

C.A.A. MINISTRIES

Church Administration Assistance

Steps for Starting a Successful

GREETING & WELCOMING MINISTRY

By

Mike Turner



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Steps for Starting a Successful *GREETING & WELCOMING MINISTRY*

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A successful Greeting & Welcoming Ministry is one of the most important ministries in the church. When properly organized and executed it will be instrumental in the growth of your church. It will also determine how your church is viewed and promoted throughout the community and surrounding areas when discussed. Visitors and guests must feel accepted, recognized, informed, and most of all feel that their visit is appreciated. These feelings are naturally expected when visiting a church. They become the deciding emotions and factors that will determine whether they will return to visit again and/or eventually join your church. Most will make a judgment of your church on their initial visit that will affect their overall perception of your church from that day forward.

In-other-words, your church's first impression will unquestionably affect church growth.

The following are only suggestions and recommendations. They may be tailored to each individual church's preferences, structure, layout, and order of service. We at CAA Ministries have visited many growing churches to observe their greeting and welcoming ministry. We have also interviewed several pastors and discussed what has worked for them. With this knowledge we have combined what seem to be the most effective steps to provide you with the following recommendations and information.

God bless you and your Ministry,

Mike Turner

CAA Ministries

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SECTION - I

Three Recommended Steps for a Successful Greeting & Welcoming Ministry *By CAA Ministries*

- (1)- *Select the right person as “Greeter-Coordinator” for your Greeting & Welcoming Ministry!***
 - (2)- *Properly communicating visitor recognition and receiving maximum results in completed visitor information cards.***
 - (3)- *Assuring those visitor information response cards are gathered and processed after the conclusion of a worship service.***
-

{Step #1}

Select the right person as “Greeter-Coordinator” for your Greeting & Welcoming Ministry! (Friendly, Respected, Responsible, Organized & Dedicated)

Coordinator Responsibilities: (enlist, remind, & instruct)

Enlisting greeters:

Enlisting greeters is no easy task at first. Calling church members and asking if they would serve as a greeter during certain months is not fun, but must be done. This is done at least 2 weeks before the first Sunday of each month. If people are reluctant to commit for a whole month, you should ask if they would greet for one Sunday in the month; and should you have two services, ask if they preferred early or late service and which entrance location would they prefer. You will need to determine the number of greeters needed to cover the entrances before you start calling. The greeters needed each Sunday may be singles, couples, or whole families.

Sunday afternoon is a good time to telephone people because they have just returned from church and seem to be more receptive. You should never insist a member take a turn. Always ask those who declined if you could call them another time. Some will respond, "It's not my thing." or, "Not now. Call me later." Many will respond, "Yes, we'll be glad to serve. Put us down for the whole month." People serving as greeter will occasionally express how much they enjoyed the experience—music to the ears. You should make a mental plus written note of those members.

You should always jot notes beside the names of people who asked to be called later as well as those who refused. You will soon learn who in your congregation are willing to help with the greeter program allowing the process of scheduling to become a more pleasant experience.

Reminding greeters:

You must provide written reminders to the greeters a week before they are to serve. You should either hand deliver written reminders on the Sunday prior to their service or deliver by US mail. In addition e-mail and a personal phone call of encouragement on Friday or Saturday prior to their service is a good idea. The reminders will include where and when the greeters promised to serve and special instructions if needed. After members have served one or more times, you can replace the written notices with phone calls. You should always send thank-you notes to greeters after they have served. (Do not rely on the same people for two consecutive months, they will burn-out and may become ineffective)

The coordinator should always keep a greeter chart at home and one posted at the church. Make sure you post the chart at church in a visible location, and make sure all greeters know where it is located. When you contact someone the second time you can easily phrase your request as like this, "You greeted last (*name of month*). May I count on you to greet again in (*name of month*)?" Most greeters will volunteer for a whole month on the second request; in fact, many of them eventually began signing the greeter chart voluntarily. Greeting will become a pleasure rather than a chore for many.

Members' attendance will be more faithful during the months they serve as greeters. Most will be there every Sunday. The greeter coordinators, however, always must be prepared to substitute. Greeters need notices included regularly in the Sunday bulletins and monthly newsletters. (Serving this week is and those who will be serving next week)

Instructing greeters:

Requirements for greeters should be put in writing for easy review, and schedule greeter training when needed. Always remind them to smile, be friendly and helpful, and arrive at their post 15 to 20 minutes before services are to start. It is recommended that all greeters meet together for prayer prior to taking their designated post. They are asked to greet *everyone* who comes into the church—whether with a handshake or just a smile and a pleasant "good morning". (*Always speak, gives his or her name, and try to make conversation*) Greeters are to open doors, direct visitors, usher them to a seat if necessary, and provide them with a visitor information card with instruction for completing and returning it.

