

Six Things a Guest Will Evaluate While Visiting Your Church

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True church growth is a result of a positive church experience, members inviting family and friends as well as a reputation that is spread by word-of-mouth. Many people will visit a church several times before making a decision to call that church home. The challenging part, particularly for churches of a few hundred people, is that visitors can sneak in and out without anyone even knowing they were there.



Someone once said that a visitor will make a decision about a church long before the pastor even begins to speak. If this is true, what is the visitor evaluating in the process?

1. Easy Way-finding

Finding your way around any new environment can be challenging, particularly if there is not appropriate directional signage. Drive through your campus and look for those pivotal decision points and determine if a directional sign could help a visitor find where to park, drop children off or enter the building. This is particularly important if the campus has multiple buildings or entrances.

2. Friendly Encounters

As a visitor enters the building, who is the first person they interact with? Is it a friendly parking volunteer, greeter or usher? How welcoming are members to someone they don't know who is sitting next to them? Are there people assigned to look for new people and say hello? This can be tricky because some people like to be recognized as being new and others want to blend with the crowd while they assess the environment.

3. Inviting Facility

How inviting is the facility? Is it clean and clutter free or do the windows have fingerprints on them? Is there debris laying in the flowerbeds or is the landscape meticulously manicured? All

of these subtle things leave an impression on a visitor and tells a story about the culture and priorities of the organization.

4. Multiple Access Points

Visitors need an easy way to access information about the church. They look for the types of activities and programs that are available. They are thinking things like:

- What does this church believe?
- What is this church trying to accomplish - what is the mission?
- What kinds of programs are there for my kids?
- What kinds of volunteer opportunities are there for me?
- What kinds of discipleship options are there for my spiritual growth?
- What are the steps to becoming a new member?

It is important to make this kind of information easy to access and understand.

5. Communication Process

Think about how information is shared and the different avenues for providing that information. Does all information get communicated through announcements, video or the church website? Is the information consistent in every forum? How often is information updated and how much notice do members receive when marketing an upcoming event? Manage church communications by taking the time to think about who needs to know what kinds of information and when do they need to know it.

6. New Member Expectations

Visitors who decide to become members need to understand what will be expected of them once they make that commitment. Think through the new member process and be sensitive to putting too much pressure to participate, particularly at the level of long time members. The last thing you want is to scare someone away because they couldn't fulfill the requirements of being a new member.

Most churches want to grow and include more people to help fulfill their mission. Taking the time to think through a visitor experience can be one way to help transition a visitor into a new member!

photo by: Edgar Zuniga JR

- See more at: <http://smartchurchmanagement.com/6-things-a-guest-will-evaluate-while-visiting-your-church/#sthash.G9l6NWg3.dpuf>