



Great Greeting

A 30-Minute Training for the Ministry of Welcome

*Helping every person experience kindness, dignity, belonging,
and the love of God.*

Purpose

Greeters do more than open doors or distribute materials. They help people experience the church as a place where they are seen, respected, and invited into community.

This 30 minute training equips greeters to offer a warm, attentive, and appropriate welcome without overwhelming guests or making assumptions about them.

A greeter's goal is not simply to say hello. A greeter helps remove barriers so people can participate fully in worship and community.

What We'll Learn

By the end of the training, participants will be able to:

- Describe five practices of effective greeting.
- Offer a simple, natural introduction.
- Recognize when a person may need assistance or space.
- Respond appropriately to common guest situations.
- Identify one change that will strengthen the congregation's ministry of welcome.

Preparation

BRING

- Participant handouts
- Pens
- Painter's tape, if using the entrance activity
- Printed scenario cards
- A map or list of important church locations

BEFORE THE SESSION, CONFIRM

- Accessible entrances and seating
- Restroom locations
- Nursery or children's ministry procedures
- Emergency procedures
- Who can answer questions about worship, membership, pastoral care, and accessibility
- The congregation's process for collecting guest information

30-Minute Agenda

0–5 min	Welcome is Ministry
5–20 min	Five Practices for Great Greeting
20–27 min	Scenario Practice
27–30 min	Personal Commitment and Closing
+15 min	Optional: Entrance Walk-Through and Extended Practice

0–5 Minutes: Welcome is Ministry

FACILITATOR PROMPT

"Think about a time when you entered an unfamiliar place. What helped you feel comfortable? What made you feel uncertain or out of place?"

Every person who enters our church brings a different story. Some arrive with joy. Others may be anxious, grieving, curious, lonely, or unsure whether they will be accepted. We do not need to know their whole story to offer Christ-centered hospitality. We begin by being present, attentive, and kind.

KEY MESSAGE

Welcome is a ministry of relationship, not merely a task.



1. Be in the Right Place

Be visible, approachable, and clear of the path.

Greeters should arrive early enough to be in the space and be ready before guests arrive. Stand where people can easily see you, but do not create a crowd or block a doorway, hallway, ramp, elevator, or check-in area.

GOOD PRACTICES

- Face the entrance rather than talking in a closed circle.
- Keep accessible routes open.
- Avoid gathering several volunteers in one doorway.
- Notice whether signs and directions are easy to understand.

FACILITATOR PROMPT

"Where could a greeter stand so people see us without having to move around us?"

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Mark possible greeter locations with painter's tape. Invite participants to enter the building as though they have never visited before. Ask:

- What did you notice first?
- Was the entrance easy to find?
- Did you know where to go next?
- Did anyone or anything block your path?
- Where would a greeter be most helpful?



2. Introduce Yourself

Offer your name without pressuring someone to give theirs.

"Good morning. I'm Jordan. Welcome."

Other options

"Hello. I'm glad you're here." · "Welcome to [Church Name]. I'm Taylor."

AVOID SAYING

- "Are you new?"
- "Is this your first time?"
- "I've never seen you before."
- "You must be visiting."

A person may have attended before, may be returning after a long absence, or may already feel self-conscious.



3. Prioritize the People Who May Not Yet Feel Connected

Pay particular attention to unfamiliar faces, while continuing to welcome everyone.

Look for simple cues

- Someone pauses inside the entrance.
- A person is scanning signs or looking around.
- A family is trying to determine where children should go.
- Someone is looking for accessible seating.
- A person arrives alone and appears uncertain.

"Welcome. Is there anything I can help you find?"

Save longer conversations with friends for after worship or fellowship time.



4. Personalize the Welcome

Respond to the person in front of you, not a script.

Watch for cues

- Does the person pause and engage?
- Are they moving quickly?
- Do they seem overwhelmed?
- Are they using a mobility aid?
- Are they attending to children or another family member?
- Do they appear to want assistance or privacy?

Match the person's comfort level as you greet them. A warm welcome does not require physical touch. Do not initiate a hug, touch a child, or take hold of a mobility device.

AVOID COMMENTS ABOUT

- Body or appearance, pregnancy
- Disability or health
- Family relationships
- Race, ethnicity, nationality, language
- Gender identity or sexual orientation
- Financial circumstances
- Why someone has been absent

BETTER CONVERSATION STARTERS

- "Is there anything I can help you find?"
- "Would you like a bulletin?"
- "Worship begins at [time]. Sit wherever you are comfortable."
- "If you are interested in accessible seating, I'd be glad to show you."
- "The nursery is available, and children are welcome in worship."



