

FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

INVITING OTHERS TO JOIN
THE FAMILY OF GOD

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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THREE-WEEK CURRICULUM FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL AND SMALL GROUPS

- **Week One: Let's Get Radical**
- **Week Two: What's the Plan, Fran?**
- **Week Three: Preparing for Company**

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NOTES

INVITING PEOPLE TO JOIN OUR FAMILY

Why do I want to invite people into God's house? Talk together as a group for about 15 minutes in answer to this question.

Write the answers to the following questions.

1. What is this church known for? (Structure, geographic, programmatic, historic, theological, community, other....)
2. Why do I attend this particular church?
3. How does this church help me grow in my faith?
4. Why do I think my church experience is important enough for others to experience it as well?
5. Why is it important to be invitational?
6. How would I want my guests to be treated?

Share your thoughts with the groups and summarize the points here. Spend about 10 minutes sharing together...

IS IT YOUR TIME TO BE RADICAL?

You may have heard recently about a book that many church leaders are studying titled, *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*, by Robert Schnase, Bishop, Missouri Conference. Bishop Schnase details practices considered by many to be critical to congregational success.

KEYS TO A HEALTHY AND FRUITFUL CHURCH

Described as keys to “health, vitality and fruitfulness,” these practices are:

- Radical Hospitality
- Passionate Worship
- Intentional Faith Development
- Risk-Taking Mission and Service
- Extravagant Generosity

Vibrant, fruitful, growing congregations practice Radical Hospitality. Christian hospitality is the active desire to:

- *Invite*
- *Welcome*
- *Receive*
- *Care for those who are strangers so that they find a spiritual home*
- *Discover for themselves the unending richness of life in Christ*

Radical Christian hospitality is more than “Good morning,” more than coffee...it is receiving and caring for God’s children resulting in transformed lives for Jesus Christ.

PRAYER GUIDE—WEEK FOUR

Spirit of Hospitality

So when they got out on the land, they saw a charcoal fire already laid and fish placed on it and bread. John 21:9 (Read John 21: 2-12)

This is such a sweet act of hospitality that is often overlooked. These dear men who have walked daily with Jesus for years are at loose ends. Jesus is not with them anymore and although they have seen him and know he lives their life seems to have no direction. So Peter decides to do something familiar, something with purpose, something to distract him from all the unanswered questions he has. He goes fishing, and invites his friends to go with him.

Jesus knows exactly how these men feel and he knows that personal contact is the only way to give them peace. So our Lord cooks them breakfast. Did you get that? **OUR LORD COOKED THEM BREAKFAST.** Breakfast is real, it meets a real need, it shows real care. This was holy hospitality. It ministered to the emotional, physical and spiritual needs of these disciples at just the right moment in time.

Jesus is our example even in following the command to be hospitable. Many people setting in church with us need some holy hospitality because they too are at loose ends and uncertain about the future. Hospitality can only happen when we make personal contact. Let us cook breakfast!

Prayer for our church

Father please forgive us when we fail to follow Jesus. Create in us a spirit of hospitality so we can recognize and respond in practical way to the emotional, spiritual and physical need of our fellow believers. Give us the words to speak, and the will to act at just the right moment so that others may feel the love of Christ. We ask this in the name of Jesus and for the sake of His Kingdom. Amen

PRAYER GUIDE—WEEK THREE

Spirit of Hospitality

Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. Luke 10:38

We know this story well, but let us just look at these few words. “Martha welcomed Him into her home.” Sit back and think about this. What did it cost her to do this? What was she feeling? What was the lasting impact of this act?

Friends, Martha did not just invite Jesus into her home; she did everything she could think of to make Jesus feel at home. She saw that his personal needs were taken care of; she fixed special food (maybe even spending more than she should have). Martha offered **extravagant** hospitality.

