

Greeting Newcomers as Warm, Friendly Presence

Creating a friendly atmosphere as a spiritual leader:

- At one Sunday service find someone you don't know and sit with them.
 - Generally, those new to the church sit towards the back.
 - Keep your eye out for newcomer packets.
- Say something like, "Hi, my name is _____," and hold out your hand for them to shake. They generally tell you their name at this point. Be sure to say it in your head and refer to them by name quickly so you'll remember it. "Do you mind if I sit next to you, Sheila?"
- Take your cues from their demeanor. If it appears they would like to visit, engage them in general conversation.
- If they have a newcomer packet, "I see that you have a newcomer packet – is this your first time here?" "How did you find us? Do you have any questions? Perhaps I can answer them."
- If they don't have a newcomer packet, "I don't believe we've met before. Have you been coming to Church long? How did you find us? Are you enjoying it? Do you have any questions?"
- Play it by ear. Most people are grateful to have someone sit by them so they aren't sitting alone.
- Sometimes people don't want to chat. You'll sense it. If their answer to your first question is short or hesitant, it may be a clue that they would rather be quiet. Respect that. I've found that even if you say very little, they still appreciate you're being there so they are not sitting alone.
- When it's time to "Greet those in your row," please introduce them by name to those around you. "Hi, my name is Jane and this is Sheila." Others will introduce themselves.
 - If Sheila is a quiet one, only introduce her to one or two people and then sit quietly with her while others are greeting.
- When the service is over, you can say something like, "Thank you for letting me sit with you."
- If they are new perhaps you can add, "Have you met Rev. David? I'd love to introduce you," or "May I show you where the Fellowship Hall is?"
- Then, if they aren't one of the shy ones (and most aren't) take them to the Fellowship Hall and introduce them to someone else. Then, telling them you're very glad to have met them, you can excuse yourself.
- Make a point of looking for them after that to say hello.

Please write a paragraph about your experience and tell us about it when you turn it in.