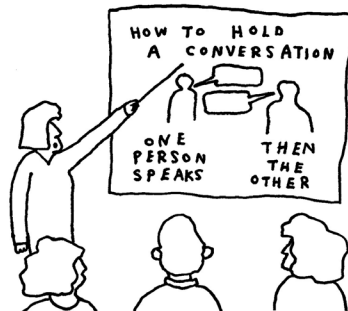


# THE WELCOMERS

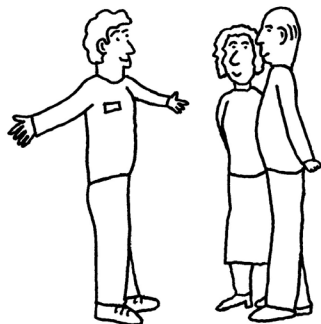
IT IS THE  
JOB OF THE  
WELCOMERS  
TO BE  
WELCOMING  
AND WEAR  
A BADGE



THEY ARE  
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TO EQUIP  
THEM FOR  
THIS ROLE



IN THE  
EVENT  
OF ANY  
NEWCOMERS  
ATTENDING  
A SERVICE  
A WELCOMER  
WILL BE  
SUMMONED  
TO DEAL  
WITH THE  
SITUATION



THERE IS  
A ROTA  
SO THAT  
THE SAME  
PEOPLE  
DO NOT  
HAVE TO BE  
WELCOMING  
EVERY WEEK



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# YOU'RE WELCOME!

A COURSE EXPLORING THE MINISTRY  
OF WELCOME IN OUR CHURCH



DIocese of TRURO

DISCOVERING GOD'S KINGDOM  
GROWING THE CHURCH

# PARTICIPANTS' MANUAL

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The welcome someone receives in church has a huge impact on whether they stay, in fact positive first impressions are crucial! Research shows that those who do not receive a good first impression are unlikely to stay. Many of us are in the Church because of the acceptance and inclusion we've felt when we entered it, and continued to feel as we've remained.

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Welcome is also a deeply biblical theme, finding its roots in the compassion of God for the outsider and illustrated vividly in Jesus' own commitment to share a table with all – lawyers and sinners, religious leaders and tax collectors. Welcome is rooted in God's nature as Trinity. The welcome that Jesus offers in his ministry to and for others reflects the welcome that the Father offers to the world. The Spirit draws us into the welcoming life of God, shaping us to be like Jesus. Christians are called to welcome others as they have been welcomed.

This workshop is designed to offer time to reflect on how we welcome people into our church whether on a Sunday or for other special services, and to address our welcome even before someone steps through the door.

To help you prepare for the session, jot down your answers to the following questions:

1. Think about a time when you've felt welcome, e.g. when you've visited someone's house; started a new job; going to a meeting – what made you feel welcome? Was it to do with the place, or the person/people?

2. Now think about a time when you didn't feel welcome...

3. If you can, try going to a church you aren't familiar with for a Sunday service. Note how you feel about going before you go – and afterwards, make notes about how the experience was for you. Did you feel welcome? Why or why not?

# WHAT IS WELCOME? A BIT OF THEOLOGY!

Do you have a favourite passage in the Bible which demonstrates God's welcome?

Reflect on the following passages:



Share with God's people who are in need.  
Practice hospitality.



*Romans 12:13*

“

Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.

”

*Hebrews 13:2*

“

I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in.

”

*Matthew 25:35*

# THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

When did Jesus demonstrate his acceptance of people – what stories can you recall?

With whom did Jesus eat?



# THE PRODIGAL SON - LUKE 15:11-23



↑ Rembrandt's 'The Return of the Prodigal Son'

Hermitage, St Petersburg



# REFLECTION

***A dictionary definition of welcome:***

***To salute with kindness, to receive & entertain hospitably and cheerfully.***

Who are the types of visitors we would find difficult to welcome unconditionally?

What Would Jesus Do? Could you pledge to be inclusive?

**I pledge to welcome all who come into this church.**

**Signed:**





# WE EXTEND A SPECIAL WELCOME...

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We extend a special welcome to those who are single, married, divorced, widowed, gay, confused, filthy rich, comfortable or dirt poor. We extend a special welcome to those who are crying new-borns, skinny as a rake or could afford to lose a few pounds.

