

Invite · Welcome · Connect

2022 Checklists & Ideas/Resources



Newcomer Ministry High Level Congregational Assessment

There are assumptions in these comprehensive assessment tools that your congregation is undertaking significant opportunities to teach and support lifelong Christian formation in its members. This high level list is a starting place for you to evaluate your congregational newcomer ministry. It is not intended to be either all inclusive or size specific.

INVITE ... Evangelism

- Do your clergy, staff, and lay leaders teach, preach, and model INVITE (personal invitation) & Evangelism?
- What are you doing in an organized way to invite new people to visit your church? Do you provide any physical tools to your members to help them invite others?
- How do you prepare your congregation to be evangelists? Do you offer education/ training/ guides guides for sharing their faith journey/stories?
- What are the creative avenues your church offers to invite the local community to visit? Do you intentionally connect these activities with information about your church?
- How well do you know (and how much are you involved with) the community surrounding your church?
- What is your church/clergy/staff relationship with local civic/community groups?
- What do you offer in the way of communication, both outside & in-house? Have you cultivated a relationship with your local media?
- Is your website up-to-date, relevant, newcomer & mobile friendly? Are you using social media as an evangelism tool?

WELCOME ... ministry of Hospitality

- Do your clergy, staff, and lay leaders teach, preach, and model a theology of WELCOME & Hospitality?
- Do the members of your congregation intentionally look for the stranger in their midst?
- Would you say your congregation is a "friendly community" or is it a "community of friends?"
- Can you identify the members of your congregation who have the gift of hospitality?
- Does your church have an organized comprehensive strategy/system for welcoming and following up with newcomers? If so, do the members of your vestry and leadership know the details of the system?
- How well is your welcoming system working? What needs to be added and/or changed?

COMNECT... Ministry of Belonging

- Do your clergy, staff, and lay leaders teach, preach, and model CONNECT, helping people discern their giftedness (vocation); then empowering, equipping, entrusting, and affirming them for ministry?
- What is your process for connecting newcomers into ministry at your church? Do you have an intentional system of tracking and follow-up of every single newcomer?
- Given that the Deep Truth of CONNECT is the "Sacred Act of Listening"...do you offer any resources/classes for listening skills?
- Can you identify the members of your congregation who are "connectors" those people who naturally have a gift for connecting others?
- Given that newcomer ministry needs to be a team effort, how do your staff and/or lay volunteers interface with newcomers?
- What are your pathways to belonging? Do you offer a clear membership pathway, teaching the importance of our Episcopal rites of initiation, e.g., baptism, confirmation, and reception?
- What is your process for empowering laity for ministry? Do you have a variety of resources/ methods/classes to assist people in discerning their God-given giftedness for ministry?
- Do you have written descriptions of all lay ministries in your church? In what ways do you communicate ongoing up-to-date information about lay ministries to your newcomers and congregation?
- Do you have a system for the nurture and support of all lay ministries in your church?
- Do you have exit conversations with the people who leave your church?

CHURCH-SCHOOL

- Do your clergy, staff, and lay leadership understand and/or believe that your school could be your biggest mission field?
- Do you have an organized strategy to address this issue? If so, what is it?
- What are the ways you intentionally build and maintain healthy relationships between your church and school?



Newcomer Ministry Congregational Assessment

This list is a starting place for you to assess and create your congregation's system for inviting. It is not intended to be either all inclusive or size specific.

Inviting	We do this well	We need to work on this	We do not do this yet
Physical tools for invitation are provided to members i.e., business cards, postcards, etc.	0	0	0
Education & Training			
Classes and/or teaching resources are provided to help			
parishioners learn how to effectively evangelize, i.e. how to			
share their faith story; how to invite someone to church	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc
Church offers numerous creative ways of invitation to the local community			
Intentionally connect these activities with information about your church, always asking the question, Why are we doing this and how does it align with our mission?	0	0	0
Community			
Your church's neighbors			
Do you know them? Do they know you?	O	O	O
Demographics, opportunities & needs of neighborhoods around your church are clearly defined and known	0	0	0