Greeters are urged to learn one new person's name each Sunday. If a greeter does not know a person, he asks, "I don't believe I know your name. I'm (*gives his name*)." If approached in this manner, most people will say whether they are members and give their names. Some members resent being asked if they are visitors when greeters simply don't know them.

Your church becomes friendlier as members learn one another's names. Greeters' names should be printed in the bulletins and newsletters and on their badges. Some greeters will begin telling members who were absent the previous week how much they were missed. This practice frequently uncovered family illnesses and other special needs, which should be passed on to the pastor and/or outreach ministry.

Greeter programs usually are successful if greeter coordinators faithfully enlist greeters, remind them of their commitments and responsibilities, and thank them for serving. Remind greeters of Romans 15:7: "Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God" (RSV).

{Step #2}

Properly communicating visitor recognition and receiving maximum results in completed visitor information cards.

Recognition of visitors:

First, Greeters are the point person for this part of the process. Before church services, Greeters should be at the entrances looking for unfamiliar faces. In the event Greeters are unsure whether a person is a visitor or church member, they should not just assume he or she is a church member and misses the opportunity to welcome a visitors. Simply say; “Hi I’m (*your name*), I don’t think we have met before”.

Most will respond with their name plus some type of signal that will identify them as a visitor or church member. If not, just be interested and available without forcing yourself on folks who just want to get in and get a seat.

Greeters will also want to provide visitors with an information response card along with the church bulletin as they enter and are greeted. Explain the procedure for returning the completed visitor information card. Provide directions to restrooms, and for those with small children, you will also want make sure they are aware of your nursery and its location. However, let them know that children are welcome in the service. The nursery is there if the parents feel their child should not yet be in the worship service.

Second, The Pastor should welcome visitors and guest during the service. (They should never be singled out, ask to stand, ask to remain seated while members stand, or put on the spot in any way) The Pastor should state that he would like to know more about them and also mail each one a personal note containing information about the church and how they may contact him if needed, but to do that he will need their address that may be provided by completing a visitor information response card, and if they did not receive one upon entering please let one of the members of welcoming team know as they now make their way up the isle.

Retrieving completed Visitor information response cards*:

The Greeting & Welcoming Ministry team members are the first “faces” of your church body that a visitor sees. So the friendliness and guidance offered by this ministry is extremely important. It should provide visitors with a feeling of comfort and help that orients them so that their enjoyment and involvement in your church activities are made easier. It will also influence their willingness to complete and return the visitor information cards.

The success to the number of completed visitor information response cards is very much affected by the explanation and direction relayed from the Pastor’s welcoming statement.

Prior to the congregation being dismissed a final statement is made by the pastor acknowledging the presents of honored visitors and guest. He will explain the process for turning in the completed visitor information cards, and for first time visitors, the church would like to provide them with welcome packet containing information about the church and the ministry programs offered for the whole family. (Show an example by holding one up) Explain that they are to hand their completed visitor information card to one of the church ushers or volunteers stationed at each exit as they leave, and request to receive one of the welcome packets.

*View included options for collection of visitor information card.

{Step #3}

Assuring those visitor information response cards are gathered and processed after the conclusion of a worship service.

Gathering Visitor information response cards:

A predetermined location should be established where all completed cards are to be placed. All greeters should be informed and shown the location for placing the completed cards. Before Greeters are dismissed they should be instructed to make a walk through of the church seating to assure visitors did not just leave visitor card lying in their seats. Once gathered the greeters should look over the card together and discuss their observation of the individuals that have turned them in. In many cases it is a good idea for greeters to add any helpful notes or suggestion to the individual cards that might be helpful to the pastor or outreach team.

Processing completed Visitor information response cards:

The processing and follow-up of the completed visitor information response card will determine the success of your overall Greeting & Welcoming Ministry objective.