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We welcome you if you can sing like Pavarotti or can't carry a note in a bucket. you're welcome here if you're 'just browsing,' just woke up or just got out of prison. We don't care if you're more Christian than the Archbishop of Canterbury, or haven't been in church since little Jack's christening.

We extend a special welcome to those who are over 60 but not grown up yet, and to teenagers who are growing up too fast. We welcome keep-fit mums, football dads, starving artists, tree huggers, latte-sippers, vegetarians, junk-food eaters. We welcome those that are in recovery or still addicted. We welcome you if you're having problems or you're down in the dumps or if you don't like 'organised' religion.' We've been there too!

If you blew all your money on the horses, you're welcome here. We offer a welcome to those who think the earth is flat, work too hard, don't work, can't spell, or because grandma is in town and wanted to go to church.

We welcome those who are inked, pierced or both. We offer a special welcome to those who could use a prayer right now, had religion shoved down your throat as a kid or got lost on the coastal path and wound up here by mistake. We welcome tourists, seekers and doubters, bleeding hearts... and you!

# HOW DO WE WELCOME?

It helps if we understand what it feels like to go into an unfamiliar place. Imagine you've been given £10 with which to place a bet on a horse. How would you feel? What would you want to know?

BETTING SHOP	CHURCH
Where is the betting shop?	Where is the church?
What time is it open?	What time does it start?
What do I do?	Ditto
Will there be someone to show me what to do?	Ditto
Do I need to take anything?	Ditto
Will anyone see me going in?	Ditto
Will I get better odds in a different shop?	What's the difference in all the churches? Anglican/Methodist/Baptist/Catholic?
How long will it take?	How long will it last?
Do I have to stay until the race is over?	Will I have to stay until the end?
Does it cost anything besides the bet?	Do I have to give some money?
Will they all be men?	Will they all be women?
Will they stare at me?	Ditto
What do I wear so I don't stand out?	Ditto
Do I need to have tattoos to fit in?	Do I need to cover up any tattoos?
How do I collect my winnings?	Is the coffee free?
Will there be a toilet?	Ditto

# THE WELCOMERS

The visitor has made it through the door. What are the 20 common mistakes in welcoming visitors?

1	11
2	12
3	13
4	14
5	15
6	16
7	17
8	18
9	19
10	20

# TOP TIPS FOR A GOOD WELCOME

## THE SERVICE

Think of the following:

Books;

Where to sit;

Children;

The toilet;

Special Needs;

The Peace;

The Collection;