Christian hospitality means putting forth a real effort to meet the needs of people. Extending comfort, providing support, offering encouragement, being friendly are acts of hospitality. This may not always be easy or convenient, but like Martha we will be blessed. Remember Jesus’ words “to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them, you did it to me.” (Matt. 25:40)

Prayer for our church

Father God, You give us many opportunities to offer Christian hospitality to both the saints and strangers. Open our eyes, open our ears and open our hearts that we may be aware of these opportunities. Father we want to be extravagant in our hospitality to everyone. Show us who You would have us invite to church and give us your love and grace to boldly share the invitation. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen

A SPIRIT OF INVITATION AND WELCOME

Churches that practice Radical Hospitality sense a calling and responsibility to pray, plan, and work to invite others and to help them feel welcome and to support them in their faith journeys. Out of genuine love for Christ and for others, they take the initiative to invite, welcome, and support newcomers and help them grow in faith as they become a part of the body of Christ.

It’s easy to focus on what we expect from the church rather than what the church expects from us, just as it’s easy to expect God to do for us what God created us to do for God. We are here in the spirit of Jesus, “*not to be served, but to serve.*”

WHAT IS A FRUITFUL CONGREGATION?

Fruitful Congregations:

- Naturally turn outward
- Know that their work focuses on those not yet here
- Are missional, open, inviting
- Know it’s not about them but about the strangers yet to be invited and welcomed

And for more discussion...

Check out the Case Study for Week One on pages 25 and 26. Read through it as a group and discuss the questions.

WEEK TWO

Jesus said, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me."

(Matthew 25:35)

Churches characterized by Radical Hospitality are not just friendly and courteous, passively receiving visitors warmly. Instead, they exhibit a restlessness because they realize so many people do not have a relationship to a faith community.

"The greatest contribution we can make to the body of Christ . . . is, inviting someone else or helping a newcomer feel genuinely welcome so that she or he receives what we have received."

There are many around us who would say we are in the midst of a great spiritual awakening. In the 1790s, there was a great spiritual awakening in our country. As the decade began, there were few Methodists. But as the frontier moved westward, we adapted the unchanging gospel message to fit the spiritual hunger of the culture. Therefore, by 1800, there were more Methodists than any other denomination in the U. S. Then, in the 1890s, there was another great spiritual awakening. We were receptive to the changing world around us. There were great economic and political changes, as well as spiritual ones.

Today, however, only 15% of the 300,000+ churches in North America are growing, and a significantly fewer number of United Methodist churches. Doesn't sound like an awakening, yet there seems to be a void that has sparked the world's interest as in no other time before. The problem is not denominational, but the mindset and heart of the God's people. There is fear that we could miss another great movement of God's Holy Spirit. *"The fields are ripe for harvest,"* as Jesus said (John 4:35).

Would you agree?

PRAYER GUIDE—WEEK TWO

Spirit of Hospitality

And whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it, and stay at his house until you leave that city. As you enter the house, give it your greeting. If the house is worthy, give it your blessing of peace. But if it is not worthy, take back your blessing of peace.

Matthew 16:11-13

Jesus sent the twelve out to preach the kingdom and he intended that they depend on the hospitality of others as they went about this task. A blessing comes with the hospitality. The advancement of the Kingdom still depends in part on the hospitality of believers toward those who enter the church. Will those who visit our church feel a warm welcome? Will they leave blessing our church?

Prayer for our church

Father it is no accident when someone enters our church doors. May our people receive all who come to our doors with love and open minds, because it is You Father who sends each of these to us. We know Your blessings will be with us when we offer true Christian hospitality to each visitor. Grant us Holy Father an extra measure of the spirit of hospitality for the sake of our Lord's Kingdom we pray. Amen

Did you know...

- Nearly half of our neighbors do not share our faith, or a memory of our faith, or our assumptions or our vocabulary.
- Between 35 and 60 percent of our society does not attend church regularly. In some communities, that figure rises to almost 75 percent.
- Still, between 70 and 75 percent of these people identify religion as important or very important in their lives.
- Between 40 and 60 percent of the un-churched report praying to God daily or weekly. They identify themselves as having faith, but they choose not to participate in a congregation.

