

Conducting Guest Interviews - Instructions, Process, and Tracking

Interviewing guests (visitors) to your congregation can provide some of the best information you can receive around how your congregation and its members are viewed; how your facilities make an impact on the newcomer; how well your congregational systems around welcoming the 'stranger in your midst' actually function! Here are some instructions on how to have a meaningful conversation with a guest, and how to use the data you gather.

Process:

What to say to the interviewee:

Introduce yourself to the guest, explaining that the purpose of the interview is to help the congregation learn from how guests see the congregation and to learn about its visibility in the community. It is hoped that the discovery of the positive and negative perceptions of guests may assist members and staff in making appropriate changes based on what is learned from the interviews.

How to organize:

Have a team of members from your congregation do these interviews, dividing up responsibility for the total number of interviews to be done. Have someone on the team compile the responses to each question and summarize them on one sheet. The team should then gather together and review the responses.

Learning from Your Interviews:

What patterns do you notice from the responses? You might respond to this by completing the sentence, "We are a congregation that," with information that you've gathered. For example, "We are a congregation that creates a good first impression".

What are the most complimentary things you discovered about your congregation's welcoming of newcomers in the responses to these interviews? Our strengths are.

What are the most problematic things you discovered about your congregation's welcoming of newcomers in their responses to these interviews? Our current limitations are . . .

What recommendations do you have for your congregation in order to improve your ability to welcome newcomers? List them here:

Also, please refer to our Visitor Interview Form.