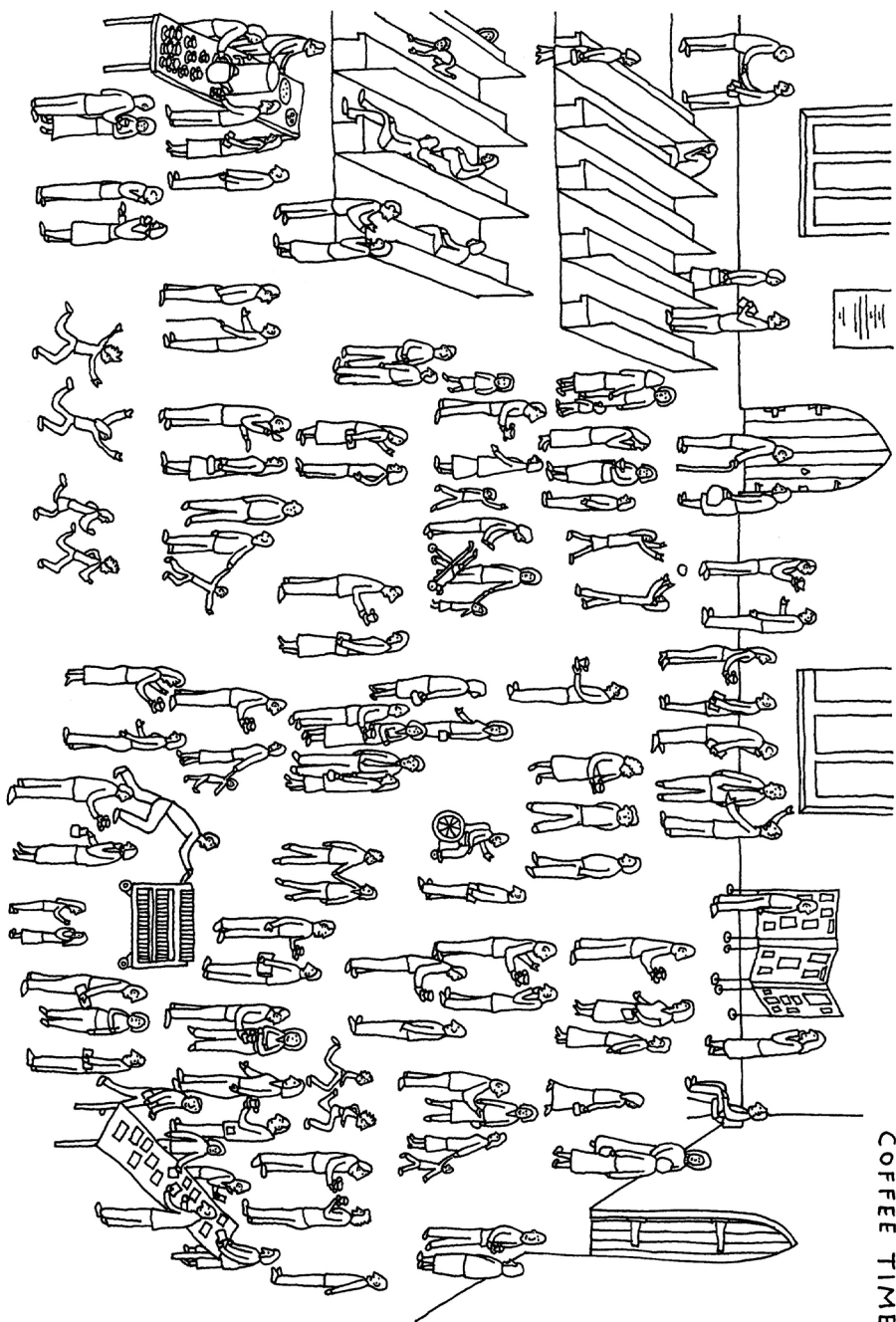
Going up to Communion.

## **AFTER THE SERVICE**

What policy does the church have for ensuring people are not just left in the pew at the end of the service?

- Say something to the newcomer
- Invite them to coffee
- Introduce them to one or two others
- Conversation
- What information can you give the newcomer to take away?
- Is there a card you can give them which they can fill in to leave their details if they wish?
- Will you recognise them if they come back? Do you need to make a note of their name?

# COFFEE TIME



# REVIEWING THE MINISTRY OF WELCOME

How can the church encourage everyone to be part of the ministry of welcome?

Should our church have a Hospitality/  
Welcome team?

What was the most important thing I learnt  
about hospitality and welcome?

What do I think our church does a) best and b) not so well from what was discussed  
about welcome?

What am I (or what are we) going to do or seek to change as a result of this session?





# APPENDIX 1

## Welcoming through inclusion

### SCENARIO 1

Adult Care Services in your area have opened a residential home for adults with learning disabilities just down the road from your church. A small group of them have started coming to church with a couple of their carers. Their abilities vary, but some are unable to speak and one or two have mannerisms which others might find distracting, such as rocking in their seats and making gratuitous noises. What are the issues here? How can they be helped to feel welcome and be integrated into the life and worship of the church?

### SCENARIO 2

For the first time in your community an ecumenical service is due to take place at your church on Remembrance Sunday. The congregation of the local parish church will be attending. What needs to be considered and how can you plan for a warm welcome?

### SCENARIO 3

A Baptism is taking place during a morning service. The baptism party are non-churchgoing, including people of other faiths and young children. How can they best be welcomed, made to feel comfortable and helped to join in?