CHURCHED OR UN-CHURCHED?

Despite these modern-day facts of life, many of us continue to do business as if we exist in a “churched” society, as if most everyone knows what we know, believes what we believe and wants what we want.

However, according to research published by the Barna Research Group in May 2004 and March, 2005, there are 75 million un-churched people living in the United States – one-third of the adult population.

PRAYER GUIDE—WEEK ONE

Spirit of Hospitality

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

Romans 12: 9-12

What a list! These are Christian virtues we all are striving to achieve in our daily walk with God. Although last on the list hospitality is not least important. However, we must understand that Christian hospitality is different from the hospitality offered in this world. Very simply put, Christian hospitality is offered with the love of Christ. This kind of hospitality can win people to Christ.

Prayer for our church

Father God Almighty, give us Your grace to live lives of Christian hospitality inside and outside our church. We do not want to be a “noisy gong or a clanging cymbal”. Let our acts of hospitality reflect Your love and grow Your kingdom. In Jesus’ blessed name. Amen

WEEK THREE CONTINUED

BIBLICAL MODELS OF FAITH-SHARING

1. Saul becomes Paul: Acts 9:1-19a

A dramatic experience of coming to Christ.

2. On the road to Emmaus: Luke 24:13-32

Welcoming the stranger.

3. Timothy is nurtured by family: 2 Timothy 1:3-5

4. Andrew invites his brother Simon: John 1:40-42

Social network of family.

5. Philip invites his friend Nathanael: John 1:43-46

Social network of friendship.

6. Simon Peter struggles with the faith

7. A village is invited by an outcast: John 4:39-42

Below are focal points one might include in a conversation with a newcomer or someone who is returning to church. Brainstorm as a group about what the conversation might sound like using the terms below as a framework for your dialogue.

Greet:

Assure:

Show interest:

Serve:

Connect:

Giving/receiving:

Closure:

**WEEK THREE CASE STUDY
CONSIDER THE GUESTS DESCRIBED BELOW.
HOW MIGHT WE WELCOME (RECEIVE) THEM
THROUGH HOSPITALITY AND PERSONAL
INVITATION?**

1) Male. Age 25. Single. Loves computers. Used to attend a United Methodist church with his parents but quit when he was in high school. Is coming back because he's feeling depressed—feeling that something is missing in his life.

2) Frantic mother. Age 30. Has three children under the age of 6. She's brought them into the coffee hour and they're trying to eat all the cookies on the plates. Mother has come to church because she's near her wit's end. Her husband wants a divorce and she's doing the best she can to manage.

3) Homeless man. Indeterminate age. Has been on the street for several days without a bath or clean clothes. Came to church looking for hope.

4) Couple. Early 20s. Newly married. They just moved to town. They're looking for a church like the one they left in their hometown.

5) Two women. Early 40s. They're going to be in town for an extended period of time but only temporarily. They're musicians and often have gigs on the weekends, either in or out of town. They're looking for a place where they can enrich their spiritual journeys.

6) College student. Age 18. Is in an alcohol recovery program and looking for an alternative to typical college life of partying.

7) Retired farmer. Male. In his 60s. Used to attend church but quit 15 years ago over a dispute with the pastor. Now that his wife has died and his kids have moved away, he's searching for meaning.

Questions

In groups of three, respond to the following questions:

- Who in your family or extended family most influenced your faith journey?
- Who outside your family or extended family most influenced your faith journey?
- Share with your small group a time when you responded “yes” to Jesus or to God’s working in your life.

WEEK TWO CASE STUDY BEYOND OURSELVES

Send out your bread upon the waters.

Ecclesiastes 11:1

Chuck was searching for a church where the people were genuinely caring and there were opportunities for outreach to people in need, where he could be free to think and question, and where he could not just “hear” the Word but also “feel” it. He had quit going to church because the one he’d attended for two years was more interested in serving the needs of the congregation than in reaching out to the troubled and hurting. But when an ad on TV reminded him about The United Methodist Church, he began to give the denomination some consideration.

