



What is the first impression guests have about your church? First impressions matter because people matter. We hope people will return so that they will hear truth from the Word of God and if they are not already, that they will become fully devoted followers of Christ. This checklist walks you through areas that should be reviewed to maximize the opportunity when guests visit our churches.

Welcome and Hospitality Checklist

Building

Do you have up to date signs on major roads or streets near the church to direct people in the correct direction?

Can the church's name and service times be easily read from the street?

Does the exterior of your church look well-maintained and attractive? Is the landscaping well maintained?

Do you have designated and convenient parking spaces for guests located near the front doors of your building?

Is there adequate lighting in the parking lot and entrances for evening services?

Is reserved parking for handicapped close to the building?

Are parking attendants normally visible throughout your parking areas? Does this need to be added to your plan?

Are the sidewalks, entrance, and interior spaces of the church easy to navigate for persons in wheelchairs or with other mobility concerns? Are handicapped spots clearly marked?

Are the entrances to the church office, Sanctuary, meeting spaces and the nursery clearly marked?

Are signs identifying each room in the church located near each door?

Are there clear directional signs to restrooms, nursery, and classrooms?

Are the restrooms clean and stocked with soap, towels (or hand dryers) and tissue?

Do you have adequate lighting in the hallways, classrooms, and the sanctuary? Is there adequate lighting at night in parking areas and entrance areas?

Are your public spaces uncluttered? That is, have old bulletins and out-of-date church brochures been discarded? Are collection boxes neat looking and well-marked? Are seldom used items stored out of sight?

Do you have an adequate number of waste baskets?

Are rooms clean? Have the rooms been properly maintained?

Communication

Do you have an up to date church website that provides the church location, times of worship services, current activities and a way to contact the church? Do the photos prioritize people and relationships?

Can visitors to your website get directions to the church in one click?

Does your church have a Facebook page, a Twitter feed, or other ways to engage in social networking where members and their friends can engage in the life of the congregation? Does the information posted there give a positive and accurate image of the church?

Do you attempt to raise public awareness about the life and activities of your congregation through advertising, specific member invitations, special events?

Is the receptionist and/or voice mail message on the church phone friendly and informative?

Is church signage, or other publicly visible information correct?

Nursery and Children

Are the locations of the nursery and other child-spaces clearly marked?

Is the nursery located near the worship space?

Do ushers and greeters warmly welcome children and proactively offer information about Sunday School, Nursery, or other child-focused ministries?

Is childcare information available in the bulletin, in the pews, and online?

Are children registered when entering the nursery? Is there a system for identification and pick up in place?

Are the nursery staff capable and warm persons?

Are the rooms for infants, toddlers and children attractive, clean, well illuminated and free of odors?

Are toys, furnishings, equipment and bedding clean and sanitary?

Is your church up to date in all Safe Church practices and training?

Worship

Is hospitality emphasized in lessons and sermons? Are members encouraged to invite people to church activities?

Do you have designated "greeters" besides ushers who are trained to welcome and help guests?

Do you have attractive and understandable visuals/information (screen or bulletin) that help guests participate in your worship?

Do the ministerial staff have opportunities to greet guests before the service?

Do you welcome guests early in the service without singling them out?

Do you provide direction and an invitation to explain communion so that guests know they are welcome and how to participate?

Is your worship bright, vibrant, and well-paced?

Is your music, whatever style, done well and will guests be able to participate in congregational singing?

Is the sound in the room well balanced?

Do the sermons generally have life application points that are relevant to people?

Do the sermon and announcements avoid technical terms or language only familiar to regular attenders?

Does the service start on time? Does the service begin and end well, i.e., on a strong inspirational note?

Do regular attenders encouraged to introduce themselves to people they do not recognize?

General Hospitality

Does your church have a common space that allows people to gather for a few moments?

Do your members engage guests and invite them to other social activities after the service, taking the initiative to introduce them to regular members?

Do you have a workable procedure for getting the names and addresses of first-time guests?

Is there a system for following up with first-time guests? Do you provide first time guest with something to remember your church? Do you have a welcome packet or gift for first time guests?

Does your follow up system include responding to guests within 48 hours?

Do you have a Welcome Center or information table with current newsletters, attractive brochures and other information about your church? Is the Welcome Center located in a visible location?

Are the bulletin boards current?

Are extra copies of curriculum and Bibles in the classrooms? Are teachers prepared and trained to welcome guests?

Do you have a name tag system that is current and utilized in small classes?

Are there classes, groups or special events held regularly for newcomers?

Do you have a system in place to follow up with newcomers when they return after their initial visit? Do you have a system to shepherd newcomers until they decide to become regularly active in the church?

Do you regularly interview people who have recently visited your church and ask them for feedback, including those who came only once as well as those who have continued to come? Do you ask how people found out about the congregation and what their initial experiences were like?

This list is by no means all inclusive. Entrusted To Teach Ministries recommends each church occasionally have an impartial “first time guest” visit your church so that they can share their experience with church leadership. This feedback can be very informative.

You might also be interested in our First Impressions training for those who lead and/or serve in your welcoming ministry. You can learn more about this one hour and thirty minute seminar at www.entrustedtoteach.org/seminars-offered.