

Host / Hostess Training Guide

Hosts & Hostesses seek to ensure all visitors are joyfully welcomed into the worship center and treated as valued individuals. This team will serve communion and collect the weekly offering. Attendees will be assisted in finding a seat when worship center seating is limited and when the service is in progress. There are several aspects to the host / hostess position as described below:

Greeting: Making people feel welcome and appreciated.

- ✓ Smile, ensure that everyone in the worship center is joyfully greeted and made to feel welcome. “Good Morning” “Welcome” “Hi, I’m <name>”
- ✓ Prior to the service starting, you should be able to spend a little time talking with people. Once the music starts, your conversation will probably be limited to a smile and “Hi! May I help you find a seat?”
- ✓ Seek to learn (and remember) the name of anyone you don’t know. Find out some information about them. Help everyone in your section feel that they are welcome, appreciated, and part of a small community – your section.
- ✓ Some things you might want to find out about (take notes if appropriate):
 - What are their names?
 - Do they have kids? (great lead in to kid’s program)
 - Where do they live? Native or from out of state? Where?
 - Have they been attending Journey for long?
 - If new, how did they find out about Journey? Do they have any questions about the church?
- ✓ Avoid long conversations with friends and regular attendees. A visitor that gets “ignored” because we are having a conversation with our buddy will not feel welcome and may not come back.
- ✓ Smile and have fun!

Ushering: Assisting with seating needs while helping prevent worship service distractions.

- ✓ Prior to the service starting and when seating is wide open, people will probably want to find their own seat—that’s fine and we will be doing more greeting than ushering at this point. (The only exception is for infants and small children as discussed below)
- ✓ Once the service starts, people usually appreciate help finding a seat: (smiling) “Hi! May I help you find a seat?” If there are seating options, let them know: “We’ve got some room in the front as well as some seats in the middle. Do you have a preference?” Often the person will have a seat already saved for them by a parent or spouse. “Let me know if I can help”

- ✓ During the music, bringing people to the front half of the worship center is a minor distraction. It's a larger distraction during prayer, sermon, communion, and other quiet times.
 - Therefore, it's better to try to fill the interior front sections during the music so that there are enough seats left along the side and in the back for the people that come in during the sermon. (Exception: small children, infants)
 - To better fill the front sections during the music, hosts and hostesses in the rear of the worship center should bring people forward to the front section hosts/hostesses who have identified empty seats and will seat them.

- ✓ If seating begins to tighten up, begin surveying your area of the worship center to determine how many empty seats are available in each pew. Ask those sitting next to empty seats whether the seats are reserved. Example: Smile, point to the area, and ask the people on each side "How many seats are available."

- ✓ If seating is very tight, it may be necessary to have the people already seated shift toward the middle. This is particularly important in the rear sections due to the length of the rows. Example: A group of 3 guests arrive late and need seating, but there are only single seats left. The Host combines 3 "single" open seats scattered across a row into a group of 3 seats by asking some of the people in the row to shift over.

- ✓ Avoiding disruptions to the service by others:
 - Be sure visitors with infants or young children know that we have a secure nursery and great kids programs (but children are welcome in the church if parent's prefer.) Help people with infants or young children find seats near the back left of the worship center (near the sound room) and near an aisle so they can easier excuse themselves if the kid(s) become noisy. Kindly, point out the quiet room in the back left. If they prefer to sit up front, do your best to help them sit next to an aisle so they can leave with minimum distraction and embarrassment. It would be better to have the people already seated slide over so that the children are along aisle rather than seat the children in the middle of the row.
 - Avoid bringing people to the front during prayer, sermon, communion, and other quiet times.

- ✓ Severe/ ongoing distractions:
 - If a distraction is severe and doesn't appear to be getting better (example: wailing baby in the middle of the sermon, going on several minutes and getting worse), smile and ask if you can help. Try to help the person "save face" as much as possible.
 - For baby/child related issues, a female usher will typically pose less of a threat than a male usher
 - Cell phone ringing or other ongoing beeping noise: If source is known, nearest usher should approach and politely ask the individual if they would be able to turn off the cell phone or putting it into a silent mode. If source is unknown, Ushers should discreetly move to the perimeter and wait until problem goes away or source is found.

- Loud talking, unruly behavior:
 - If the person/people do not appear to pose a physical threat, any usher should approach and politely introduce themselves as an usher, ask if everything is OK. If they need help, offer to escort them to the lobby to handle the issue. If they don't need help, then politely let the individual know their talking (or whatever) is distracting the people around them.
 - If the behavior continues, or if the person appears to be a potential physical threat (large male): two or more male ushers should approach (one lead, other(s) nearby) and politely introduce themselves as the lead usher, let the individual know they are causing a distraction, and that they need to stop or they will be asked to leave.
- Unstable disruptive behavior, suspected on drugs, clear physical threat:
 - One usher should proceed to the welcome desk and call the 911, the Man of Duty (MOD), and the on duty first aid responders. Wait for the police, then escort them into the worship center when they arrive.
 - Three or more male ushers should gather close by the individual, then approach, avoiding any quick or other motions which could threaten or spook the individual. Politely introduce themselves as the lead usher, let the individual know their talking (or whatever) is distracting the people around them. Ask the individual if they would mind following us to the lobby so we can talk to them.
 - If the individual responds favorably, the ushers should lead them outside (toward the compass classes preferred) and try to maintain a pleasant, non-threatening dialog.
 - If the individual resists, do not provoke them. The ushers should stay close should the individual become violent until the police arrive. Those people seated around the person should be moved out of the area.
 - If the person/people do not appear to pose a physical threat, any usher should approach and politely introduce themselves as an usher, ask if everything is OK. If they need help, offer to
- ✓ Avoiding disruptions to the service by yourself:
 - Minimize use of the front and middle cross aisles after service has started.
 - Don't stand in front of people that are seated once the service has started. Move to a location that won't block their view
 - Avoid bringing people to the front during prayer, sermon, communion, and other quiet times.
 - Try to save your own seat(s) near an aisle and further back in your section to minimize the distraction when you leave and return from communion/offering. If your travel path