CONCEIVABLY, IT WOULD BE EASY FOR CARLOS TO GET INVOLVED WITH a United Methodist church. First, of course, he would need to find one where he felt welcomed from the time he walked in the door, where the tone of the church was upbeat, where worship was geared to his need for experiencing the Spirit and which had outreach programs that satisfied his need to serve others.

Carlos is like most of us. He’s looking for love, acceptance, experience, spiritual aliveness and purpose. Then why isn’t Carlos, and hundreds of thousands like him, attending church already?

OUR MISSION AS A CHURCH

The longer a congregation exists, the more concerned it tends to become with self-preservation – and the less concerned with its original purpose. Time, money, staff, and even prayers become increasingly inward-focused. The result, not surprisingly, is that the church stops growing.

But the church’s number one priority is not self-preservation, but disciple-making.

Our mission at FUMC Lexington is:

To INVITE, EQUIP, AND DEPLOY faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

We have identified this process simply as

WORSHIP, GROW, SERVE

- **Worship:** We invite others to experience God through our Worship services
- **Grow:** Nurture and help them grow through our small groups (Sunday School)
- **Serve:** Use their gifts to serve others, making a difference in world in the name of Jesus Christ

A church can do many good things, but this process of making disciples is our focus.

While evangelism or witnessing can be a very intimidating thing for many, we believe this simple process helps us to understand how we all can help make a difference. Just by sincerely practicing an invitational and hospitable spirit, we can help others come into a new relationship with Christ.

WEEK ONE CONTINUED

Someone in a pew across from her hissed, “Go! Go!” and motioned her to get in line. They had been waiting for her to move so they could take their places. Laura had been a United Methodist all of her life and had attended church regularly. But everything was different here.

After the service, no one approached her. No one her age acknowledged her. No one asked if she needed anything. Each time Laura visited this church, she received a gracious welcome from two members of the choir. She mentioned that she traveled a great deal but would like to know how she could be involved. They gave her a brochure. **OBVIOUSLY, THIS CHURCH IS TRYING TO BE WELCOMING**—after all, two members of the choir were assigned the duty of greeting guests—but did Laura actually feel welcome? Did she feel significant or even interesting to the people of this church?

The ad in the newspaper was an invitation, and the church was blessed Laura accepted. Yet did the people of the church respond hospitably?

As a congregation, it’s easy to start thinking in terms of insiders and outsiders without even realizing it. The members of the church in Laura’s true story would no doubt say they are friendly, because they are—to each other. What would make the difference between a church that merely allows newcomers into its midst and one that embraces them?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

NO MATTER HOW MUCH ADVERTISING WE DO, no matter how welcoming we become, what’s the number one thing that can get people to visit a church?

A personal invitation.

- According to a survey by Barna Research Group, 65 percent of people who don’t go to church regularly say they would be more interested in going if a friend invited them.
- At the same time, 62 percent say they would be more interested in attending if the church sponsored a concert or event of interest.
- Not as significant, but still important, 36 percent said they would be more interested in attending if a pastor or church member visited their homes and invited them.
- Where welcoming is the “receiving” part of disciple making, invitation is the “reaching.”
- In Matthew 28:19–20, we are instructed, “*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing . . . and teaching them.*”

**TO MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS OFTEN MEANS
MAKING DISCIPLES ONE PERSON AT A TIME.
AND IT MEANS EACH ONE MUST FIRST BE INVITED.**

WEEK ONE CASE STUDY: AND YOU WELCOMED ME...OR DID YOU?

FRIENDS REACHING FRIENDS

The principle is this:

Non-Christians come to Christ and the church primarily through relationships with Christians.

Again, this may seem elementary, but I remain amazed at the number of Christians who believe something other than reaching friends will somehow create growth. Christians friends and relatives bring twice as many new believers into God's Reign as all other reasons . . . combined!

