

POSTINGS

articles for missions mobilizers



October 2025 | Vol. 20 | Issue 10 | by Ellen Livingood

Introducing Newcomers to Missions

Great potential has just walked into your church

Did newcomers visit your church for the first time this week? Or maybe they have been attending for a few months but are still getting acquainted. What impression have they gotten of your church's global and local outreach? Do those new to your church sense how much you care for lost people? Have they been invited to learn more?

Helping visitors know you are passionate about expanding Christ's Kingdom near and far isn't complicated, but it takes some intentionality. This month's *Postings* highlights some important points of

potential connection between your missions program and newcomers—including first-time visitors and those still determining if and how they fit into your congregation.



1 MAKE YOUR WEBSITE A STRONG FIRST MISSIONS IMPRESSION

Before they even decide to attend a service, the majority of potential visitors search a church's website to try to figure out what this body is really like. A portion of them will be specifically looking to see how you serve your community and engage in global missions.

Some church websites do a great job of presenting global/local involvement, often including a missions intro page under the "About Us" section that communicates how much missions is at the heart of the church's purpose. Frequently churches have a whole section dedicated to missions that introduces both vision and program. A short video of the senior pastor expressing real excitement about missions leaves a strong first impression.

Do those new to your church sense how much you care for lost people?

Unfortunately, other church websites focus solely on how to apply for a spot on a short-term ministry team. This is a useful page function for insiders, but it fails to give visitors any window into your heart for the lost or your larger missions goals.

You will want to work with your church website manager to design an easy-to-find space where you present your missions passion along with illustrations of exciting outreach and service ministries you are involved in. Include an email address for visitors to contact your team for additional information.

2 BRAINSTORM WITH YOUR PASTOR/DIRECTOR OF CONNECTION

Under various titles, larger churches usually have a staff person responsible for creating a welcoming environment for newcomers. Schedule a meeting with this person to talk about ways that you can work together to help newcomers understand your church's passion to impact your community and the world. How can you support your staff person as well as benefit from their front-door connections and insights?

3 SET UP AN "INTRODUCING MISSIONS" SPOT

Having a space in your church vestibule/atrium focused specifically on introducing missions to newcomers is useful. However, a static display, especially if not staffed, quickly fades into the background. Having a special table or booth, perhaps set up just once a month, staffed by a super-friendly member of your missions leadership team has greater impact and allows you to personally engage

newcomers. A simple but attractive brochure with basic information about your global engagement and how to get involved can be a useful tool. Jot down frequently asked questions and consider the best means to answer them.

4 BE A PRESENCE AT YOUR NEWCOMERS WELCOME

Many churches set aside a place and time to personally welcome newcomers. Schedule a member of your missions team to represent your missions ministry at these meet-and-greet sessions. Does your church give guests a welcome bag containing information and perhaps a gift? What could you include that represents missions in a memorable way?

5 MAKE PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

Can a member of your missions team follow up with interested newcomers in their first few weeks of attendance by meeting for coffee or inviting them for dinner or desert? This takes effort but is amazingly fruitful. Expand these new friends' understanding of the entire church including encouraging stories of how God is using your congregation and your missionaries to expand His Kingdom globally and locally.

Questions are good conversation starters that can also uncover their interests and experience. For example, have they ever lived abroad or traveled extensively? Did they grow up in a household where another language was spoken? Do they work with, or have neighbors, who are immigrants?

6 CREATE LOW-COMMITMENT ENTRY POINTS

What are some excellent ways a new attendee can “dip their toe in the water” of missions service in your church? That could be in a one-day, local missions ministry, service to missionaries, or limited responsibility in your missions programming (think serving on the team planning your next missions event). Make the opportunity a “trial run” to see if they feel it is a fit for them and for your missions program. Offering a wide variety of opportunities makes it easier for every newcomer to find a role that they feel fits their gifts and interests. Make sure to follow up with them afterward to see how they felt about serving in this way. What might be the next step? Were there misconceptions you need to address?

7 PLAN FOR THEM IN YOUR MISSIONS CONFERENCE/EVENT

If you have different workshops or tracks during your missions Sunday, conference, or festival, design one specifically for newcomers. Extend personal invitations for them to come and meet your missions team personally and get to know more about your program. Give them the backstory of partnerships, annual ministry opportunities, etc.

What are some excellent ways a new attendee can "dip their toe in the water" of missions service in your church?

Don't wait until a new person is "settled" into your church before inviting them to plug into ministry.

If your church has a missions banquet, consider advertising one or more tables designated for those attending your conference for the first time. Recruit table hosts good at making others feel comfortable and who can answer questions about the evening's program and your overall missions program.

8 CREATE A FUN MEMBERSHIP CLASS PRESENTATION

Does your church run a class or series that helps potential new members better understand how your church functions? Time is often quite limited, so can you find a way to creatively introduce missions even if you just have five minutes? Don't overload your presentation with too many facts. Depending on the time provided, include a few specific ways that people can get involved. Linking them to a [missional interests survey](#) can provide great background on where they might contribute.

9 RESPOND GRACIOUSLY TO NEWCOMERS' AGENDAS

Some new attendees may have been highly involved in a particular missions focus in their prior church, or they may be passionate about supporting a personal friend in missions. As

a result, they may be eager to recruit their new congregation to support these people/projects, too. While you do not want to discourage their enthusiasm, graciously explain that your church already has priorities to which you feel God has called you and that it is seldom possible to adopt one of the many relationships that individuals in the congregation personally support. Disappointing newcomers is hard, but upfront honesty is best.

Although you may not be able to embrace their particular missionary or project, you likely can learn something from how their prior church went about engaging in missions. Ask about what their church did best in fostering global outreach.

10 GO AHEAD AND ASK, "WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET INVOLVED?"

Don't wait until a new person is "settled" into your church before inviting them to plug into ministry. Sometimes newcomers are looking for a church where they can quickly dig in and contribute. Serving is a great way for them to make friends as well as test where their gifts are needed.

Others may want to commit to involvement more slowly, perhaps because of a previous, painful church situation, indecision about whether they are making your church their home, or some other reason. If they aren't ready to get involved just yet, follow up with, "Is it okay if I check back with you in a few months?" If they say yes, make a note on your calendar to reconnect.

PITFALLS TO AVOID



1. **No idea what you're talking about.** Never assume a newcomer has a background in missions. For example, no one wants to feel stupid for not knowing what the Great Commission refers to, what church planting is, or that the 10-40 window isn't a stained-glass panel somewhere in the narthex!
2. **Too much information.** Be careful not to overwhelm people with lots of details. In our fast-paced world, everyone receives far too many messages to absorb all they are told. Rather than expecting your new attendees to get to know all your missionaries, invite them to connect initially with just one.
3. **Missions-ese.** Avoid using abbreviations for the names of mission agencies or activities like ESL. If you have a creative name for your missions program or event, include a clear explanation of what it is.

DON'T WAIT

Take a moment next Sunday and notice any young families, college students, empty nesters, singles, or senior citizens walking through your church doors for the first time. Take note of the visitors returning week after week. Each has God-given gifts, experience, interests, and often a desire to make a real contribution in some significant way. If God is blending them into your congregation, then divinely-planned matches between your newcomers and your church's global opportunities are just waiting to be made!

Divinely-planned matches between your newcomers and your church's global opportunities are just waiting to be made!

Catalyst's *Postings* e-newsletter is a free, monthly publication of practical articles highlighting what churches and agencies are doing to mobilize untapped potential for global impact.

SUBSCRIBE at catalystservices.org/postings.
READ past *Postings* articles at catalystservices.org/postings-gallery-of-archives.