

The Environment

The environment is everything a first time attender experiences. It has often been said that the first time someone comes to church, they rarely hear all of the message, they are more focused on the building, the seating, the artwork, the friendly faces around them and other tangible interactions. Once they return a few times, they will begin to focus more on the message.

To increase the chances of their returning to your congregation use the following checklist as you walk around your church meeting place:

- Clear, legible, and welcoming outdoor signs
- Obvious and accessible entrance
- Room for parking
- Handicap accessible parking
- Well cared-for lawn, landscaping
- Clean, organized entryway and public spaces
- Clear, legible interior signs for:
 - sanctuary
 - bathroom
 - Sunday School classrooms
 - offices
 - book table
- Clean bathrooms (flowers, candles, etc.)
- Introductory literature prominently displayed:
 - brochures
 - New Church Connection*
- Welcoming and informed greeters before and after the service
- Book table (clean, dusted, and filled with newcomer friendly books)
- Person available to help people at the book table
- Guest book or response cards (or some way to gather people's information)
- Clear and assessable bulletin (including the order of service, upcoming events, how to be involved, contact information, etc.)
- Welcome packets
- Refreshments, coffee, etc. for fellowship opportunities after worship
- Events, groups, classes, programs, etc. to which to invite people
- A system to follow up with contacts

Take steps today to create a welcoming message and environment in your congregation.