³⁴ When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. ³⁴ The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

Leviticus 19:33-34 NIV

"Accepting people where they are while helping each other accept where God wants us to be."

Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?", "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

John 8:2-11 NIV

Video excerpt from "Antwone Fisher"

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jTQMR1lsiGw

Welcome to the Family

How to greet guests, welcome strangers, and follow-up so they will want to keep coming back.

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God Tells Us How to Treat Guests

1. Hospitality means __love of strangers__

   • Do not __mistreat your guests__

   • Treat guests __as one of the family__

   • Love guests __as you love yourself__

   • Remember __once we were all church guests ourselves__

2. Terms create powerful __images__

3. All churches believe they are __friendly__

4. Without guests a church cannot __grow__

Four Percentages
of Effective Assimilation

a. **75%** _of guests do not understand our church_

b. **35%** _of our people leave every year_

c. **40%** _of first-time guests assimilating is a minimum_

d. **80%** _of guests who return a second time will_ usually assimilate with our church

Understanding the Sticky Factor

- The number one reason guests stay is if they think they can make a _____friend_____.

Top Ten "Very Important Points"

1. The new front door of the church is __the website__.
2. Walking to the __front door__.
3. Offering a __welcome booth__ and __ministries of the church__.
4. Entering the __front door__.
5. Meeting __people__.

Top Ten "Very Important Points"

6. Entering the __auditorium__.

7. Participating in the __worship service__.

8. Exiting the __auditorium__.

9. Making sure to __invite them back__.

10. Contact the __first and second week__.

Seven Ways to Welcome Guests to Church

1. Invite your _____guests_____ with a personal invitation

2. Arrive ____early____ to make sure everything is ready for you guest's arrival.

3. Greet guests warmly at the ____entrance____ and escort them to their seats.

4. Help guests ____understand____ what is taking place

Seven Ways to Welcome Guests to Church

5. Anticipate and answer as many __questions__ as possible in advance so guests do not have to ask.

6. Do something _____extra_____ to make guests' visit special.

7. As guests leave, be sure to thank them for coming and ____invite them back___ .

How to Follow-Up with Guests Appropriately

1. The principle of "Suspects and Prospects."

   a. Suspects are….

   b. Prospects are…

2. Three Principles of Follow-up

- Guests follow-up is most effective when guests receive the following:

  a. A __personal__ contact

  b. A __prompt__ contact

  c. A __continual__ contact

3. A Four-Step Plan

- Step 1: Contact the Guests

  o Text or email guests within 2 days

  o Thank them for coming and invite them to return

  o Ask if they received a welcome packet

3. A Four-Step Plan

- Step 2: Honor the Guests
  - o Mail a special gift to their house
  - o Text and ask about their interests and needs

3. A Four-Step Plan

- Step 3: Inform the Guests

  o Invite to a leader's luncheon

  o Clarify next two steps they need to take

  o Explain the discipleship pathway

3. A Four-Step Plan

- Step 4: Embrace the Guests

  o Clarify expectations

  o Encourage them to join the 101 class
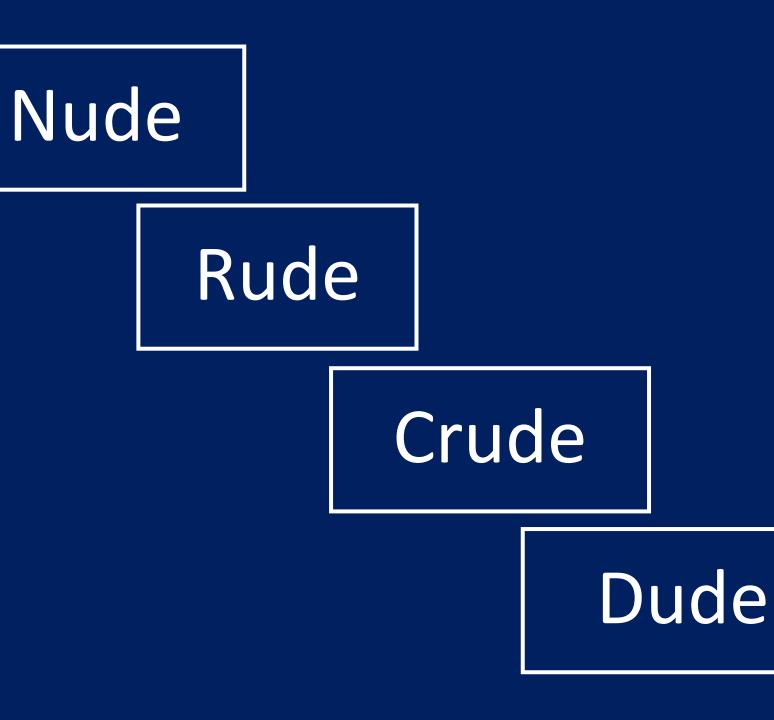
  o Honor them with an Annual Welcome Banquet

Mark 5:1-3 (NIV)

 "[1] They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. [2] When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. [3] This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain."

Mark 5:4-5 (NIV)

"[4] For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. [5] Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones."

Nude

Rude

Crude

Dude

Mark 5:6-8 (NIV)

"⁶ When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. ⁷ He shouted at the top of his voice, 'What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!' ⁸ For Jesus had said to him, 'Come out of this man, you impure spirit!'"

Mark 5:9-10 (NIV)

"[9] Then Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' 'My name is Legion,' he replied, 'for we are many.' [10] And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area."

Mark 5:15 (NIV)

"15 When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, **dressed and in his right mind**; and they were afraid."

Mark 5:18-19 (NIV)

[18]As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. [19]Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."

Mark 5:20 (NIV)

"[20] So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed."

So WHAT?

~ Jesus has power over your darkness.

~ Jesus' mercy changes everything.

~ You have a story to tell.