

Is Your Bulletin Guest-friendly?

9 ways to help first-time visitors.



The church bulletin is an incredible opportunity to put something in the hands of guests that, at least anecdotally, increases the chances they will return. While church members can benefit from it, the most effective use comes from those who are new to your church. Here are nine essentials for the church bulletin with the guest in mind:

1. **Worship times.** Many bulletins are retained for future use. It is thus imperative for the worship times to be prominent in them.
2. **Physical address of church.** You want to encourage the guest to return, so include the physical address of the church for their GPS.
3. **Website and social media links.** This is a primary means of communication for our culture. Your church must be speaking that language, and guests need to know where to find you online.
4. **Email, and telephone contact.** Make certain there is an email and telephone contact so the guest can get more information on the church. Also, make certain someone responds quickly to any inquiries.
5. **Prayer request contact.** I encourage all churches to have some type of prayer line, either email or telephone. Many guests to your church will communicate with you

through a prayer line before any other means. Make certain those contacts are in the bulletin, and make certain you have someone responding promptly to them.

6. **Sermon notes.** I have been surprised at the number of guests who are eager to take notes during the sermon. They expect to have a place to take notes.
7. **Major events.** Never clutter a bulletin with a multitude of events and regularly scheduled activities. Most of the time, the event should be an event for everyone, and should be considered of major value to the congregation.
8. **Vision or mission statement.** This (hopefully) succinct statement will communicate to the guests what really matters at your church.
9. **Order of service.** Some churches have gotten away from putting the order of service in the bulletin. I think that's a mistake from a guest-friendly perspective. Guests may not have a clue what's taking place in the worship services. Make certain they have a clue.

One item that may seem like an obvious omission is a guest registration card. We have found that these cards are more effective if they are placed as loose cards in the bulletin, rather than perforated cards the guest must tear off.

Again, let me emphasize that the bulletin is a primary tool to connect with guests. If you have abandoned this practice because it does not have a cool factor, please reconsider. It's making a huge difference in churches that are using it intentionally to reach out to guests.

By Thom Rainer

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