CAA Ministries as well as others include in Church Management Software programs the input fields for information collected. This helps to easily manage your steps and information throughout the follow-up process. CAA's process of handling information prevents visitors from being overlooked and not responded to in a professional and prompt manner. It also takes the information collected by the Greeting and Welcoming Ministry and transfers over to the outreach ministry's plan for final follow-up. For more information on CAA Ministries and its Church Management Software visit www.CAAMinistries.org

If you do not have, or regardless of whose Church Management Software you use, we strongly recommend that your church purchase and implement CAA Ministries inexpensive web based program "***Outreach Connect***". This program organizes and simplifies the distribution and response process of your church's guests and prospects information. It provides everything you need to turn a "one-night-each-week" outreach program into a seven-day-a-week outreach ministry... For details and more information on CAA Ministries' "***Outreach Connect***" program visit our website at: www.CAAMinistries.org/outreach_connect.htm

**** Not properly following through, loosing or just forgetting someone that visited and completed a visitor information response card can be devastating to a person or family searching for a new way of life through Christ and the church. How your church completes this process will portrays an image that will not be forgotten. It might just be the last opportunity to make a difference in someone's or some family's eternal life decision.***

SECTION - II

Outline for a Successful Greeting & Welcoming Ministry

1. PRAYER
2. Select the right Greeter Coordinator
3. Establish a list of qualified and willing volunteers
4. Create a calendar with dates volunteers are to serve
5. Train all volunteers and provide them with a copy of their responsibilities along with a copy of the calendar of assignment dates
6. Coordinate each step with Pastor's welcoming statement
7. Contact and remind volunteers prior to their day of service
8. Make sure Pastor properly welcomes visitors from the pulpit with explanation and instructions for completing the visitor information cards
9. At the close of the service and from the pulpit; properly instruct visitors where to return visitor information response cards, and acknowledge their presence with appreciation
10. Provide all first time visitors with a welcome information pack
11. Collect all completed cards and place them in their designated location
12. Mail monthly thank you notes to volunteers who have served throughout the month
13. Coordinator should follow-up with staff and outreach team to assure card are being processed properly
14. Everyone is to smile, be excited, friendly, helpful, and polite
15. EXPECT GREAT CHRIST-CENTERED RESULTS

OPTIONS FOR COLLECTION LOCATIONS OF VISITOR INFORMATION CARDS

Throughout we have used the simplest method by suggesting staff and volunteers be stationed at each exit to receive the completed visitor information response cards. Also this is where we make sure all first time visitors are presented with a welcome information pack. There are several options we have observed, however we believe you must decide which one will best serve your congregation and worship style.

Three suggested options are:

1. Have staff, volunteers and greeters stationed at the exits with welcome information packs
2. Have a designated welcome center conveniently located where visitors are directed to stop by to meet church staff and leaders plus receive a welcome information pack.
3. Have a reception room where visitors may enjoy refreshments and socialize with the Pastor, church staff, Sunday School Teachers, and ministry leaders. Provide visitor information packs to first time visitors.

Also many churches chose to provide some type of small gift such as baked goods or candy with attached notes of appreciation and inspiration.

SECTION - III

INFORMATION TO CONSIDER

Visitors must have a positive first impression Or they won't be back

All Greeting & Welcoming Ministry team members are responsible for:

- knowing the layout of the buildings and where the exits are located
- being available in case of an emergency to help people to exits, etc.
- keeping the entrances clean and organized
- being on time and in their appropriate places
- securing an appropriate substitute and informing the Team Leader, in case of absence
- attending Group Prayer time at the designated time to pray for and encourage others
- demonstrating an servant-type attitude that is God-honoring

Greeters are also responsible for:

- opening the doors for incoming and outgoing members and guests
- making sure visitors receive a visitor information response card
- being aware and making themselves available to people needing special assistance
- being prepared and available to direct people when necessary
- keeping the entrances clean (picking up trash, placing "lost" items in the office, etc.)
- keeping traffic flowing through the entrances

Two comments to remember:

- "Hi I'm (*your name*); I don't think we have met before".
- "I don't believe I know your name. I'm (*gives your name*)."

Skills and Gifts to be used and developed: All volunteers in the Greeting & Welcoming Ministry should have a friendly approach and good interpersonal skills. Resourcefulness and conscientiousness are helpful.

"A well-organized greeting team will help your church live up to its friendly reputation. Guests will depart from your building with a positive impression of your Church."

NOTE:

CAA Ministries has designed a visitor information response card that will be extremely valuable to your Pastor, staff, and outreach ministry. (See example on page 15 & 16) It was designed so you may properly identify and minister to the specific needs and desires of each individual or family visiting your church. The card we recommend is printed on both the front and back. A special designed card is recommended for the purpose of helping your church members recognize the people visiting. Member should be informed to look for the people that have these cards in their hand. Once recognized they should speak and express appreciation for their visit. We also recommend that your church's order of service include a brief congregational fellowship time that immediately follows the Pastor's welcoming statement.

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SECTION - IV

More Than a Job!

Greeting is a ministry, not just a task to be done. It is important that greeters be people who really do care about people and who want them to experience God in the worship service, in small groups, and in other settings in the church.

