



Welcoming and Following up with Visitors!

Organize a welcoming process and train members of your congregation to partner in welcoming visitors! You can set up a rather simple yet effective method for welcoming visitors that come to your church with a little preparation and training.

- ✓ **INITIAL VISIT:** Give the visitor a warm welcome and a brochure or information packet which can be handed to first time visitors as they arrive. Be sure to include information that will allow the new person get involved in your church activities, a list of who to call if they have questions, a list of small groups that they can get involved with AND some information for the children who visit (see the archives of the Welcoming Community newsletter to get some ideas and templates for this!) **You can go to the Welcoming Community newsletter to find a great inexpensive gift item to give to families with young children.**
- ✓ Ask the visitor to complete a visitor form that, as a minimum, tells you their name, address, phone, address and number and ages of children.
- ✓ **DAY AFTER VISIT:** Send a short note which thanks the visitor for attending AND include an invitation to some of the weekly events that happen at your church. Give the family the names and phone numbers of one or two other members who have kids of similar ages or who live in the same neighborhood, etc so the visiting family has the option of calling someone if they are interested. If the visitor is clearly from another community or committed to another congregation, discontinue follow up at this point.
- ✓ **BY WED OR THURSDAY AFTER THE VISIT:** Have someone from your congregation or the Pastor give the family a short phone call to again thank them for their visit, to see if they have any questions about the congregation AND to offer them the gift of an email devotional which helps them incorporate their faith into the workplace. (Download the customizable pdf form from Welcoming Community to send to your visitors.) This devotional is available for free because it is sponsored by the EXODUS Network. You may sign your guests up by going to <http://66898.tgifmail.com/pages.asp?pageid=32798>. If the family is new to the community and they have children, encourage other members with children of the same age to invite the children over for a play date.

- ✓ **ON THE 2nd OR 3rd VISIT:** Offer to give the visitors a personal tour of the church building. Be sure to have some members of your congregation approach the visitors, engage them in conversation, introduce them to others and give personal invitations to mid week event or activities. Send a notice to the SS teachers/youth leaders or activity leaders that would have them in their class. Encourage the leaders to give a call or send a note to the person eligible for their class/activity.
- ✓ **ON THE 4th VISIT:** Give them a picture directory, arrange for them to have a mailbox, invite them to attend a no-obligation membership class. If the family has young children, offer the family a night of free child-care.
- ✓ **DURING THE 2nd MONTH:** Have at least one family invite the visitors to their home or a restaurant for a shared meal. Consider matching up families who are new to the community with “Surrogate Grandparents”.
- ✓ **DURING THE 3rd MONTH:** If the visitor has not yet joined a small group, have the coordinator of small groups contact the visitor to offer their assistance in being involved. Be sure to include the children in small groups appropriate for them as well.

Encourage your leadership team to pray about how God might want to do something new with your welcoming plans and strategies!

This article and the accompanying resource is one of the articles from the Welcoming Community email newsletter. This newsletter is published about 8 times a year by the EXODUS Network in order to support churches, Christian schools and neighbors in their desire to become more welcoming communities! The newsletter provides articles and ready to use tools to ensure that families who are moving and are new to schools or churches are warmly welcomed.

The EXODUS Network is a Christian community relocation service that offers a free service that connects moving families with information about the Christian community and with REALTORS in local communities who are Christian community specialists.

The EXODUS Network has also created a national directory called ChristianSchoolSearch.com. Be sure to create a free account for your school at www.ChristianSchoolSearch.com so that families who are moving will be able to find your school! You'll want to add your information even if you have your own website –in fact you can put a link to your own website along with your school's information. This ChristianSchoolSearch directory will soon be available on many REALTOR and Christian business websites. It is FREE MARKETING for your school! You can sign up to receive the next issue of Welcoming Community when you add your school.

The Christian School Directory along with a nationwide church directory (USACHurchSearch.com or CanadaChurchSearch.com) are free because they are sponsored by local REALTORS who are Selected Agents of the EXODUS Network across the country.

Hopefully, when you know of families from your school who may be moving, you will encourage them to call the EXODUS Network so they can be connected to the Selected Agent (there is NO CHARGE). These moving families will be able to use a wide variety of tools and resources, including lots of Moving Resources and a complete move organizer that helps you get everything organized for your move.

EXODUS Network selected agents are from the various real estate companies. We thoroughly prescreen individual agents for professionalism, service and commitment.

The EXODUS Network Selected agent that is sponsoring the ChristianSchoolSearch.com and USACHurchSearch.com or www.CanadaChurchSearch.com in your community is