

Mystery Guest Program

Paper No. OCCG-015

Larry Wilson, Elder, Memorial Houston

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: A method for periodic reviews of your facility and public operations to try to maintain an ongoing friendly experience for visitors so that minor controllable factors do not hinder the spread of the Gospel.

KEY WORDS:

Church of Christ, mystery guest, visitor

GLOSSARY:

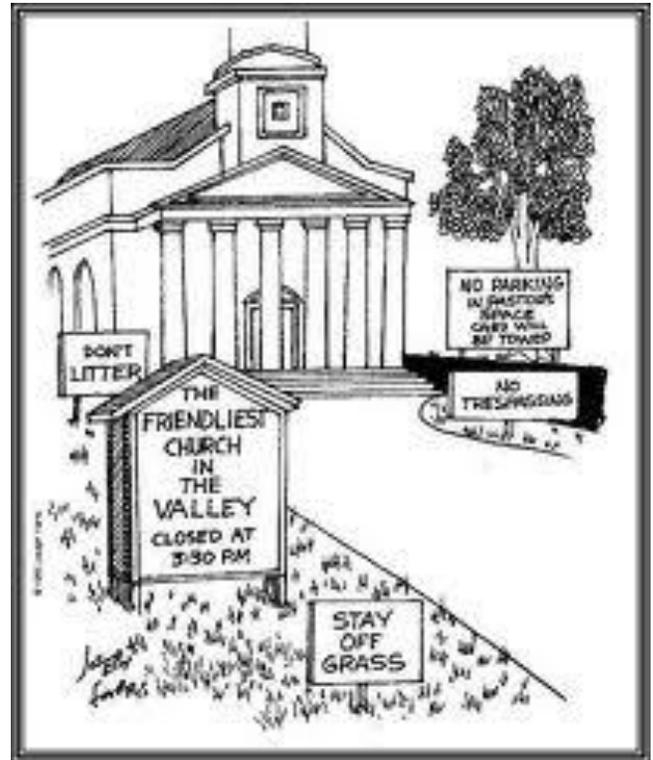
Mystery Guest: A Sunday morning visitor from another congregation who is not known to your members and who is casually dressed.

REPORT:

A visitor from your local area has by definition indicated a potential interest in worshipping with your congregation. This is probably the best case scenario for a personal evangelism prospect. Literally a visitor has already shown an interest in your congregation.

There are a number of factors which will contribute to or detract from their further consideration of your congregation.

Some of these may seem trivial to a member who has attended the congregation 25 years and knows exactly where the restrooms are, but there are a number of issues which can be stress points for an intimidated visitor.



To implement the guest program from time to time volunteers will be recruited from various areas, and will be asked to visit local congregations as a visitor, and submit an anonymous report to the congregation. When practical areas for improvement are noted, congregations can make improvements as a part of their personal evangelism program.

Most of the changes will not be direct "personal evangelism." However, we need to understand that all our activities and ministries impact personal evangelism.

That being said, if you are receiving this paper, you do not need to wait for a “mystery guest.” Have one or more of your members do it for you. It is probably better for it to be a newer member and one not in the leadership, but most of the points are objective measurements and can be done by anyone. It would be interesting for several (if not all) of your members to fill out a mystery guest form as it will bring all our members to be a little more sensitive to what we need to be doing.

The questions need to be filled out from a **first time** visitor’s point of view. For example, a quality paint icon on visitor’s parking space may seem good to your Buildings and Ground’s personnel, but the visitor may never find them. In that case it would mean that on entering the parking lot, high signs would indicate a visitor’s parking. From visitor’s parking, a sign should indicate front door or entrance if it is not obvious to a visitor.

If you do not even have dedicated visitor parking, that can be a whole other problem.

Other special considerations are that after years of changes, in some congregations few people actually enter the “front door.” Visitor signage should be appropriate to your situation.

It is for sure we do not want some minor factor which we can impede our ability to spread the Gospel.