According to Herb Miller's research with the National Evangelistic Association (Lubbock, Texas), when you compare the outreach per 100 calls of clergy and laity with similar gifts, **the laity attract twice as many people into the faith**, presumably because secular people do not perceive laity as being "paid" to invite them.

No doubt the underlying theme here is to avoid even the appearance of selfish motives for inviting someone or showing interest in them:

Asking people to attend so that they will become members, or so they will serve on committees, is recruiting, not inviting...and it's certainly not discipleship.

Keep yourself focused on the ultimate objective of making disciples, and think more about the people you're inviting than about what you are trying to accomplish by inviting them.

A woman in her 40s moved to a new town. The town had doubled its size in less than 10 years and was experiencing growing pains, not the least of which was that the natives regarded newcomers as interlopers.

Laura was interested in attending the United Methodist Church she'd seen advertised in the community newspaper. On Sunday morning, she drove to Main Street to the church. She was late and the church pews were filled. Feeling selfconscious, she sat down in the only seat she could see: the very last pew, which was cluttered with hymnals, papers, offering plates and other items for the morning. At last she discovered she was in a United Methodist Church.

During the service, choir members kept staring at her. She began to feel uneasy. Perhaps she wasn't supposed to be sitting there, or maybe even be there. Or was it the way she was dressed or how she looked? As confident as Laura was, she felt uncomfortable. She smiled. The choir members continued to stare.

During a time in the service when church members were to greet each other, a couple of people from the choir made their way to the back of the church to greet her. Oh, that's why they were staring at her. They must have been the official greeters. When it was time to go to the front for communion, Laura was embarrassed because she didn't know when she was supposed to go and what to do once she had taken the sacraments. Some people were kneeling. Others returned to their seats immediately.

MY F.R.A.N./F.R.A.N.K. PRAYER LIST

Never underestimate the power of prayer. Think of individuals in the four FRAN groups and list their names below. Then covenant with God to pray for these individuals daily. Pray for the opportunity to invite these persons to church or Sunday School or other “inviting and welcoming” events and gatherings at our church.

FRAN =

- FRIENDS,
- RELATIVES,
- ASSOCIATES (WORK AND SCHOOL) AND
- NEIGHBORS

FRANK = ADD KIDS AND YOUTH!

Name	Invited

How can we go about doing this?

We want to encourage every person in our church to list their un-churched friends and relatives in the community – four or five specific names.

THE F.R.A.N. PLAN

One way to go about this is to think in terms of what we call the “FRAN plan”. FRAN is an acronym that stands for:

- Friends
- Relatives
- Associates (work and school)
- Neighbors. (See the “FRAN plan” on page 24 of this booklet)

Next:

- Covenant to PRAY daily for the persons you have listed.
- Be attentive and listen carefully to the nudging of the Holy Spirit to develop our relationship further.
- Invite them to worship or study.
- Invite them to meet the living Christ.

Questions

Are you willing to:

- Pray daily for the persons you have listed?
- Perform intentional acts of kindness for at least one of those persons over the next two weeks?
- Invite that person to be their guest in worship sometime in the next four weeks?

The Open House on September 13 would be an excellent open door and opportunity.

THE F.R.A.N.K. PLAN

Some churches have adapted the FRAN Plan to be the “FRANK” Plan by adding “Kids” as a special invitation focus.

Remember:

Children and youth can also be involved in inviting. In fact, another Barna study (from October 2004) indicates that that nearly half of all Americans who accept Jesus Christ do so before age 13 (43%), and that two out of three born again Christians (64%) made that commitment before their 18th birthday. To engage your church’s young people in inviting may make big differences in the lives of their friends.

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

Question

What is our goal for bringing persons into our church family?

If it is only to ensure having more persons to do the work, then newcomers will sense they are being used, not served, and they will leave. It's up to us to continue to care and extend hospitality, and help them into meaningful relationships with ourselves or with others to whom they can relate. This is how we will all grow in our faith journey.

Radical Hospitality describes churches that strive without ceasing to EXCEED EXPECTATIONS to accommodate and include others.

Are we ready?

