



DIOCESE OF GEORGIA

Congregation Hospitality Checklist

Before visitors get to your church

- Are members encouraged to invite friends and family to church?
- Are church brochures, flyers on special services and other items to share with possible newcomers available to members who wish to use them in making an invitation?
- Does your church have a website which is current and accurate?
- If so, does the home page have:
 - Worship times
 - Physical address
 - A link to map and directions
 - A phone number and email address for contact
 - A list of special service times at Christmas and Easter
- Does the church have voicemail with a clear, inviting answer?
- Does your church voicemail message give service times?
- Does the voicemail message give special service times at Christmas and Easter?
- Are special church activities covered by the newspaper?
- Are there church signs pointing to your church from major roads nearby?
- Do you have a church logo (or consistent type face) used in both your advertising and signage?

The Church Grounds

- Is church sign in good repair and attractive?
- Is the church's name easy to read from the road?
- When viewed from the road, does it look like the people who worship in the church love the place they worship as shown through care for their buildings and grounds?
- Are service times clearly posted in plain site on the main sign at the road or a clearly visible sign on the building?
- Are entrances well marked?
- Can a visitor easily identify through signage:
 - Where to park
 - Where to find the office
 - Where to worship
 - Where to find the nursery
- Are the grounds cared for with routine mowing, tending to flower beds, etc.
- Are there visible problems with the roof (such as tiles missing), is the building paint chipped, or is there other damage visible?

- Are the windows clean?
- Does the church building look well maintained and attractive?
- Are sufficient parking spaces available for the disabled?
- Are there parking spaces reserved for visitors (or is the congregation taught that those who are able should park farther, saving close spaces for visitors and late arrivers)?

Narthex

- Are there well-made brochures for visitors looking for more information on your church?
- Is the current newsletter available for visitors in the narthex?
- Are old bulletins, old brochures for events, or similar items out on tables?
- If there are bulletin boards, are they kept current and attractive, reflecting your congregation's life and ministries?
- Is the narthex well lit, well painted and attractive and inviting space?
- Are tissues available, particularly in cold and allergy season?
- Are restrooms clearly marked?
- Do the restrooms look and smell clean and are they well stocked with supplies?

Other Rooms (Not the narthex or the Nave)

- Are *areas* for nursery and Christian education clearly marked?
- Are individual *rooms* marked clearly?
- Are rooms for infants and toddlers child safe and clean?
- Is there clutter, such old VBS materials, Sunday School Curricula, etc. that needs to be thrown out?

Greeters

- Are greeters positioned at the entrances to the church?
- Are greeters trained in how to welcome newcomers?
- Do greeters smile and make a genuine welcome including eye contact?
- Do greeters encourage visitors to sign a guest book?

The Nave

- Is the interior of the church clean, comfortable and inviting? Does it smell nice? At least 15 minutes before the liturgy starts are the candles lit, and are the wood and metals polished just like you would do at home for a special meal or gathering?
- Is the temperature appropriate (neither too hot nor cold)?
- Are all light bulbs in working order?
- Is there dust on window sills, ceiling fan blades or any other surfaces?
- Are prayer books, hymnals and other items readily available and neat?
- Are there forms for feedback available, such as a visitor card?

The Liturgy

- Are the bulletins created with the guest in mind, defining (at least on first use) terms such as BCP for Book of Common Prayer and other such as EYC and ECW?
- Are bulletins well proofed and free of typos?
- Are sufficient instructions (such as announcing page numbers at key points in the liturgy) provided for a first time visitor to follow the service?
- Is all service music listed in the bulletin?
- Are any parts of the liturgy that are not in the Prayer Book and not typical to an Episcopal Church (particularly those said by the congregation) listed in the bulletin?
- Does the worship start on time?
- Is the worship joyful and inviting?
- Is the liturgy clearly well-prepared, with all ready for their roles from acolytes to readers to celebrant and preacher?
- Is the music, no matter the style, well played and well led for congregational singing?
- Are ushers ready to assist with those in need during the service, such as showing the quickly exiting mom with a crying baby to the nursery, changing area, etc.?
- Does Passing the Peace favor those who know one another and unintentionally shun newcomers?
- Are announcements brief and to the point?
- Is there a clear invitation that all baptized Christians may receive communion?
- Are there clear directions, in writing or spoken, on how to receive communion (or a blessing)?

After Worship

- Do members leave clergy free to interact with newcomers, making an appointment for needed conversations or concerns rather than monopolizing time?
- Do members greet those they do not know, while not mobbing newcomers?
- Are refreshments available for a time of fellowship following the liturgy?
- Do your greeters look for visitors after the liturgy to suggest coffee or other fellowship?
- Is there follow up from clergy as well as a lay person or lay persons for all who sign the visitors' book?

Two More Ways to Put Your Hospitality to the Test

1. Have members of your vestry or greeting teams visit other Episcopal Churches and churches in your area of other denominations. Then have these teams return to brainstorm what was learned, seeing your own church with new eyes and incorporating good ideas from other churches.
2. Ask a person with no church to be a "mystery worshipper" and make a report back on their experience. For examples of reports see: <http://www.ship-of-fools.com/mystery/index.html>