

**WELCOMING GUESTS &  
INCORPORATING MEMBERS**

**FINDERS, KEEPERS...SOWERS, REAPERS!**

**RESOURCES FROM OTHER CHURCHES**

**The Rev. Jeunée Cunningham  
Start Up! Start Over!**

## ***Liturgy for New Members (1)***

### **Celebration of Membership**

*When including Baptismal or Confirmation Candidates, include following:*

#### **Admission of Catechumens for Holy Baptism and Candidates for Confirmation**

[List names in bulletin]

*Celebrant*      What do you seek?

*Answer*        **Life in Christ.**

*The Celebrant then says,*

Do you accept Jesus' great commandment to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and to love your neighbor as yourself?

*Answer*        **I do.**

*Celebrant*      Do you promise to be regular in attending the worship of God and in receiving instruction?

*Answer*        **I do.**

*Celebrant*      Will you open your ears to hear the Word of God and your heart and mind to receive the Lord Jesus and grow in his love?

*Answer*        **I will, with God's help.**

*Celebrant*      May Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who has put the desire into your hearts to seek the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, grant you the power of the Holy Spirit to persevere in this intention and to grow in faith and understanding.

*People*         **Amen.**

### **Celebrating our New Members**

[List Names]

#### **Welcoming New Members**

Celebrant (to new members): What do you seek?

*New Members*      I seek to be part of this community, to join you *in Encountering God, Building Relationships and Making a difference in the World.* [use your own mission statement or appropriate church motto here.]

*Celebrant*      Will you, as baptized members of Christ's body, live out your baptismal covenant in the midst of this community.

*New Members*      **I will, with God's help.**

*Celebrant*      Will you support [Church Name's] mission and fellowship through your prayers and participation?

*New Members*      **I will, with God's help.**

*Celebrant* (to congregation): Will you who witness this new beginning keep these persons in your prayers, share with them your ministry, bear their burdens, and encourage them?

*People:*       **We will, with God's help.**

### **Rededication of Current Members**

*Celebrant*       Will you, who have already committed yourselves as members of [Church], continue to live out your baptism in the church and in the world, and sustain this church with your ongoing prayers and support of its mission and ministry?

*Current members:*   **We will, with God's help**

Together let us renew our Baptismal Covenant

### **The Baptismal Covenant** (*Please stand*)

...

Concluding prayer:

*Celebrant*       Blessed are you, our God, our Maker, for you form us in your image and restore us in Jesus Christ. In baptism, we your servants are buried with Christ and rise to new life in him. Renew us in your Holy Spirit, that we may grow as members of Christ. Strengthen our union with the rest of Christ's Body as we join together in our life of praise and service; through our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

*Celebrant*       Please welcome the new members of [Church].

*People:* We recognize you as members of the household of God. Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal priesthood.

### **The Peace**

#### **Additional Prayer for all members of the church**

O Christ, you are the Rock, on which we your people, as living stones joined together, now grow into a spiritual house;

O Christ, you are the Vine, of which we your people are the branches;

O Christ, you are the Head of the Body, of which we your people are the members;

We pray that you will sustain us and all members of your holy Church, that in our vocation and ministry we may truly and devoutly serve you.

And O Lord, because your church cannot continue in safety without your help, protect and govern us always by your goodness;

through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

## *Liturgy for New Members (2)*

Sponsors: We present (N., N.) who are baptized members of the Body of Christ and we welcome them to our community as they undertake their Christian journey among us.

Celebrant (to new members): What do you seek?

New Members: We seek to be part of this community, to join you in growing and serving and worshipping God.

Celebrant (to sponsors): Will you support these persons by your prayers and example and help them to grow in the knowledge and love of God and of St Peter's Church?

Sponsors: We will, with God's help.

Celebrant (to congregation): Will you who witness this new beginning keep (N., N.) in your prayers, share with them your ministry, bear their burdens, and forgive and encourage them?

People: We will, with God's help.

Together let us renew our Baptismal Covenant on p. 304

Celebrant: Blessed are you, O God our Maker, for you form us in your image and restore us in Jesus Christ. In baptism (N., N.) were buried with Christ and rose to new life in him. Renew them in your Holy Spirit that they may grow as members of Christ. Strengthen their union with the rest of his Body as they join us in our life of praise and service; through our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. AMEN

Celebrant: Please welcome the new members of St Peter's Church.