For more discussion...
Check our readiness to welcome and engage newcomers or those returning to church by looking at the Case Study on pages 28 and 29. Put yourself in place of each of the persons represented in the scenarios. Talk as a group about what conversations you might have with these persons.

PLANTING SEEDS

Un-churched persons in your community are not equally receptive to becoming Christians for members in your church. Some will be quite responsive, while others not at all. Some will tend to move “back and forth” depending upon their life circumstances. Jesus alluded to this “receptivity” in telling us to turn our eyes to the fields that are “white unto harvest” (John 4:35), to plant the seed of the gospel in good (receptive) soil (Matthew 13:1-9), to preach in towns that are receptive, and leave the ones that aren't (Luke 9: 1-6). So how might we identify those who are receptive? Life transitions are one important way – significant changes in one's lifestyle move them toward a spiritual receptivity.

What about persons / families who:

- have a new baby, have children going back to school
- are new to the community, are newlyweds
- face separation or divorce, lose a job
- are new grandparents
- move into/build/buy new homes
- are contacts in organizations/clubs, are job associates
- are families with a recent loss
- others?

For more discussion...

Check out the Case Study on page 27. Read through it as a class and respond to the questions.

WEEK THREE: PREPARING FOR COMPANY

A VITAL COMMUNITY OF FAITH: WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

It is critical that the congregation be a vital, dynamic community of faith where people...

- Reach out to people
- Receive them into fellowship
- Provide opportunities for them to grow in their relationship with God
- Nurture them in faith
- Send them out to serve the ends of the kingdom in the places where they live, work, and play

Questions about leadership and vision are not to be taken lightly. Vital congregations will always be led by Christ-centered men and women whose primary focus will be on equipping people for ministry, and on innovative action to “do the gospel” in new ways.

If we do not have a community of faith in place to nurture persons seeking to grow in spirit and in truth, we advertise something we cannot deliver.

WELCOME TO SUNDAY SCHOOL...

Being a newcomer in a Sunday School class can be like going to someone else’s family reunion. Everybody knows each other, has histories and experiences in common, but you’re left standing on the edge – unless someone approaches **us** to hear **our** stories and include **us** in the family.

Question

Consider the perspective of a stranger. How easy is it to become a part of your class?

CARING FOR THE FAMILY

Getting people in the front door is one thing – keeping them from quietly disappearing out the back door is another.

Question

What’s the primary ingredient that keeps people active in church? **FRIENDSHIPS.**

**PUT SIMPLY,
IF PEOPLE HAVE FRIENDS AT CHURCH, THEY STAY.
IF THEY DON’T HAVE FRIENDSHIPS, THEY WON’T.**

Studies show that up to half of the people who join a church leave after six months. New members who stay beyond that time average more than seven new church friends during those first six months. Those who leave average fewer than two. The reason most often given for leaving (in this study) was, “*I did not feel part of the group.*”

10 MINUTES TO DECIDE...

Studies indicate that visitors decide in the first 10 minutes whether or not they are coming back to a church. That 10 minutes includes the way the guest is welcomed, the aura for worship into which the person steps and the beginning of the service.

People are going to be attracted to our church if they can feel comfortable and sense our excitement and expectancy that something good is about to happen.

Question

How can we show our excitement about being in God's house and in a relationship with God?

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

First impressions are lasting ones. People make up their minds about your church within the first ten minutes of contact. Long before the preacher preaches, people most often will have decided if they plan to return. These ideas and definitions may help your church make a life-changing impression on those who are new to your congregation.

TWO TIPS FOR THE WHOLE CONGREGATION TO DO EACH SUNDAY:

CIRCLE OF 10:

Greet anyone, member or guest, who comes within ten feet of you. Make a special effort to greet the people you don't already know within your Circle of 10.

RULE OF THREE:

Try not to talk to other members for the first three minutes after the service. Talk only to those you don't know and to people that you know are guests. It takes guests about three minutes to exit the church after worship so it's important to make sure someone has made contact with them before they leave.

