



FIRST IMPRESSION TEAM

“A man who has friends must show himself friendly.”

Proverbs 18:24

MISSION STATEMENT: *The First Impression Team will instill within every guest a positive image of _____ Church as a place where God meets the complete needs of each individual in a continually healthy way.*

PHILOSOPHY OF FIRST IMPRESSION TEAM:

1. Visiting a new church is an intimidating experience for most visitors. The First Impression Team will do its best to remove the intimidation factor and allow our visitors to feel “at home” at _____.
2. The goal of the First Impression Team is to change the concept from one of being a “visitor” to being a “guest.”
3. The First Impression Team will help move us toward our ultimate goal of becoming a “guest friendly” church rather than a “member friendly” church. *It is recognized that not everyone in our church can relate well to visitors. Hence, we need specialized people to give visitors the impression that we have a “user friendly” environment.*
4. This will also allow the Pastor to spend much needed time with our members rather than obtaining visitor information.

PURPOSE OF FIRST IMPRESSION TEAM:

1. The First Impression Team will obtain information (i.e. names, addresses, family members) about our guests. A simple information form will be completed by the guest. The data will be entered by our church secretary into a database via a software program. This information will then be used for visitation, direct mailings, as well as a letter from the pastor expressing our appreciation to the guest for attending our services.
2. The First Impression Team will provide the guests with information about our church. This information consists of a:

1. Church informational brochure (includes a map of the main floor)
2. Church Bible marker (ribbon)
3. Church souvenir or gift
3. The First Impression Team will immediately provide a good first impression of our church with a friendly smile and upbeat conversation.
4. The First Impression Team will answer any questions from our guests. These questions may concern the location of the rest rooms, the nursery, the Sunday School program, the Youth program, etc.

REQUIREMENTS OF FIRST IMPRESSION TEAM:

1. The First Impression Team must have a good overall understanding of the church (the choir, youth program, Sunday School, Senior Adults, pastor's family, etc.) in order to answer the guest's possible questions. Such answers as "I don't know" may be interpreted by many guests as a lack of commitment on the part of the team. A general rule of thumb is to expect those questions which might be asked by a visiting pastor.
2. The First Impression Team must be involved in the overall church program. Such answers as "I don't participate" may be interpreted by many guests as a lack of participation on the part of the team. If such participation does not deserve the team's attention, then it indicates a possible reason to avoid that particular area of the church. This means the team must be involved in the most visible areas of the church such as the worship services, Sunday School, nursery, and other areas.
3. The First Impression Team must be focused on this assignment. It is easy to become distracted with the membership, all of whom want and deserve attention. However, the team's primary responsibility is to make a positive first impression upon every guest.
4. The First Impression Team must treat every visitor like a distinguished guest. The team needs to always remember that guests don't have to attend the next service nor even remain to the conclusion of this service!
5. The First Impression Team must always be positive in expression and word. The old saying is still true: "*You never get a second chance to make a first impression.*"

ORGANIZATION OF THE FIRST IMPRESSION TEAM:

1. In most churches the First Impression Team will fall under the direction of the Outreach Director, Assimilation Director, or Pastor.

2. When possible, we will employ husband and wife teams in order to guarantee identification with each guest. Some guests will identify more with the husband; others will identify more with the wife. It will also signal to the guest that we are a family-oriented church.
3. Each team member will wear a name tag.

UTILIZATION OF THE FIRST IMPRESSION TEAM:

1. Since guests may appear in any of the Sunday services it is important that the First Impression Team be prepared for our guests in all of the Sunday services. As the Team grows in number, the responsibility of these services may be divided among the team members.
2. Wednesday visitors are few in number. Due to the need of workers in our various Wednesday activities, this work will be limited to those team members which are available in the sanctuary. It is unlikely that we will be able to coordinate our activities prior to any service due to everyone's varied schedules.
3. The First Impression Team will operate in two distinct phases:
 - ❖ *PRIOR TO THE SERVICE* –
 - As a general rule, we will not distribute material during this time in the sanctuary. This will allow our guests to become oriented to their new surroundings without anyone infringing upon their “space.” The weekly bulletin will occupy their attention at this time, too! Thus, be sure your weekly bulletin is “user friendly” with easily identifiable terms.
 - Some team members will be out of the sanctuary in preparation for the choir or some other activity.
 - Those team members which are available for the sanctuary, however, will *locate any visitors during this time and become acquainted with them.*
 - The team can “break the ice” by saying, “Welcome to _____! We’re the _____ (last name). My name is _____ and my wife/husband is _____. We live in _____ and have attended here for _____ years. Do you folks live close by? (Answer.)
 - The team can discuss any specialized needs of the guests such as the nursery, chair lift, and rest rooms.

❖ *DURING THE SERVICE –*

- Time will be reserved during the service for The First Impression Teams to distribute this material to our guests.
- We will distribute the “packages” during our “*Monthly Praise Chorus*” time.
- It is important that each team have its “package” in suitable quantity at its own storage site in the sanctuary. This will allow each team to be ready to go as soon as our Music Director has our regular attendees to stand.
- The Music Director will welcome the visitors in his customary way by asking them to remain seated while our regular attendees stand. The First Impression Team will visit our guests while everyone else sings a verse of song or a chorus. Upon completing the visit, please ask the guests to stand with us and join the greeting time.
- At the end of the service the pastor will encourage the guests to leave their guest information form with an usher. The First Impression Teams can serve as ushers, too.
- Suggestions for approaching our guests:
 - During the early part of the service identify two possible guests that you as a First Impression Team member can approach (in case another team goes to your first choice). It is best to go first to the guest seated closest to you.
 - Say, “*Welcome to _____! We’re the _____ (last name). My name is _____ and my wife/husband is _____. We live in _____ and have attended here for _____ years. Do you folks live close by? (Answer.) Thank you for coming today! We’d like to give you a gift for coming today.*”
 - **Distribute the items in the following order:**
 - a. **Bible ribbon** bearing the church name for each member of the family in the sanctuary – “*This is something you’ll want to keep!*”
 - b. **Church brochure** – “*This tells you all about the _____ Church experience.*”
 - c. **Information form** – “*Our pastor would like to send you a letter this week and thank you for coming. Would you please fill this out and give it to an usher when you leave?*”
 - d. **Gift.**

- Try to greet our other guests during the remaining handshake time.
- NOTE: Occasionally we will mistake a second time visitor as a first time visitor. The visitor will likely tell us that they have already received this “package.” In such cases, do your best to give our guests a good greeting and thank them for coming again! **Above all, do not allow this mistake to bother you!** It is better to have this kind of mistake than make the mistake of never approaching our guests in the first place (which is the mistake of most churches today)!

OTHER POSSIBILITIES:

1. Some churches provide designated parking for visitors near the doors. This sends an immediate signal that this church cares about visitors!
2. How about having an umbrella crew to assist people on rainy days?
3. A “Reception Center” near the front entrance is also a great way to distribute materials and become acquainted. Some churches have adequate space for a nice coffee lounge, too. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that the visitors will visit the Reception Center.
4. Visitor gifts may include a coffee mug, informational dvd or children’s dvd, or even a seasonal flower.