People: We recognize you as members of the household of God. Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal priesthood.

Celebrant: The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

*From St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Purcellville, Virginia. Used with Permission*

## Welcoming the Stranger

Theology of Hospitality and Incorporation Strategy  
The Rev. Frank Logue, King of Peace Episcopal Church, Kingsland, GA King

King of Peace Episcopal Church is a welcoming community that seeks to reach out to all people we encounter and aid them in their own journeys to know and serve the living God. As a member of the Welcoming Team at King of Peace, you are fulfilling a vital ministry in this church. You serve as a missionary out on the front lines of the mission field. The time you spend welcoming newcomers can make a real difference in someone's life. This booklet should illuminate the scriptural and theological foundations for why welcoming the stranger is essential to King of Peace as well as give some nuts and bolts description of how the process typically works.

### Scripture

In Leviticus 19:34, the Children of Israel are told, "The alien who resides with you shall be to you as a citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." Through this verse, we too are reminded that all of us have experienced times when we were the stranger. We are to love the stranger in our midst.

Throughout the Old Testament we find further references to the importance of hospitality to the stranger. In Genesis 18, Abraham extends hospitality to three strangers and is blessed. While in Genesis 19, Lot extends hospitality to two messengers from God and he and his family are spared in the destruction of Sodom. In 1 Kings 17:8-15, the widow of Zeraphath offers hospitality to the prophet Elijah and her supply of food miraculously lasts through the time of famine.

Within the New Testament, the word for hospitality is the Greek word *philoxenos*. *Philoxenos* means to love the stranger (*philos*=love, *xenos*=stranger). So to offer hospitality in the New Testament is by definition to show love for the stranger. Jesus himself is both the stranger and the one offering hospitality. In the Gospel of Luke from 9:51 when Jesus "sets his face to go to Jerusalem" until 19:45 when he enters the Temple, Jesus is almost always on the road. In his travels Jesus stays with others, relying on their hospitality. Jesus is not always greeted warmly as we see when he is not welcomed in the first Samaritan village he tries to visit (Luke 9:52-56). Jesus remains the stranger, the one on the margins of society in need of the hospitality of others. At the same time, Jesus is welcoming and extends hospitality himself. Jesus used table fellowship to show what the Kingdom of God should be like and then he shared the table with "tax collectors and sinners." Finally, love of strangers is an important part of Jesus' teaching. In the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), love for the stranger is seen as a form of love of neighbor. So throughout the Gospels, we see that hospitality was both something Jesus depended on for his life and ministry and a vital part of who he was as God incarnate.

Other New Testament passages show the importance of welcoming the stranger. In Romans 12:13, Paul told Christians to "Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers." Hebrews 13:1-2 says, "Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." Christians are clearly called upon to continually show love for the stranger. The hospitality Jesus taught is not a decorative add on to our beliefs, but a central tenant. Just as hospitality (love of stranger) was part of who Jesus was, it is to be part of who we are. Acts of hospitality flow out of love for the stranger.

### Theology

As theology is the study of God (*theos*=God, *logos*=words, things, concerns), then you as a member of the Welcoming Team are a theologian. In theology we look both backward and forward. As we look backward to the scripture for teaching, we also look forward to the coming reign of God. In God's time, there will be no strangers. All will know God and one another fully. The sign of that coming reality in our own lives is the Eucharist we share each week. It is to this communion with the

Triune God and through God with one another that we invite the stranger. To this communion, each stranger brings his or her own unique gifts. We at King of Peace are made more fully into the image of Christ through each newcomer we welcome. This means that we will want to welcome into our community people whose experiences, backgrounds, abilities and interests are different from our own. God will speak to us through the strangers we encounter. The uniqueness of each newcomer is not to be overlooked. To shut ourselves off to the diversity that strangers offer is to shut ourselves off from the wonderful gift of coming to know God more fully through the stranger.

