

The First Impression

The process of integrating new members into your congregation begins the first time they walk in your church door. How you attract people to come the first time is an important part of their first impression, as is the way you welcome them.

Attracting Guests

1. Maintain an attractive web site - many church shoppers do extensive research over the Internet before deciding to visit. Make your site inviting and informative. Include directions to the church and a photo(s). Include recent sermons so they can "preview" the minister as well as the faith. If possible, post the current church newsletter and/or a calendar of current church events.
2. Clearly visible road sign - important particularly if your church has road visibility. Include the minister(s) name(s), service times and current sermon topic. Should be legible to drivers, current, and attractive.
3. Guest Sundays - have minister designate certain sermons as especially appropriate for guests. Encourage members to invite their friends and co-workers!

Greeting Guests

1. Before Service:
 - a. Two friendly, outgoing members at the front door fifteen minutes before service to welcome guests as well as members upon entering.
 - b. Friendly, well trained greeters at a welcoming table near entrance should greet as many new folks as possible, inviting them to fill out a Guest Registry Form. *See II.b. Guest Registry Form.* If there isn't time to fill it out before the service starts, have a visitor take it with them into the service and return it to the Welcome table after the service *See II.c. Greeter Instructions.* Families with children should be escorted to RE or connected with an RE greeter.
 - c. An information table with literature about UUism and your church, including the church newsletter and a current calendar of events is a great place for guests to browse. Post a knowledgeable greeter at or near this table to answer questions.
2. During Service:
 - a. A welcoming statement of inclusion read by a Board Member at the beginning of service is much appreciated. *See II.d. Welcoming Statement.*
 - b. Following the welcoming statement, the Board member can ask guests who feel comfortable to stand and introduce themselves and tell where they are from.
 - c. Greeting of neighbors is a great time for guests to be welcomed by adjacent members.
 - d. Announce at the Offertory that, "visitors who are here for the first or second time are invited to let the basket pass. You are our guests and we are honored by your presence." New guests are impressed by this welcoming gesture, yet those who have come several times are given a gentle hint that it is appropriate for them to contribute.
3. After Service:
 - a. Greeters should be at their posts immediately following service to take completed Guest Registries, to invite guests to share their impressions of the service, and to answer questions. Some guests appreciate a tour of the church.
 - b. Greeters can also introduce guests to other members who act as hosts, sharing coffee and conversation.

Getting to Know UU

1. An informal talk with minister(s) following service once per month; a time to have initial questions answered.
2. Announce in Order of Service, during service, and on large sign posted just outside sanctuary. Greeters can also notify guests before or after service.