After a Mystery Guest fills out the questions, they should be e-mailed to bbaugh@thearray.org or mailed to OC Church Growth Think Tank, 19210 Cohen Green Lane, Houston, TX 77094 with your contact information. The form will be passed on to the congregation from the Think Tank without your contact information. If the congregation would like to speak to you afterwards, we will make you aware and it will be your choice whether to call them.

Reviewers: Paul VanderLinden, Memorial, Houston

This paper can be downloaded from www.occgthinktank.org / project papers

MYSTERY GUEST PROGRAM QUESTIONS

Congregation name: _____ **Date:** _____

Congregation e-mail address if available: _____

All questions scored between 0 and 10, with 10 being good or best. If a congregation is small enough to not need the item being asked about, score it a 5. If you don't know, it is a zero.

PRE-ARRIVAL

- 1. Googled "church of Christ in town" and easily found the congregation _____
- 2. Website quality (0 for doesn't exist, 10 for professional quality) _____

SIGNAGE AND PARKING

- 1. Were there appropriate area directional signs (e.g. if off major thoroughfare)? _____
- 2. Quality of signage from the street _____
- 3. The entrance to your parking area is well marked _____
- 4. Location of visitor parking well marked _____
- 5. Visitor parking well marked _____
- 6. Location of lobby well marked from visitor parking _____
- 7. Were you greeted before you entered the building? _____

GREETING

- 1. Quality of Lobby _____
- 2. When entering the front door, was there a Welcome Center? _____
- 3. Quality of Welcome Center _____
- 4. Did you meet a person whose service it was to make sure you know the layout of the facility and where you should go? _____
- 5. Were you escorted to your first location? _____
- 6. Were you introduced to someone at your first location? _____
- 7. Were you introduced to someone of a similar social situation? _____
- 8. Did you feel appropriately greeted? _____
- 9. Were generous and useful signage and maps provided? _____

FACILITY, OUTSIDE

- 1. Did the facility seem generally up to date and not "tired looking"? _____
- 2. Quality of exterior appearance _____
- 3. Quality of parking lot appearance _____
- 4. Quality of parking lot lighting (Estimate if you are there in daylight) _____

LANDSCAPING

- 1. Quality of flowers _____
- 2. Quality of shrubbery _____
- 3. Quality of grass _____
- 4. Quality of trees _____

FACILITY, INSIDE

- 1. Quality of the interior appearance _____
- 2. Quality of Rest Room appearance _____
- 3. From the center of the lobby, could you see a restroom sign? _____
- 4. Were you engaged by a person of a similar social situation? _____
- 5. Were generous and useful signage and maps provided? _____

NURSERY

- 1. Quality of Nursery _____
- 2. Did contemporary security procedures seem to be in place? _____

BIBLE CLASS

- 1. Area you attended: _____
- 2. Minutes dedicated to a Class Host function (class fellowship rather than teaching)? _____
- 3. Was the Bible Class offered as a forum to discuss personal prayer needs? _____

WORSHIP SERVICE

- 1. At any point, were you uncomfortable because you were a visitor? _____
- 2. Was the Sunday AM sermon uplifting or relevant from your point of view? _____
- 3. Did you learn something from the sermon? _____
- 4. Was the song service uplifting? _____
- 5. If the songs were projected, were notes provided with the songs? _____
- 6. If the Bible verses were displayed during a reading, did the versions read and projected match? _____
- 7. Did the sermon, songs, and readings have a common theme? _____
- 8. Did the service seem organized and intentional? _____
- 9. Did the worship service appeal to all ages? _____
- 10. Did the worship service start and end on time? _____

GENERAL

- 1. Does the racial diversity of the congregation match the community? _____
- 2. Does the economic diversity of the congregation match the community? _____
- 3. Were there public reminders of the congregation goals and objectives? _____
- 4. Is there an attitude of excellence in all things in the congregation? _____