### **The Process of Assimilation** *Incorporation*

The following is an outline of the process of assimilating newcomers into our community of faith. It must be stressed that not all of the steps will be followed in every case, nor will they always follow the same pace. This outline is to give you an awareness of how your ministry as a greeter at services fits into the bigger picture.

#### **Step 1: Prayer**

First and foremost comes prayer. We should all individually and as a group pray for the strangers God will put in our way. Through prayer we can become more tuned in to the voice of God and the ways God would have us show our love for the stranger. Greeters always meet to pray together 20 minutes prior to the service.

#### **Step 2: Invitation**

Many of the people we encounter in our lives are estranged from each other and from God. Most of these people will not find their way to King of Peace unless they are invited. Your church and your pastor will team with you to spread the word about our church. But the invitation is not to church alone, but to a life-changing encounter with the living God. As such, it is important to recognize that we do not invite people alone. God the Holy Spirit is now working in the lives of people in Camden County in ways they cannot see or comprehend. That work of the Spirit is part of our invitation. In fact, without the work of the Holy Spirit, our invitation is nothing but yet another offer to attend yet another social gathering.

#### **Step 3: Before the Service**

As a greeter, you are the point person for this part of the process. Before church services, you should be out front looking for unfamiliar faces. I know that we are all new here, so this task may seem daunting. But if you are not sure whether someone is new, don't be afraid to speak up. Just say, "Hi I'm \_\_\_\_\_, I don't think we have met before." So whether they are new or not, they are welcomed. There is no need to follow a preformatted script for greeting newcomers. Just be interested and available without forcing yourself on folks who just want to get in and get a seat. In general newcomers who arrive early will want a chance to check out the church fully and find out more. Visitors arriving close to service time or after the service has started usually want to slip in with little or no fuss. Be sensitive to what our guest wants.

Be sure to point out the visitor's table with the guest book and the introductory brochures (these tell about all of our worship service, groups, outreach programs opportunities for fellowship and expectations of members). You will also want to offer a response card along with the service bulletin. For visitors with small children, you will want to make sure they are aware of our nursery. But also let them know that children are welcome in the service. The nursery is there if the parents feel their child should not yet be in the worship service.

#### **Step 4: During and After the Service**

The celebrant will welcome newcomers and visitors during the service. They will not be asked to contribute to the church in any way nor will they be singled out to introduce themselves. All baptized persons will be invited to join in taking communion, others may come forward for a blessing.

Following the service, you will want to try to touch base with the people you greeted before the service. If an opportunity presents itself, introduce the newcomers to others in the church. You should also offer to introduce them to the Vicar.

#### **Step 5: Within 48 Hours**

If a newcomer fills out their address in the guest book, or turns in a response card with their address, the Welcome Team will send someone by as part of the “Mug a Newcomer” program. Two lay persons will drop by the newcomer’s home within 48 hours to drop off a King of Peace mug along with the current newsletter and a schedule of services. It is best if the persons visiting the home are not the same persons who greeted the newcomers at church. These lay persons will stay as briefly as possible and will not go inside even if asked to. The purpose of the visit is to make a second point of contact to let newcomers know that we appreciate their visit.

#### **Step 6: Follow Up**

The Vicar will send out a note to all newcomers and one-time visitors within a week of their visit. This note will thank them for their attendance, outline upcoming events, and give information on how to contact the Vicar if they desire. Any member inviting a guest to King of Peace is asked to follow up personally within the week after the first visit.

On subsequent visits, newcomers can keep whatever distance they deem appropriate. King of Peace will not ask for further involvement during the first 6 months of attendance. Periodic mention will be made to the availability of Baptism and Confirmation during the service and in the bulletin and newsletter. It will normally be up to newcomers to make the first step toward these sacraments. The various small groups of the church will also be advertised. In addition, there are always outreach projects and fellowship opportunities taking place. Newcomers will be encouraged to participate in these and other events at King of Peace. However, they will not be pushed into making a commitment.

