

ASSIMILATION

- Bibliography -

The Assimilation Seminar: From First Time Guests to Long Time Members, by Nelson Searcy and Kerrick Thomas (Church Leader Insights). Order from:

http://www.churchleaderinsights.com/store/cart.php?m=product_detail&p=7

Provides proven methods for retaining the first time guest to your church and tips to move them along to becoming committed members. Includes 2 Teaching CDs plus a Resource CD that includes 25+ page Assimilation Strategy used at The Journey, Sample Emails and Surveys, Greeter and Usher Overviews—etc.

Beyond the First Visit: The Complete Guide to Connecting Guests to Your Church, by Gary L. McIntosh (Baker, 2006) ISBN 0801091845

The author invites you to take another look at your church through the eyes of a first-time guest to identify the things that might be holding them back from a second visit. This is a practical book that provides advice on assessing and improving the ways in which your church attracts people, welcomes them, does follow-up, and brings them into the church family. More than simply offering mere techniques, it gives suggestions for making a welcoming attitude part of the fabric of your church.

Finding Them, Keeping Them: Effective Strategies for Evangelism and Assimilation in the Local Church, by Gary McIntosh and Glen Martin (Broadman & Holman, 1991) ISBN 0805460519

This book includes time-tested strategies for evangelism and assimilation into the local church.

First Impressions: Creating WOW Experiences in Your Church, by Mark L. Waltz (Group, 2004) ISBN 9780764427572

Is a warm handshake enough? First-time guests often decide whether to return to a church before the service has even begun. This book provides practical ways to make the first impression the best impression and keep attendees coming back.

The Gift of Hospitality: In Church, in the Home, in All of Life, by Delia Halverson (Chalice Press, 1999) ISBN 0827212437

Halverson explores how Jesus exemplified for us God's gift of hospitality and shows specific ways and models for creating a hospitable environment and lifestyle in all aspects of our life at church and at home.

High Expectations: The Remarkable Secret of Keeping People in Your Church, by Thom S. Rainer (Broadman & Holman, 1999) ISBN 0805412662

The author takes an in-depth look at why people leave churches and how church leaders can hold onto their members.

The Inviting Church: A Study of New Member Assimilation, by Roy M. Oswald and Speed B. Leas (The Alban Institute, 1987) ISBN 1566990203

By studying eight congregations and summarizing many other earlier studies, the authors provide information on those aspects of congregational life important for attracting and assimilating new members. The three most important contributors

to growth are satisfaction with worship and program, congregational harmony and cooperation, and social action. The Inviting Church includes a self-study design for assessing assimilation processes and analyzing visitors' perceptions.

Making Room: Recovering Hospitality As a Christian Tradition, by Christine D. Pohl (Eerdmans, 1999) ISBN 0802844316

Although hospitality was central to Christian identity and practice in earlier centuries, our generation knows little about its life-giving character. MAKING ROOM revisits the Christian foundations of welcoming strangers and explores the necessity, difficulty, and blessing of hospitality today. Christine Pohl traces the eclipse of this significant Christian practice, showing the initial centrality of hospitality and the importance of recovering it for contemporary life. Combining rich biblical and historical research with extensive exposure to modern service communities--The Catholic Worker, L'Abri, L'Arche, and others--this book shows how understanding the key features of hospitality can better equip us to faithfully carry out the practical call of the gospel.

Making Your Church More Inviting: A Step-by-Step Guide for In-Church Training, by Roy M. Oswald (The Alban Institute, 1992) ISBN 1566990556

If you've read the book or viewed the course, now lead your church in study with this workbook approach to Alban's Inviting Church materials. The fifteen sessions are designed to help clergy or lay leaders guide committees or study groups through an exploration of their congregation's IQ (invitation quotient). Discover how well you invite, welcome, and incorporate new members. As participants uncover the inviting elements of your church, they develop a personal witness style that emerges comfortably from their individual gifts.

Membership Matters: Insights from Effective Churches on New Member Classes and Assimilation, by Chuck Lawless (Zondervan, 2005) ISBN 0310262860

This book is based on a national study of effective churches and shows how growing churches implement new member classes and motivate their members into ministry. Membership Matters is designed to be a guide for church leaders wanting to start or improve a membership class. It includes models for classes and examples of resources such as church covenants, class schedules, and lesson outlines. It also gives direction on motivating uninvolved members to participate in ministry. One chapter chronicles an ongoing discussion among pastors of growing churches that are effectively motivating members to do ministry.

That All May Worship: An Interfaith Welcome to People with Disabilities, by Ginny Thornburgh, et. al. (National Organization on Disability, Religion and Disability, 1997)

Seeking to assist congregations with becoming more welcoming and inclusive in their places of worship, this interfaith handbook begins with a discussion of attitudes about disability in the religious community. After exploring the use of affirming language, the authors explain the importance of religious leaders, trained ushers, transportation, and religious education in disability awareness. They also discuss ways that congregations can affirm, support, and care for caregivers. The book features sections on including people with particular disabilities. Equally valuable is an audit of barriers in attitudes, communications, and architecture. For congregations new to the issue of disability awareness, this handbook is a good place to begin.

Turn Your Church Inside Out: Building a Community for Others, by Walt Kallestad (Augsburg Fortress, 2001) ISBN 0806640340

Walt Kallestad envisions the church as a mission center—committed to reaching out to others through evangelism and service. He combines biblical principles with leadership and communication skills to show how pastors and lay leaders can develop a dynamic congregation open to change, motivate staff and members for innovation and creativity, and make a positive difference in their communities.

Welcome! Tools and Techniques for New Member Ministry, by Andrew D. Weeks (The Alban Institute, 1992) ISBN 1566990572

This toolkit of intentional and compassionate strategies takes an encouraging, incremental approach to help even small groups get started quickly. Study the separate chapters on: Imaginative Marketing, The Ministry of Greeting, Crafting Welcoming Materials, Tracking and Involving Newcomers, and Structuring Groups For Growth. Adapt an additional 34 pages of template forms, brochures, and procedures to your needs.

Widening the Welcome of Your Church: Biblical Hospitality & the Vital Congregation, by Fred Bernhard (LifeQuest Publishing Group, 1996) ISBN 0963720694

Can sharing coffee and other forms of hospitality in the church help a congregation grow? Coffee won't do it alone, but biblical hospitality will. In this exciting book you'll come to understand how the congregation which embraces hospitality always grows in vitality and in numbers. You'll learn the biblical and historical basis for hospitality and also come to understand: hospitality to strangers; hospitality to children and youth; hospitality to church members; hospitality to those who make us uncomfortable; physical facilities and hospitality; and styles of worship and hospitality. "Widening the Welcome" includes a study guide ideal for individual, small group, and congregational reflection.

This bibliography was prepared by the staff of the Covenant Resource Center. While not specifically endorsed by the Evangelical Covenant Church, the above resources may be helpful as you plan for ministry. For additional assistance or suggestions, contact the Covenant Resource Center at 1-800-338-IDEA(4332) or resource.center@covchurch.org.

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