
HOSPITALITY STEP 5

Welcoming begins even before a new person steps into the church. The Stewardship Team and Hospitality Committee (if one is organized) should work in tandem. Hospitality and welcoming are an absolute key element in the success of a parish family. We cannot minister to or with our family if they are not in the pews. Your parish should communicate its mission, its welcome and the times for liturgical celebrations to the wider community. This could include an attractive and useful web site, a brochure about your parish which is available to local realtors, and hotels, and an attractive sign on which the Mass times are large enough to be seen from the road.

It is important that each person who attends an event or liturgical celebration at your parish receive a welcome. The usher/greeter at Mass is a key person and possibly the only person from the parish who will speak with the new person. Greeters should warmly welcome parishioners to Mass and all parish activities. The parish should communicate to all parishioners their responsibility to be welcoming people – even in the parking lot.

One of the most effective ways to foster a sense of community and welcoming is for the parish to provide a coffee hour after the Sunday morning Masses and possibly an ice cream social after the Saturday evening Mass. Ideally this would be every weekend and would be provided free (or at least one weekend per month). For welcoming newly registered members, consider implementing some or all of these suggestions:

Welcoming newly registered members.

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1. Prepare a “Welcome Packet” to be given to all new parishioners. Items that could be included in this packet are:
 - ❖ Welcome letter from pastor
 - ❖ Brochure about the church, staff, activities and a facilities floor plan
 - ❖ Parish bulletin with schedule of Masses
 - ❖ Directory of Parish Ministries
 - ❖ A map of the local area
 - ❖ School and religious education information, Stewardship information including commitment forms for time/talent and finances
 - ❖ Booklets on prayer, parish patron, and parish mission statement
2. When a newcomer wishes to register at the parish, consider a *personal* interview using one of the following methods.
 - ❖ The pastoral staff schedules regular times at the parish office for a personal interview of newcomers
 - ❖ The parish secretary schedules an appointment for the newcomer with a member of the pastoral staff for a personal interview
 - ❖ The parish Welcoming Committee or Parish Stewardship Committee calls the newcomer and schedules an appointment at the newcomer’s home.

3. The registration interview should be more than a mere collection of data. The time spent in friendly conversation about people's background, occupation, interest, etc. often makes a lasting positive impression. It is important to convey to new people *we care about you* and *we ask each parishioner to make a commitment to the parish*. Remember to update parish census information after the interview.
4. Contact should be made by telephone or by a personal visit to those parishioners who do not return a registration or time/talent commitment form. Any commitment form that is returned should be promptly reviewed and the new person's name given to the appropriate contact person.
5. A periodic *newcomers'* social or coffee hour will enable new parishioners to meet other members of the parish family, both new and old. Newcomers should be personally invited. All members of the parish staff and Parish Pastoral Council should be present to personally greet the people, give a tour of the facilities and answer questions.

It is may be possible to obtain from local City Hall, realtors or other commercial suppliers, the names and addresses of new residents. Whatever people's beliefs, the Catholic community should make an effort to welcome them in a warm and friendly manner.