After greeting for a few Sundays, people will begin to recognize the body language of people who are not familiar with the church. It may be helpful for greeters to remember a time when they were going into a meeting or a building for the very first time. They should consider such questions as: "What did it feel like?" "What questions did you have?"

People visiting a church probably want to be sure they are going in the right door and that they are not interrupting anything. People may wonder if they will find seats and how they will be received when they sit near others.

Greeters should also have in mind the special concerns visitors might bring. Visitors with small children may need to know about nursery care or if children are usually included in the worship service. Ideally, a church will have enough greeters to enable someone to lead the family to the nursery instead of providing only verbal directions.

As greeters welcome newcomers, they should introduce them to others in the congregation.

The greeting & welcoming ministry team should be made up of people from across the age spectrum. The ministry team should include people who have been long- time members and those who are relatively new. Couples, families and single people should be among the greeters. It is important that the church model — through the greeters — the variety of people in the congregation and the variety of people the church is seeking to reach.

Greeters are among the first people who offer the gift of hospitality to newcomers and to long-time members alike. The offer of hospitality is the offer of an experience of God's love. Greeting is more than fulfilling a task. It is helping people to know and experience the welcome and hospitality of God.

Greeters need to remember that people need to be welcomed more than once, so they should make an effort to greet those who have been faithful participants in worship.

Sometimes life circumstances change, and people may feel a particular need to experience God's hospitality. Unfortunately, many congregations feel they are very friendly because they are friendly to one another! It is therefore especially important for greeters to be sensitive to people they have not seen before or people who appear to be lost or looking for directions.

When people approach a church for the very first time, they want to know they are welcome and accepted just as they are. What would it mean if we welcomed people in response to the Scripture: "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God" (Romans 15:7, NRSV)?

SECTION – V

“How to Win Friends and Influence People”

This is Dale Carnegie's summary of his book, from 1936. We recommend a copy of this book be purchased and given to all volunteers serving on the Greeting & Welcoming Ministry Team.

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 2. Six Ways to Make People Like You
 3. How to Win People to Your Way of Thinking
 4. Be a Leader: How to Change People Without Giving Offense or Arousing Resentment
-

Part One

Fundamental Techniques in Handling People

1. Don't criticize, condemn or complain.
 2. Give honest and sincere appreciation.
 3. Arouse in the other person an eager want.
-

Part Two

Six ways to make people like you

1. Become genuinely interested in other people.
2. Smile.
3. Remember that a person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language.
4. Be a good listener. Encourage others to talk about themselves.
5. Talk in terms of the other person's interests.
6. Make the other person feel important - and do it sincerely.

Part Three

Win people to your way of thinking

1. The only way to get the best of an argument is to avoid it.
2. Show respect for the other person's opinions. Never say, "You're wrong."
3. If you are wrong, admit it quickly and emphatically.
4. Begin in a friendly way.
5. Get the other person saying "yes, yes" immediately.
6. Let the other person do a great deal of the talking.
7. Let the other person feel that the idea is his or hers.
8. Try honestly to see things from the other person's point of view.
9. Be sympathetic with the other person's ideas and desires.
10. Appeal to the nobler motives.
11. Dramatize your ideas.
12. Throw down a challenge.

Part Four

Be a Leader:

How to Change People Without Giving Offense or Arousing Resentment

A leader's job often includes changing your people's attitudes and behavior. Some suggestions to accomplish this:

1. Begin with praise and honest appreciation.
2. Call attention to people's mistakes indirectly.
3. Talk about your own mistakes before criticizing the other person.
4. Ask questions instead of giving direct orders.
5. Let the other person save face.
6. Praise the slightest improvement and praise every improvement. Be "heartily in your approbation and lavish in your praise."
7. Give the other person a fine reputation to live up to.
8. Use encouragement. Make the fault seem easy to correct.
9. Make the other person happy about doing the thing you suggest.

SECTION – VI



THREE SIMPLE REASONS CHURCHES DON'T GROW

A church that is not growing is probably due to one or more of the following three reasons.

- (1) – **Not enough 1st time visitors/guest**
(Visitor/Guest Attraction)
- (2) – **Visitors/Guest who come....don't return**
(Visitor/Guest Retention)
- (3) – **Those who do return don't get involved**
(Newcomer integration/assimilation)

How to overcome being a stagnated and/or non-growing Church

(1) **Visitor/Guest Attraction** – is accomplished 1st by making sure you have an outreach ministry program that is designed to identify church prospects in your community. These consist of new movers to your area and individuals living within your community that do not have a church home or attend a church regularly. Your members are trained and understand the importance of being a disciple and individual Christian discipleship. Also, it is important that the outside of your facility reflects a clean and prideful appearance that will attract and portray what can be expected on the inside.