is from your seat to your station is more than 5-6 steps away from the side or back aisles, then you are probably distracting the people you are walking in front of.

- ✓ Check in with the offering coordinator to let him/her know you're present and to get a service schedule. Verify what position you will be serving (H1 – H22). Be sure to find out what the cue is for each of the following:
 - When to go to your designated communion station
 - When to begin serving communion
 - When to begin taking up the offering
- ✓ At the designated time of the service, all person's serving communion will quietly go to the designated communion station. (C1, C2, C3, or C4)
- ✓ Servers will silently take communion as the trays are distributed.
- ✓ Servers in the far left and far right stations (C1 & C4) will remain in the station until given the cue to begin communion.
- ✓ Servers in the stations along the back wall (C2 & C3) will wait just outside of the station out of the view of the people in the back sections until the cue to begin communion.
- ✓ The front sections have 4 servers each. Two will start at the front moving to the rear (one of the left one on the right), and the other two will start at the back moving forwards. Example: the front left section has four servers – H1, H2, H9, and H10. H1 starts at the front left corner, H2 starts in the front right, H9 starts in the back left, H10 in the back right.
- ✓ The rear sections have 2 servers each.
- ✓ Don't send the communion trays down an aisle that has trays coming from the other end.
- ✓ If a row has a large number of empty seats, avoid making the people in the row get up and walk the tray across the empty seats if possible.
- ✓ Do a quick check to make sure your tray has enough bread/juice to serve an aisle before sending it.
- ✓ Try to avoid getting ahead of the server at the opposite end of the aisle because they may get two sets of trays at the same time. Wait until you and your partner have both bread and juice before moving to the next pair of row.
- ✓ If there is an odd number of rows, one person will have to pass their trays, then walk around and receive them.
- ✓ If you finish quickly and are returning to a rear communion station, see if the back section needs help. You could collect empty cups from the people sitting in the front of a section or serve the people sitting along the back wall or cry room.
- ✓ Once done, quietly return your trays to the appropriate communion station.

Collecting the Offering:

- ✓ Offering is normally after the communion, but not always.
- ✓ The offering is nearly identical to communion with a few minor differences
- ✓ The offering will normally follow communion. After returning your communion trays to you communion station, you will pick up an offering bag and wait silently for the cue to begin collecting the offering:
 - Servers in the far left and far right stations (C1 & C4) will remain in the station until given the cue to collect the offering.
 - Servers in the stations along the back wall (C2 & C3) will silently walk along the back of the church to the aisle they will be walking down and wait for the cue to collect the offering.
- ✓ The offering bags are passed in same way the communion tray is passed
- ✓ It's OK to smile while collecting the offering. We should be giving out of joy and gratitude, so why not smile?
- ✓ Once your section is complete, proceed quickly to the back of the worship center and place your bag in the large basket.
- ✓ Quietly return to your seat using the least disruptive path as possible. If the service is nearly over it is OK to remain at the back of the worship center until the end of the service.

After Service: Making sure people are invited to come back. Cleaning up your area

- ✓ Stay near your section so you can smile and greet people as they leave. "Have a great week." "See you next week" "Bye"
- ✓ If someone new stops to ask for information or talk, be sure to introduce yourself and get their name (and remember it!) Give them all the time in the world and introduce them to others if possible.
- ✓ Seek to reconnect with new visitors and thank them for coming ("Dave, Barbara, I'm glad you came. I'd love to see you again next week"). Find out if they have any questions ("If you have any questions about our church, I'd be glad to try to answer them. We also have a information desk in the atrium.")
- ✓ Once your section is empty, take a minute to clean up any leftover bulletins, scrap, etc. Take any left personal belongings to the information desk.

Other tips:

- ✓ Let the joy of salvation "shine" in your attitude and behavior
- ✓ Be in position 10-15 minutes before the service time. (20 minutes for holidays, grand opening, 1st day etc.)

- ✓ Check your breath, take a mint if in doubt
- ✓ If you know you'll be absent, let the communion coordinator know ahead of time.
- ✓ Realize that we all have different gifts: some are better at greeting, others are better ushers, etc. That's fine! We need some of each.
- ✓ If you know someone that would like to help out with guest services, recruit them!
- ✓ Have fun!
- ✓ Smile!