

SURFACE TO SOUL

Live Well | Lead Well | Coach Well

Invite, Welcome, and Befriend Guests

Did you know that 80% of first-time visitors come because they were personally invited? That's huge and it's partly why the church has been around for 2000 years. Churches that are growing typically equip their members to extend invitations to their friends, family members, co-workers, and neighbors on a regular basis. Most churches have given up on community ads and mass mailings due to their limited impact. **So, if personal invitations are the way to go, how can you help members and friends of the church to extend invitations?**

STEP 1 | CREATE SAFE & WELCOMING SPACE

This is the heart and soul of your church—is it a place people want to bring their friends? If not, that's where you need to start. If your membership isn't inviting people to church, there may be a reason for that. Make sure people are welcomed, that their questions are answered, that they don't feel lost. First impressions matter. The worship experience should be engaging, easy to follow. The music should be high quality and easy for most people to sing along. People want to see people like them (young, old, different ethnic background, etc.) serving in leadership roles.

STEP 2 | MAKE INVITING EASY

Make it easy to invite people friends, family members, neighbors, and co-workers:

- Remind your congregation to invite their friends. Sometimes we need to hear this message repeatedly.
- Print invitation cards that members can use to invite friends. Give the basic church details, including times, directions, and parking info. Make it more than an invitation: include interesting quotes or facts—something to make people hang on to it. If it's an event for kids, include games or puzzles on the invitation.
- Offer special visitor-friendly events to introduce visitors to your church such as an Alpha Course, a free meal, a movie night, a benefit concert, a community servant event, or a daycare club.
- Make your worship bulletin an invitation-ready handout so every member has an invitation in their hand.
- Have a page on your website dedicated to visitors so they can check your church out online and calm any fears before they decide to go. Familiarize your members about this page and encourage them to use it.

STEP 3 | EXTEND “ONE LINER” INVITATIONS

- “I’m going to worship this Sunday at 8:30am. Would you like to join me?”
- “Would you like to go to worship with me this Sunday and then come to my home to watch football?”
- “My church is hosting a spaghetti dinner this Saturday to raise funds for the community shelter. Care to join me?”
- “My church is having a wonderful Christmas concert next weekend. I’d love to have you join me.”
- “I’m part of a men’s Bible study that meets at Perkins Restaurant. Would you be interested in joining me?”
- “My church is working on a Habitat For Humanity house this Saturday. Would you like to help build a home?”

STEP 4 | FOLLOW UP

Once people come, make sure they want to come back. Some churches deliver fresh baked bread or cookies to visitors later in the afternoon. A follow-up call or a hand-written note from the pastor, usher, or greeter (someone the visitor actually met) is well received. If a call is made, ask visitors if they'd like to receive your weekly e-newsletter or weekly text notices. Remembering someone's name and saying hello when you see them again is probably the most important thing you can do to make someone feel like coming back. So don't hide your light under a bushel – start inviting people this week!



jladoux@vibrantfaith.org



surfacetosoul.org