		We do this well	We need to work on this	We do not do this yet
Loca	I community groups			
39	The church has partnered with these groups in outreach efforts	0	0	0
Civic	Involvement			
₹•	Your clergy, staff, and leadership are affiliated with local civic and community groups, i.e, Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, Lions Club, Kiwanis, etc.	0	0	0
Con	rmunication			
Loca	l Media			
₹/	Your clergy, staff and/or leadership have cultivated a relationship with local media, e.g. local newspaper, radio, TV station	0	0	0
39	Creative advertising efforts	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	
Chur	ch Communication	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	
39	Website: up-to-date, relevant, newcomer friendly	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc
39	Newsletter: up-to-date, relevant, online	Õ	$\tilde{\bigcirc}$	Õ
39	Social Media: used in creative ways as an evangelism tool	Õ	Õ	Ŏ
29	Membership Contact Info: up-to-date email & physical addresses	Ö	Ŏ	Ö



Physical Tools for Inviting are provided to members

· Small business cards: Provide the name, address & worship times of the church

Postcards: invitations to special events in the parish

Inexpensive source: Vista Print Creative source: Moo cards

Windshield Car Decals

Episcopal Shield = Source for Episcopal Shield decals: Episcopal Bookstore Custom designed decals

- Smart phone apps = with information about your congregation
- QR (quick response) Codes = download free from Internet; use to link to your website

Education & Training

- Offer Technology Classes in E-Media: enlisting the youth as co-teachers ~ teaching "computer- ese"
- Guides for sharing our faith journey:

Sharing Faith Dinners - Each of us has our own personal faith story, and sharing our stories deepens our own faith as well as helps others to recognize how God has worked in their lives. **Embracing Evangelism** - Episcopal Church 6-part digital course.

Transforming Evangelism, David Gortner - A practical, conversational style guide for helping Episcopalians understand evangelism as a non-threatening spiritual practice.

What is Evangelism? by Patricia Lyons. An engaging vision for sharing the Christian faith.

Creative Ways to INVITE your Local Community

- Creative evangelical efforts outside the church, i.e. Ashes to Go; Laundry Love
- Alpha
- Discovery Series
- Vacation Bible School
- · Community Garden, Community Farmers Market; Pumpkin Patch
- Labyrinth (educate community about your labyrinth; invite them to walk it)
- Meet-Ups
- School Functions; Partnerships with Local School
- Art Show; Community festival; Blue Grass Festival
- Community concert; Jazz Mass
- Blessings of Animals, include blessing animals at local animal shelter or pet store
- Thrift shop connection
- · Community fellowship offerings, e.g. "Wine Study & Bible Tasting"
- Financial workshops, e.g. "Financial Peace University"
- Burning of the Greens, especially if you have a school
- Epiphany (teaching moment-why we celebrate this season): tree chipper w/bags for mulch (church name on bag)
- Rogation Sunday (blessing of parish property and neighborhood blessing)

Community

Your Church's Neighbors: FREE demographic information from Episcopal Church Center

Communication

Communication questions: Jeremy Tackett (Digital Evangelist, The Episcopal Church)

E-Newsletters: Constant Contact & MailChimp offer affordable ways to reach your community

Recommended Books and Websites

- Invite Welcome Connect, Mary Parmer
- · Reclaiming the Great Commission, Claude E. Payne, Hamilton Beazley
- · Being Christian: Baptism, Bible, Eucharist, Prayer, Rowan Williams
- · Unabashedly Episcopalian, Andrew Doyle
- · Crazy Christians: A Call to Follow Jesus, Michael Curry
- Michael Harvey's Unlocking the Growth work
- Harvesting Abundance: Local Initiatives of Food & Faith, Brian Sellers-Petersen
- Episcopal Evangelism
- Episcopal Church Foundation Vital Practices
- The Social Media Gospel: Sharing the Good News in New Ways, Meredith Gould
- Speaking Faithfully: Communications as Evangelism in a Noisy World, Rebecca Wilson, Jim Naughton
- The Digital Cathedral: Networked Ministry in a Wireless World, Keith Anderson
- · Click2Save: The Digital Ministry Bible, Elizabeth Drescher & Keith Anderson
- The Social Church: A Theology of Digital Communication, Justin Wise
- The Agile Church: Spirit-Led Innovation in an Uncertain Age Dwight Zscheile
- · **Twitter for Good,** Claire Diaz-Ortiz
- · Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism: Living in a Three-Storied Universe, Walter Brueggemann



Check List

Newcomer Ministry Congregational Assessment

This list is a starting place for you to assess and create your congregation's system for inviting. It is not intended to be either all inclusive or size specific.

