

NEW MEMBER INTEGRATION

The purpose of this tool is to help you look at your congregation's strengths and weaknesses in reaching out to seekers, welcoming guests, and including new members into the life of the community. This assessment tool requires the participation of a group of people who are interested in deepening the faith connections of members and newcomers, and reaching out to visitors and guests. Usually this will include your membership and/or outreach committees, and perhaps representatives from your Board or Council as well other key lay leaders and staff.

The assessment process can be done at one time, or divided into sections and given to leaders who have responsibilities in particular areas, with those leaders coming back together to synthesize the parts. This process could take 2-3 hours, or could run over several weeks to compile all the components into one assessment.

1. In small groups, please discuss each of the five major shaded areas on the assessment form, and as you discuss each area, give it a score before moving to the next topic.

2. Using the subtopics under each area, assess your congregation's overall effort. Score the overall area (shaded box) on a score of 1 – 10, with 1 meaning virtually no effort to 10 meaning absolutely outstanding. Be honest! For example, if you have a good website and are in the paper, but have a low profile in the community, you might give yourself a "5."

3. Review your marks on each major area.

1. Will they come? _____
2. Will they come back? _____
3. Getting to know us _____
4. Getting serious _____
5. A committed relationship _____

TOTAL _____

Where are you strongest? Where are you weakest? What can you change that will make the most difference? Remember, that it matters little if you score "9" on "getting serious" but you score "3" on "Will they come?" and "2" on "Will they come back?" If you are weak at the front end, people will never get to know you well enough to enter into a committed relationship.

For support for your congregation, contact:

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Stage of Inclusion	Specific Areas	Comments	Score 1-10
Will they come? Our image and visibility.			
	Are we visible in the community?		
	Can our sign be seen? Is it lit?		
	Are we in the newspaper?		
	Web site: Is it up to date? Does it tell me what is happening Sunday morning? Does it have photos of the church and staff? Are there past sermons for me to read? Is there a map and directions?		
	What is our image in the community? Do we have an image? Are we seen as a “moral beacon” for compassion and justice?		
	Is our outreach related to our mission? Is reaching out central to our sense of who we are?		
Will they come back? The initial experience.			
Greeting	Are our guests warmly greeted as they come in?		
	Does our minister greet people before the service, or is the minister busy elsewhere? Does our minister convey warmth and a genuine sense of pleasure pleased that a guest has come?		
	Are greeters visible, outgoing, friendly and knowledgeable? Is there consistency in greeters? Will guests see a familiar face next week?		
Follow-up	What kind of follow-up is done with our guests? Will someone call them? Will they receive the newsletter? Can they request a nametag?		
Children	Do we pay attention to visiting children? (Parents are not likely to return if their children do not have a good experience.)		

How will guests and new members get to know us? Worship and Programming.			
Worship	Is our worship vital and alive? Does it touch our hearts and minds? Do the elements work together? (Sermons are not as important as we think. Lots of stagnant churches have excellent preaching.)		
	Is there a lay presence in the service – readings, personal reflection, call to worship?		
	Are there regular and high quality intergenerational elements to worship?		
	Is there a time for greeting others in the service?		
Youth & Children's experience	Is there someone to meet our guests and their children when they arrive in the Religious Education space?		
	Does the Religious Education setting feel cheerful and safe?		
	Are children warmly welcomed?		
	Is the RE experience more than cognitive? Does it touch a child's moral and spiritual needs? Is it age appropriate?		
What does it mean to get serious? The membership process.			
	Do we offer regular opportunities for people to learn about the church, Unitarian Universalism, and the meaning of membership?		
	Do we explain the responsibilities of membership: time, talent and treasure? Do we ask for a financial pledge and talk about money frankly?		
	Does our membership orientation event include childcare? Is there food? Fun? Time to mix?		
	Is our minister(s) an integral part of the orientation?		
	Do we "close the deal" at the end of the session by inviting people to sign the book? Is signing celebrated?		

Do we make it easy for people to connect, to serve and to grow? A committed relationship – deeper relationships.			
	Do we offer small group ministry? Do we help new members find their place? Do we provide for depth and intimacy?		
	What are the opportunities we offer for social action and witnessing? Are we a moral beacon in our community? Do we provide outlets for people so that they can give of themselves?		
	Do we offer high quality adult programs?		
	Is there a youth group? What programs and activities does the group engage in? (Just “hanging out” has value and there is more needed to build community.)		
	Do we have a vital <i>and open</i> music program?		
	Do we care for people in our community? Do we offer care and support at times of life transition and crisis? Do we visit elderly members and friends where they live?		
	Do we provide leadership training and opportunities?		

Notes & Ideas: _____
