

WELCOMING A NEW PERSON TO YOUR GROUP

How do you feel when you walk into a new setting?

Most of us have questions like ... Will people like me? Will it be worth it to show up? Will I belong to this group? When should I speak and when should I sit back and listen?

It takes a great deal of courage to join any new group – work team, club, sports, and especially a small group. You can most likely look back and see a time that you were the new person. The experience you had most likely resulted from how the people already in the group welcomed you!

We can all understand the complexity of a new person joining an existing group. Group dynamics change. It takes time to build trust and chemistry. *However, whenever you add a new person, your group has the opportunity to live out the gospel!* The same way Jesus has welcomed you to his family should be our motivation to help new group members feel warm and invited! Here are some tips on welcoming a new person to your small group:

1) Respond to a request within 24 hours.

You could meet a new person for your group in the church lobby or they could sign up using our “Group Finder”. In any case, waiting more than 24 hours can cause a person to feel unwelcome, so a prompt response helps a person know you care! A best practice is to call the person to find out more about them and share the details about your group. If they don’t answer, leave a voicemail and then send a welcome text. Emails should NEVER be the first contact ... only after an initial contact has been made through a call or text. Check out a sample email below that you can send AFTER you’ve connected!

2) Find out when a new person will come.

It sounds obvious, but once a person decides to join a small group, figure out the date of their first visit. Once you’ve connected with them about that, provide any details that would be helpful for them to know ahead of time (i.e. arrive a few minutes early, where to park, what to bring, link to a ZOOM call)

3) Set the expectations for a welcoming environment.

Let your group members know when the new person will visit. In your communication, share best practices such as 1) be warm and welcoming 2) introduce yourself 3) ask questions to get to know them 4) try not to confuse or exclude the new person and 5) show the unconditional love of Jesus!

4) Confirm the new person will receive group communication.

Check your email list and text message chain to add the new member. Imagine how it feels to miss out on news of a time change or a fun event. Adding a person to your group’s communication also allows a person to feel part of the conversation and gives them the opportunity to contribute to it.

5) Check-in with the new person after their first visit.

Taking time to check-in helps a person know that you care about them. With fresh eyes, listen to feedback about your group. Set up a time to chat and listen to their perspective. Early check-ins open communication rather than leaving it to chance. Let them know you look forward to them coming back!

6) Get creative with your own ideas!

BONUS → Sample Email Template

Dear [name of new person],

I wanted to reach out and welcome you to our upcoming small group gathering! We look forward to you joining our small group and we wanted to send you this email to help you get settled.

I'm not sure if you've met any of the small group members in the past, but they include:

- [Name of small group members]
- [Name of small group members]
- [Name of small group members]

[Description of your group] We're a pretty lively bunch - we always have plenty to say and we love getting to know one another better! We're all looking forward to digging into the [sermon series, study, or topic] together. In our next gathering, we will discuss [topic]. Feel free to bring a Bible, a notebook, and a pen to join the discussion with us.

Our small group meets every week at [day & time]. We meet [address]. Lastly, you can reach me by email or text/call me at [contact information].

We're so glad that you're joining our group! Let us know if there are other ways we can help you get settled in. See you (group meeting date & time).

Blessings,
(Name of small group leader)