-	1	We do this well	We need to work on this	We do not do this yet
tirst	Impressions			
3 /	Greeting message on church voicemail			
	Warm, friendly voice with clear information about current service times & instructions for leaving a message	0	0	0
39	Road signage and/or banners Contain easily readable information while driving by	0	0	0
30	Facilities inside & out Clean, inviting, attractive, clearly tended & cared for	0	0	0
30	Designated guest parking Located near the front doors & clearly identifiable	0	0	0
30	Interior signage Clearly marked entryways, walkways, & map of facilities available	0	0	0
30	Nursery Accessible, clean, attractive to adults & children	0	0	0
30	Restrooms Well marked, clean, supplies on hand	0	0	0
Gree	eting & Welcomng			
37	Welcome Team Members:			
	Greeters (parking lot, narthex, welcome table)	\bigcirc	0	\bigcirc
	Ushers (narthex, entrance into nave)	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc
	Hospitality (coffee hour)	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc

Welcome

Check List

		We do this well	We need to work on this	We do not do this yet
3 /	Welcome Team Requirements			
	Intentional warm, friendly & informed welcome	0	O	0
	Balance of gender & age on team	0	0	O
3	Clergy Welcome			
	Clergy contact at door of church before and/or after worship	\bigcirc	O	0
	 Words of welcome from clergy before or during service 	O	O	O
₹ /	Welcome – Information Table – Kiosk Clearly identified with signage & staffed with friendly greeters	0	0	0
₹/	Nametags Either everyone wears them or no one wears them	0	0	0
₹/	Newcomer information gathering A system is in place for identifying guests/visitor/newcomers	0	0	0
₹ /	Newcomer welcome gift Welcome gift for newcomers is standard policy	0	0	0
₹ /	Newcomer information packet and/or welcome bag Information for the newcomer is available at all times	0	0	0
₹ /	Kid bags Say to newcomers "We welcome your children here!"	0	0	0
37	Worship bulletin			
	 Simple; understandable; newcomer friendly; intelligible to someone who has never been to church 	0	0	0
	Use insider language [EYC, ECW] as teachable moment	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc
37	Hospitality time (coffee hour) following worship			
	 Intentional attention to visitors/guests/newcomers 	0	0	0
	 Placement important – visitor should not have to go out of their way to get to hospitality location 	()	0	()



		We do this well	We need to work on this	We do not do
Follo	w-Up			,
30	Clergy follow-up			
	Phone call, text or email from clergy following first visit	O	O	0
	Handwritten note, preferably from clergy, within first week	\circ	\circ	\bigcirc
37	Staff and/or Laity follow-up			
	Phone call, email, and/or handwritten note after 1st & 2nd visit	O	O	O
	Invitation to newcomer coffee/dinner and/or newcomer class	O	0	0
	Distribution of newcomer info to staff/leadership	O	\bigcirc	0
	 Delivery of welcome gift (if not given at time of visit) 	\circ	\circ	\bigcirc
30	For more Follow-up & Tracking system development (see Connect Check List)			
Tra	ining, Education, In-House Assessment			
₹/	Administrative support – (see Connect Check List) Development of admin support system for newcomer ministry	0	0	0
₹/	On-going training For entire welcome team, including greeters, ushers, hospitality team	0	0	0
3 /	Flow chart Newcomer ministry strategy/process for clergy/staff/leadership	0	0	0
39	Mystery worshippers audit Invite other Episcopalians to be "mystery worshipers"	0	0	0



Sunday Morning Suggestions

- > Have your designated Vestry person of the day carry around the office cordless phone in order to answer any incoming phone calls, or...
- > Have a lay ministry volunteer at the church office answering the phone for those last-minute people who might be calling to know times of worship services or directions.

Greeting & Welcoming

Welcome Team Members

• Form greeter teams based on which service they attend; this will insure they will generally know the difference between a member and a guest/visitor

Welcome Team Tools & Suggestions

- "Ask Me" Name tags or t-shirts for greeters, ushers, hospitality teams
- Umbrellas: For parking lot and/or front door greeters in the event of rain
- Greeter Connectors: Intentional introduction to others = Greeter escorts visitor into nave and/ or arranges for member to sit with them

Words of Welcome from Clergy

- Brief welcome & instructions for the congregation to introduce themselves to each other before worship service begins; clergy also intentionally points out welcome card/welcome table
- One clergy suggestion = 'words of welcome'

No matter where you come from or where you're going

No matter what you believe or what you doubt

No matter what you feel or just don't feel today

No matter whom you love

You are welcome into this space to be met by a God

Who knows you by name, who knows your heart, who knows your mind, and...