WELCOMING QUOTIENT...TAKE THIS QUIZ!

1. When I see new people at church, I:
 - a. Avert my eyes so they don't think I'm staring at them.
 - b. Elbow the person next to me and point out the newcomers, so that person will acknowledge the new people.
 - c. Nod and smile to show the people that I recognize their presence.
 - d. Make a bee-line for them during the service or hospitality time to say hello, find out their names and introduce them to others.
2. When new people start working at my office, I:
 - a. Hope they enjoy working there more than I do.
 - b. Say hello when someone brings them around for introductions.
 - c. Send a note or e-mail to say hello and welcome.
 - d. Take a welcome gift to them when I introduce myself and all of my teammates.
3. When people I don't know sit next to me on a bench or pew, I:
 - a. Scoot away from them a little so we have more space between us.
 - b. Smile and say hi, then go back to what I'm doing.
 - c. Shake hands, introduce myself and ask about them.
 - d. Everything in "c" plus introduce them to others sitting nearby.
4. When people stop by my home when it's a mess, I:
 - a. Ignore the doorbell and hope they go away.
 - b. Speak to them through a crack in the door and try to wrap up the conversation quickly.
 - c. Join them to chat on the front porch and hope they don't look back inside as I close the door behind me.
 - d. Invite them inside, regardless of how the place looks, tossing things off a chair so they have a place to sit.
5. When new people join a group I'm in, I:
 - a. Hope they don't come sit next to me. I'm horrible at small talk.
 - b. Shake hands, say hi and sit back down.
 - c. Make it a point to sit next to them so I can get to know them better.
 - d. Call them in advance so I can introduce them to everyone else at their first meeting.

Just for fun . . .

Take this quiz to test your Welcoming Quotient, a measure of how welcoming you are in several aspects of your life. There are no right or wrong answers here, only your preferences for interacting with people. Use the scoring key at the end to assess your WQ.

WELCOMING QUOTIENT...TAKE THIS QUIZ!

6. When others look lost at church, I:
- Step into the nearest restroom or classroom, hoping they don't look to me for help.
 - Grab a greeter or pastor and encourage her/him to help the people.
 - Go up to them and point them in the right direction.
 - Offer to escort the people where they need to go.
7. When I'm expecting guests at my home, I:
- Shake the dust off the "Welcome" mat and haul it down from the attic.
 - Write myself a reminder to check the toilet seats to be sure they're down.
 - Clean the place from top to bottom, change the sheets in the guest room, lay out fresh towels in the guest bath, and turn on the outside lights.
 - Do everything in "c" plus bathe the kids and the pets.

Scoring Key:

	SCORE:
Every "a" = 1	1. ____
Every "b" = 2	2. ____
Every "c" = 3	3. ____
Every "d" = 4	4. ____
	5. ____
	6. ____
	7. ____

Total

What your score means:

- 7-13: Welcoming might not come naturally to you, maybe because you're introverted or don't have to use those skills much. You're trying to raise your awareness of how others respond to you and how you interact with them.
- 14-20: Welcoming comes fairly easy to you. You try to be friendly to people and let others know you're interested in them.
- 21-28: Welcoming is high on your priority list. You look for ways to make others feel at home and try to raise the awareness of those around you so they become more welcoming, too.

WHO ARE WE?

Video "Tale of Two Churches" or "Real Church TV" (available in the training resources *Beyond 30 Seconds: Developing a Welcoming Congregation* and the *Living Our Promise Trainer's Toolbox*)

- Discuss how we see ourselves in the video – what could we do to be better at welcoming newcomers?

Questions

Write the answers to the following questions.

- When I was a stranger and I was ignored, how did I feel? What did I need?
- When I was a stranger and someone/something helped me feel comfortable, what was it that helped?
- How can I help others—whether they are strangers, invited guests or members— feel comfortable and welcome?

Invite a member to briefly share a personal story about being welcomed.

Invite another member to share a personal story about not being helped to feel comfortable.