5. Offer Help and Follow Through

Do not merely point when you can accompany someone.

If guests need direction, walk with a guest to

- The sanctuary
- Restroom area
- Accessible seating
- The elevator
- Nursery or children's ministry check-in
- Fellowship space
- The pastor or another ministry leader

SAMPLE PHRASES

"I would be glad to show you." · "Morgan, would you please show our guest where the nursery is?" · "It's good to see you again." · "Good morning. I'm Jordan—we met recently."

Do not ask publicly about a private concern shared during a previous visit. Do not pressure guests to provide contact information.

Let's Practice

Divide into pairs or small groups. Assign one scenario per group (see the Scenario Practice Cards). Ask each group to work through the process below, then invite one or two groups to share aloud.

DISCUSSION PROCESS

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. What do you notice? | 2. What could you say? |
| 3. What should you avoid? | 4. What follow-through might be helpful? |

The Five Scenarios

- 1. The Uncertain Arrival** — a person enters alone, pauses, and looks around without approaching anyone.
- 2. The Busy Family** — an adult enters with two children and several bags, focused on keeping everyone together.
- 3. The Quiet Guest** — a person responds politely but briefly and continues toward the sanctuary.
- 4. The Accessibility Question** — a guest asks where the accessible restroom is located.
- 5. The Returning Guest** — you recognize someone from a recent Sunday but do not remember their name.

Full scenario details and suggested responses are printed on the Scenario Practice Cards, later in this set.

Commitment and Closing

Let's each share one practice you will use the next time you greet someone:

CLOSING WORDS

"Hospitality is the work of the whole congregation, but greeters help set the tone. May every person who enters our doors encounter kindness, dignity, and the love of God."

OPTIONAL PRAYER

"Gracious God, open our eyes to notice each person who enters this place. Give us wisdom to offer help without assumption, warmth without pressure, and welcome without condition. May our words and actions reflect your love for all our neighbors. Amen."

Five Practices for the Ministry of Welcome

Jot a note or a reflection answer under each practice as we go.



1. Be in the Right Place

Be visible and approachable. Keep entrances, ramps, elevators, and walkways clear. *Can people see me without having to move around me?*



2. Introduce Yourself

"Good morning. I'm _____. Welcome." Offer your name without pressuring someone to provide theirs.



3. Notice People Who May Not Yet Feel Connected

Remain available to people you do not know well. *Who may need a welcome, directions, or reassurance?*



4. Personalize the Welcome

Pay attention to the person's cues. *What is this person communicating through their words and actions?*



5. Offer Help and Follow Through

Walk with people when possible. *Did I help the person take the next step?*

"Good morning. I'm _____. Welcome to [Church Name]."

Remember

Be warm, not overwhelming.

Be attentive, without assuming.

Be helpful.

Be welcoming to everyone.

Notes

My Most Important Takeaway

SCENARIO 1

The Uncertain Arrival

A person enters alone, pauses, and looks around without approaching anyone.

1. What do you notice?
2. What could you say?
3. What should you avoid?
4. What follow-through might be helpful?

SCENARIO 2

The Busy Family

An adult enters with two children and several bags. The children are energetic, and the adult appears focused on keeping everyone together.

1. What do you notice?
2. What could you say?
3. What should you avoid?
4. What follow-through might be helpful?

SCENARIO 3

The Quiet Guest

A person responds politely but briefly and continues toward the sanctuary.

1. What do you notice?
2. What could you say?
3. What should you avoid?
4. What follow-through might be helpful?

SCENARIO 4

The Accessibility Question

A guest asks where the accessible restroom is located.

1. What do you notice?
2. What could you say?
3. What should you avoid?
4. What follow-through might be helpful?

SCENARIO 5

The Returning Guest

You recognize someone from a recent Sunday but do not remember their name.

1. What do you notice?
2. What could you say?
3. What should you avoid?
4. What follow-through might be helpful?



Great Greeting

PLACE

Be visible while keeping the path clear.

INTRODUCE

"Good morning. I'm _____. Welcome."

NOTICE

Remain available to people who may not feel connected.

PERSONALIZE

Follow the person's cues to best welcome them.

HELP

Walk with people when possible and follow through with help.



Before Worship

- Arrive at [time].
- Wear your name tag.
- Confirm key locations and announcements.
- Check that entrances and accessible paths are clear.
- Remain available rather than gathering with friends.

WHEN UNCERTAIN, SAY

"Welcome. Is there anything I can help you find?"



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