



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WELCOME MINISTRY

1. THE PURPOSE OF A WELCOME MINISTRY

Greeting vs. Welcoming

- Greeting is:
 - Brief interaction
 - Minimal connection
 - Transactional
- Welcoming is:
 - Relationship-centered
 - Intentional and personal
 - Focused on making people feel accepted and valued

Core Mission

- Create meaningful first impressions
- Introduce newcomers to Orthodoxy
- Encourage connection and ministry involvement
- Reflect Christ's love through hospitality and care

2. KEY COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE WELCOME MINISTRY

WHO SERVES

Successful teams include:

- Engaging and reliable volunteers
- Diverse age representation
- Faithful parishioners with welcoming personalities
- Strong ministry coordinators and leadership support

What the Team Does

- Welcome visitors before and after services
- Assist with visitor registration and orientation
- Distribute bulletins and welcome materials
- Connect visitors to ministries and parishioners
- Follow up personally with visitors after attendance
- Encourage fellowship during coffee hour

3. CREATING A WELCOMING EXPERIENCE

Where Hospitality Begins

- Welcome visitors before they enter the church
- Position welcome team members outside or near entrances
- Create warm, visible, and approachable engagement points

When to Engage

- Before Divine Liturgy
- During fellowship / coffee hour
- At parish festivals and special events
- Through follow-up communication after visits

4. BEST PRACTICES FOR PARISH LEADERS

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Welcome Ministry should:

- Learn and remember names
- Introduce visitors to others
- Ensure no visitor sits or stands alone
- Encourage continued participation and return visits

SUPPORT DIFFERENT VISITOR NEEDS

Provide helpful guidance for:

- Families and children
- Young adults
- Seniors
- Those new to Orthodoxy

Train and Organize Volunteers

- Hold annual training and planning meetings
- Create volunteer schedules and clear expectations
- Equip team members with scripts, materials, and visitor resources

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5. COMMUNICATION & FOLLOW-UP

MEANINGFUL FOLLOW-UP MATTERS

Healthy Welcome Ministries:

- Collect visitor information respectfully
- Send follow-up emails or phone calls
- Invite visitors to future events and ministries
- Continue relationship-building beyond Sunday morning

KEY INSIGHT

A welcoming parish creates:

- Stronger engagement
- Greater parish vitality
- Increased ministry participation
- Long-term spiritual connection

6. LEADERSHIP TAKEAWAYS

A successful Welcome Ministry:

- Sets the tone for the parish experience
- Demonstrates Orthodox hospitality ("philoxenia")
- Supports parish growth and outreach
- Helps parishioners live their faith through love and service

BOTTOM LINE

Welcoming ministries help parishes move beyond simply greeting people to truly embracing them as part of the parish family—making love, hospitality, and connection central to parish life



HAVE A QUESTION?

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