(2) **Visitor/Guest Retention** – is accomplished 1st by making sure you have a Greeting and Welcoming Ministry that is fulfilling the needs and expectations of your 1st time visitors and guest. Ministry volunteers must understand that first time visitors are usually unknown to others and unfamiliar with the layout of your facility. They are first and foremost responsible to help them overcome these unknowns. First time visitors must since a feeling that their attendance is appreciated and recognized. They must also gain a belief through their first visit that they would be accepted, and are able to relate to the existing members of the congregation. Most importantly is that they must experience an organized worship service where they hear the Gospel of Christ preached and explained. The service must be sincerely focused for providing a spiritually uplifting and fulfilling experience that is gained through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The first impressions a visitor or guest experience will determine whether or not they will return.

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(3) Newcomer integration/assimilation – is accomplished by 1st by making sure you provide a small group or Sunday School ministry with age related groups that provide social and spiritual activities which involves and includes newcomers from the day of their first visit. It is important that these small group or Sunday School classes be structured with organized outreach, care group, and fellowship teams that will be responsible to track, follow-up, and make sure newcomers are experiencing God's love and compassion through their relationships with others. They should be encouraged and provided with opportunities to serve as soon as possible. The goal is to help them understand that they are accepted and part of the church family from day one.

SECTION – VII

Sample Guest Information and Response Card (Front Side) You may want to customize your guest information and response card to your needs and specifications. Card printed front and back.

(We are providing you with a sample card just for an example of what we recommend)

	<u>Thank You for Being Our Guest Today!</u>
<p>To know you better, please take a moment to complete this form. Again, thank you for being our guest, and we hope you will visit again soon. God Bless You!</p>	
Please check all that apply: (in all sections)	
<input type="checkbox"/> First Time Guest <input type="checkbox"/> Returning Guest-Visit # _____ <input type="checkbox"/> New to the Area	
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like more information on becoming a member of Concord Baptist Church.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I/we are visiting to worship & are searching for a new church home.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Update my contact information.	
General Information	
Mr./Mrs./Ms.: _____ Today's Date _____	
Address: _____	
State: _____ Zip(+4): _____ Neighborhood: _____ <small>(location of residence)</small>	
Phone (H): _____ (O): _____ (C): _____	
Best time to call: _____ AM _____ PM	
E-mail address (primary): _____	
How I heard about Concord Baptist Church:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Friend <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper <input type="checkbox"/> Drive By <input type="checkbox"/> Door Visit <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
I came as a guest of: _____	
I am a member of: _____	
Age/Status (please check all that apply for entire household):	
<input type="checkbox"/> 12-18 <input type="checkbox"/> 19-24 <input type="checkbox"/> 25-29 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-39 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-49 <input type="checkbox"/> 50-59 <input type="checkbox"/> 60+	
Children:	
Name: _____ Age: _____ Name: _____ Age: _____	
Name: _____ Age: _____ Name: _____ Age: _____	
My Response:	
<input type="checkbox"/> I am inviting Jesus into my heart today <input type="checkbox"/> I want to be baptized	
<input type="checkbox"/> I want to rededicate my life to Christ <input type="checkbox"/> I want to meet/talk w/a pastor	
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to become a member of Concord Baptist Church <i>(please complete other side)</i>	
My Prayer Request(s): _____	

<i>Over please</i>	

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Sample Guest Information and Response Card: (Back Side)

Becoming a Member

We want to extend a special invitation to fellow believers, who are not yet members of Concord Baptist Church, to join our Family.

Please check one of the following boxes, indicating which method you have selected.

- At the end of the service, when the invitation is given, I wish to walk toward the front and speak with one of the pastors.
- I wish to meet with a staff minister following the Worship Service.
- I wish to make an appointment to meet with a staff minister at the church or in my home.
- I wish to complete this card and place it in the offering plate or turn it in at the Welcome Center in the Grand Foyer. I wish to have a staff member contact me.
- I would like to become a church member.

PLEASE PRINT

General Information

Mr./Mrs./Ms.: _____ Today's Date _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip(+4): _____
Phone (H): _____ (O): _____ (C): _____
Date of Birth: _____ Best time to contact: _____ AM _____ PM
Occupation: _____
E-mail address (primary): _____

Children:

Name: _____ Age: _____ Name: _____ Age: _____
Name: _____ Age: _____ Name: _____ Age: _____

HOW DO YOU WISH TO JOIN?

BAPTISM STATEMENT LETTER FROM: _____

Over please

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