2. No Personal Ownership

- A. So that the members would personally greet church visitors
- B. Taking responsibility for some of the systems of hospitality (training, recruiting, etc).
- C. To get beyond "Friendly with themselves" and greet visitors

### 3. Not enough Volunteers

This was a big concern. Church Hospitality ministries are labor intensive.

- A. Administration level of Hospitality Ministry.
- B. Recruiting the Greeter / Usher / Welcome Center Volunteers.
- C. Training the Church Greeter
- D. Training the Ushers.

### **3. Not enough Volunteers (continued)**

- E. Training the Welcome Center Volunteers.
- F. Scheduling the volunteers
- G. Keeping volunteers motivated and so.
- H. Finding, Recruiting, Training, Scheduling and maintaining all those volunteers is a lot of work.

### **4. Lack of Adequate Training for Hospitality Ministry Volunteers**

This was two fold

#### **Not enough training materials**

- A. How to Recruit and Train Greeters: [www.ChurchGreeterTraining.com](http://www.ChurchGreeterTraining.com)
- B. How to Welcome Church Visitors: [www.WelcomeChurchVisitors.com](http://www.WelcomeChurchVisitors.com)

#### **Not enough training**

- A. Respondents point out that there is a great need to provide some kind of training, but have a hard time knowing where to start.

### **5. Connecting Visitors to the Congregation**

Can visitors connect relationally to the congregation? How easy is it for them to break into the social networks of your congregation?

Respondents indicated that they needed help with ways to

- A. Get church visitor contact information.
- B. Contact visitors during the week after the service
- C. Help visitors come back a 2nd, 3rd, or 4th time.

## **BASIC JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

### **Ushers:**

Ushers care for people as they attend the worship service. They provide practical help by helping people find a seat, collecting offerings, handling disturbances, serving communion, helping with baptismal services or special events and providing information for newcomers.

### **Greeters:**

Greeters welcome and make contact with each person entering the doors to the sanctuary or building. They help provide a warm friendly environment for people attending services.

1. The First to Welcome
2. The First to Guide
3. The First to Assist
4. The First to Answer
5. The First to Introduce
6. The First to Smile

### **Parking Lot Attendants:**

Parking attendants manage the flow of traffic, help people find parking spaces, keep the parking lot safe and are the first to welcome people.

### **Welcome Center Hosts:**

Welcome Center Hosts are crucial to the growth of the church by extending a friendly greeting and smile, by thanking visitors with a mug, providing information, and encouraging the visitors to return. You may even become their first friend at church.

**Guest Services Coordinator:**

Guest Service Coordinator oversees the quality and excellence of the various guest service ministries by filling in the gap where needed, making sure Greeters, Ushers and Welcome Hosts are working together. The question they try to answer is how are newcomers being treated and how can we improve their experience.

**Requirements for Guest Service position:**

1. Regular attender at New Life for a least 3 months.
2. Moving towards becoming a member.
3. Ability to be at service 30 minutes prior.