# APPENDIX 2

## Words of welcome for Welcomers

- ✓ Hello/Good Morning
- ✓ I don't think we've met before. My name's.....
- ✓ This is a Communion Service. Are you familiar with that?
- ✓ This is an all-age/family service/informal praise service, so there is no Communion.
- ✓ Are you familiar with services at St X's?
- ✓ Everything you need is in the blue service booklet and on the pew sheet. The hymn books are in the pews.
- ✓ Would you like to sit with somebody?
- ✓ Would it help if I showed you where the toilet is in case your child needs to go during the service?
- ✓ Would you like to come through for a cup of coffee?

# APPENDIX 3

## Setting up a Welcome Team

1. A Welcome Team will have different roles – and therefore requires different personalities. It is important to try to match the role with the appropriate personality. Not everyone needs to be an extrovert!

2. Roles might include (and people may hold more than one):

- ▶ Door welcome – often the traditional sidesperson's role
- ▶ Pew welcome – the person who is happy to sit with a newcomer during a service
- ▶ The after service welcomer – the person who will ensure the newcomer is not left alone, is introduced to others, ordered coffee etc after the service
- ▶ The rota organiser – who will need to liaise with the priest to find out what services are forthcoming.
- ▶ The badges/welcome packs/personal details cards provider(s) – ensuring enough are available
- ▶ The Team Co-ordinator (NB church wardens are responsible for the sidespeople, but the role of Team Co-Ordinator need not be a warden) . The Co-ordinator is the first point of contact with the parish priest and wardens and ensures the Team is running smoothly, that reports go to the APCM and PCC as agreed and that the whole Team meets at least twice a year to review its practice.

3. The Team should agree the roles and make sure the expectations/responsibilities of the role are agreed and clearly written down for each Team member. This will take time.

4. How will the Team recruit new members? NB Sidespeople are elected at the APCM. Welcome Team members need not be sidespeople but this might be a good time to announce the Team members.

5. How, where and when will the Team be commissioned? E.g. in the first main Sunday service after the APCM? A good opportunity to reinforce that everyone is responsible for welcome – the Team is simply ensuring it happens!

6. What training is required? Listening skills? Team building course? This course?

7. How will the Team operate at all the different types of service – on Sundays, mid-week, funerals, baptisms, weddings?

8. How will the team organise itself if someone is absent/needs to swap duties?

9. What is the follow up process to help newcomers become more integrated? This is not necessarily the responsibility of the Welcome Team, but there needs to be some 'hand-over' system so newcomers are not either treated as a newcomer every week or are never asked if/how they want to get further involved.

10. Further resources: 'Creating a Culture of Welcome' by Alison Gilchrist, Grove Books Ltd ([www.grovebooks.co.uk](http://www.grovebooks.co.uk)).

Everybody Welcome Course by Bob Jackson and George Fisher (includes leaders and participant manual plus DVD) [www.chpublishing.co.uk](http://www.chpublishing.co.uk)

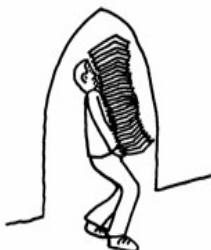


# A PRAYER

Heavenly Father, you have welcomed us  
into your kingdom  
and your heart's desire is to draw  
every human being to yourself.  
Grant us clear eyes to see people as you see them,  
sensitive feet to stand in their shoes, and warm  
smiles to welcome them in your name.  
Give us such generous hearts that  
our church becomes  
a foretaste of heaven where  
every soul you send us finds  
their loving home in the community of  
your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,

**AMEN**

# THE WELCOME PACK



NEWCOMERS ARE GIVEN  
A WELCOME PACK



THIS CONTAINS THE  
RULES AND REGULATIONS...



THE STANDING  
ORDER FORM...



THE 'VOLUNTEERING'  
FORM...



THE SMALL  
PRINT...



AND THE COMBINATION  
CODE FOR THE TOILETS

CartoonChurch.com

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## WITH THANKS

The Diocese of St Albans & the Methodist Church for materials from their welcome courses.

## FURTHER ASSISTANCE & COPIES OF 'A WAY TO WELCOME'

Please contact Liz Wallace, Parish Support Advisor on the details below.

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