Who wants to have a relationship with you

Nametags

- Blank nametags ~ everyone writes their own name
- The 30 per page (peel off mailing label) nametags
- · Laminated with magnet holders or clip ons

Guest Information Gathering

- Perforated "Get Connected" card attached to worship bulletin (for visitors & current members alike)
- Pew welcome card; guest book
- 5x7 clip board, with information sheet attached, given to each guest as they enter into the narthex
- Pew folder ~ at end of each pew ~ holds blank name tags, perforated newcomer/visitor information card, church information card, marker & pen

Guest Welcome Gift (tie in with the church's

name, locale, or logo)

- · Homemade bread
- Mug
- Magnet
- Pen
- · Packet of popcorn
- Chocolate bar
- Bookmarks
- Water bottle
- Bags for "green" cities where plastic bags are outlawed

Guest Information Packet

Welcome Bag/Folder

- · Church brochure with ministry information
- CD or Flash drive with information about the church
- Episcopalian, Sacraments, Creeds, BCP, brochures
- Church core values, mission & vision statement
- · Current newsletter
- Facilities map with service times

Kid Bags

- Colorful pipe cleaners
- Bible lesson to color
- Crayons
- Sacred scribblers (blank card stock)
- Small stuffed animal or small toy

Hospitality after Worship

- Three minute rule = parishioners are encouraged to talk to someone they do not know for three
 - (3) minutes after the service
- Clergy (if more than one on staff)
 welcoming at different exits after service

Follow-Up

Staff and/or Ministry Volunteer Follow-up

 Newcomer information shared with pertinent staff and/or ministry volunteers = this includes ALL clergy and any person who interfaces with newcomer

Newcomer survey for first time visitors TOOLKIT

Training, Education, In-House Assessment

Flow Chart examples of newcomer ministry strategy/process **TOOLKIT** Mystery worshippers audit **TOOLKIT**

Recommended Books, Articles

- Wonder, R. J. Palacio (written for children, a MUST read for adults)
- Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition, Christine D. Pohl
- · Radical Welcome: Embracing God, the Other, and the Spirit of Transformation, Stephanie Spellers
- · The Inviting Church: A Study of New Member Assimilation, R.M. Oswald & S.B. Leas
- Welcoming article "Three Minute Hospitality" TOOLKIT
- Setting the Table: The Transforming Power of Hospitality by Danny Meyer





Newcomer Ministry Congregational Assessment

This list is a starting place for you to assess and create your congregation's system for connecting. It is not intended to be either all inclusive or size specific.

Cor	necting	We do this well	We need to work on this	We do not do this yet
Proc	ess for connecting newcomers			
30	Intentional system in place for tracking & follow-up Flow chart of process has been created	0	0	0
Desi	gnated person(s) who will connect & keep track of newcomers	0	0	0
3 9	Intentional conversations with each newcomer Connect newcomer with the people & ministry that matches	0	0	0
₹/	his/her particular life phase, gifts, talents, passion Written job descriptions for newcomer staff	0	0	0
The I	mportance of Listening	0	0	0
39	Listening skills training offered on regular basis	0	0	0
Cle	ar Pathways to Belonging			
Inten	tional entry points whereby newcomers are guided in their journey th and into the life of the congregation			
3	Newcomer orientation/new member class			
3	New member welcome	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc
30	Classes for Rites of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Reception	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc
39	Entry points/doorways for spiritual nurture/discipleship	0	0	0



Closing The Connection Loops — Empowering Laity For Ministry

			_	
		We do this well	We need to work on this	We do not do this yet
Disce	rnment of gifts, strengths, vocation			
30	Variety of resources/methods are offered to help people claim	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc
	their life's work as ministry/spiritual practice	O	O	O
Lay M	inistries Accountability, Communication, Nurture & Support			
30	Regular meetings with lay ministry heads	0	0	0
30	Written descriptions & contact information of all lay ministries	\bigcirc	\cap	\bigcirc
	on website and in booklet form for easy distribution	O	O	O
30	Each lay ministry functions as a small group, offering	\cap	\cap	\cap
	encouragement and pastoral care to group members	O	O	O
30	Communication of ongoing Information about Lay Ministries			
	through newsletter, website, Facebook, ministry booklets,	0	0	0
	worship bulletins, other			
30	Recognition, Affirmation, and Celebration of all lay ministries	0	0	0

Entrance & Exit Conversations

- **Entrance Conversation**: For a Realistic Look at your Newcomer Ministry Process, visit with five (5) people who have joined your church within the last year.
- Exit Conversation: For a Reality Check, have an intentional conversation with everyone who leaves your church. This does not have to be a formal process, and might be more informative if done by laity rather than clergy ... meet them for a cup of coffee or a beer!



Connecting

FLOW CHARTS of Invite-Welcome-Connect newcomer process TOOLKIT

INTENTIONAL CONVERSATIONS

(Hearing the newcomer's soul story, an intentional conversation of the head & heart)

Initial Conversation

- · Where did you grow up?
- Did you grow up in another church tradition? If so, which one?
- If Episcopalian now...when were you confirmed/received?
- · If you've been away from church for a long time, what or who brought you back?
- · How did you find your way to this church? Did someone invite you?

Going Deeper

- · Have you ever felt God's call in your life?
- Do you feel called to a particular ministry now?
- · What do you love doing? What gives you life? Joy? What makes your heart sing?

CONNECTORS

(Shepherds, Mentors, Sponsors)

• These are people who might be in the same age range and/or particular life stage as the newcomer, i.e. parents of pre-schoolers or teenagers; dealing with elderly parents; recently divorced, etc.

LISTENING Skills Development

- The Power of Listening: Building Skills for Mission and Ministry, Lynne Baab
- Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction, Margaret Guenther
- · Community of Hope lay chaplain course with listening skills component

Clear Pathways to Belonging

Clear Membership Pathway

- Newcomer's Café provides first opportunity to hear newcomer story (how and/or why they came to church)
- Liturgy of Belonging new member welcome an interim step prior to confirmation, reception **TOOLKIT**
- Seekers Forum forum for connection that combines in-person and online community TOOLKIT
- Confirmation class models: The Discovery Series: A Christian Journey

INTENTIONAL Entry Points/Doorways for Spiritual Nurture/Discipleship

- Outreach Teams, e.g. local soup kitchen, fundraisers for local non-profits, Habitat for Humanity
- Retreats (women, men, youth, couples retreats)
- Pastoral care:

Community of Hope, Stephen Ministries, Daughters of the King, Brotherhood of St. Andrew, Christ Church Cares

- Divorce recovery
- **EPEC (Exceptional Parents of Exceptional Children)**
- · Grief groups, e.g. Mourners Path
- · Caring for the Caregiver
- 12 Step Groups (AA, Al-Anon)
- Thom's Helpers (ministry for young adults with special needs)
- Marriage enrichment
- Expectant parents support group
- New mother ministry
- Mothers Day Out
- MOPS (Mothers of Pre-Schoolers)
- Teacher appreciation (private & public school teachers)
- Fellowship groups (Foyers, dinner groups, 50+/seniors group)
- · Interest groups, e.g. Prayer Shawl Ministry (knitters), fellowships of runners, bikers, softball team, etc.
- Spiritual Nurture ~ Discipleship groups (Bible study, book study, topical studies)
- **Education for Ministry; Forward Movement, RenewalWorks**

Closing the Connection Loops-Empowering Laity for Minstry

Gifts Discernment

- Discovering Your Motivational Spiritual Gifts TOOLKIT
- **Life in the Spirit Workbook TOOLKIT**
- Opening Your Spiritual Gifts ELCA Women TOOLKIT
- **Discovering your Purpose through S.H.A.P.E. TOOLKIT**

Further Discernment

- · Strengths Finder, Tom Rath
- Living your Strengths, Albert Winseman & Donald O. Clifton
- · Gifts Differing: Understanding Personality Types, Isabel Briggs Myers, Peter B. Myers
- The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective, Richard Rohr
- · The Wisdom of the Enneagram, Don Richard Riso, Russ Hudson
- Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation, Parker Palmer

Recommended Books, Articles, Videos, Websites

- **Vital Practices for Leading Congregations**
- Foundations of Discipleship, The Rev. Patrick Gahan
- · The Cause Within You, Matthew Barnett & George Barna
- Everyone Communicates Few Connect, John C. Maxwell
- **Equipping Church Guidebook, Sue Mallory**