#### **Step 7: Membership**

At the point that someone attending King of Peace inquires about membership, a new level of assimilation into the congregation takes place. Members are, of course, required to be baptized and confirmed (if they have not already taken part in these sacraments). Members also are expected to take a spiritual gifts survey to determine what gifts they have. Then they will meet with the Vicar to discuss opportunities for exercising their gifts within the congregation and in mission. All members are expected to use their spiritual gifts for the upbuilding of the community. Members are also expected to give money to the church as a part of their offering back to God from the gifts God has given. The tithe is considered the norm, which all Christians should be working toward. If they are not already members of a small group at King of Peace, this is the time when the Vicar will help them to find the right small group.

### **Conclusion**

Remember that we do not welcome the stranger to help our church grow. We welcome the stranger because hospitality is part of who we are as Christians. It is through the stranger that God will speak to us and guide us to spiritual growth as a community of faith.

Text of this booklet is available online at [www.kingofpeace.org/resources](http://www.kingofpeace.org/resources)

## Welcome & Incorporation Plan (example)

### Invitation to worship or event:

- By a Member
- By advertising & signs
- By event, program, other “side door”
- By the Holy Spirit

### Initial Welcome

- Greeting Warmly before and after worship
- Greeted in the worship service - but not made to stand out
- Invited to fill out communication card and/or guest book
- Greeter gives Church Mug with brochures after service (other ideas - bread, gift bags, etc.)
- Invited to come again.

### Initial Follow Up

- All Communication Cards and Guest book information given to **priest** on Sunday.
  - Priest sends handwritten note thanking them for visiting
  - If person indicated they wanted to speak, contacts them by phone.
  - Adds to personal database and email list on personal computer.
  - Prays for new people
- Communication Cards and Guest book entries given to **administrator**
  - Adds person to Database for email and regular mail list
  - Sends new person info to **Community Life (membership) head**
- Community Life head sends a welcome letter and current brochures, indicating when the next newcomer lunch will be.

### Continued Follow Up

- **Informal:** Continued to be welcomed warmly as they come.
- **Informal:** Actively and personally invited to participate in classes, small groups, 101 newcomer classes, membership classes, fellowship events, outreach events, etc.
- **Formal:** Community Life Head calls about 2 weeks prior to **newcomer lunch** to invite by phone and follow up. (Includes phone calls to folk who weren't able to make last luncheon.
- **Formal:** Community Life Head invites to **Membership Class**.
- **Formal:** Contact by leader or priest **every six weeks - two months** until incorporated or status confirmed. Track membership status in database.
- **Formal:** Phone calls to those who have “dropped off” to gather information

4x / yr.  
new ppl,  
Welcome grp,  
Council  
members  
Liturgy only  
once / yr.

### Desired snapshot of incorporated member:

- Worshipping regularly.
- Active in a small group or class.
- Has several friends at the church.
- Begins to change from “You” language about church to “We” language.
- Beginning to serve in ministry and outreach.
- In process toward maturing discipleship.\*  
(\*See “Process Toward Maturing Discipleship”)

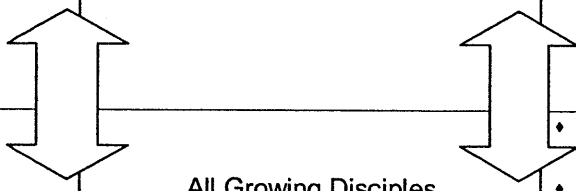


*This is handed out to new ppl @ the Membership Class once 101-45 min Mem Class → once in 3 hrs / 5 sessions*

**PROCESS TOWARD MATURING DISCIPLESHIP**

STEP	Level of Christian Discipleship	Ways to Learn and Grow, Next Steps
<p>Attend worship or events</p> <p><b>"Come and See"</b></p> <p><b>"Rites:"</b> Get your coffee mug! Start wearing name tag Attend Newcomer Brunch Get on the mailing list</p>	<p>Everyone: Skeptic to Committed Christian</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Try on" events, worship, discipleship, fellowship, outreach, service opportunities, etc.</li> <li>• Enjoy the activities of the church. Make friends.</li> <li>• Invite your friends and family to come with you.</li> <li>• Attend newcomers events</li> <li>• Attend 101 class, or membership class</li> <li>• Make an appointment with the pastor or other leader if you want more questions answered</li> <li>• "Try on" spiritual disciplines like prayer, giving, service, scripture reading, small group discipleship, meditation, silence, fasting, etc.</li> </ul>
<p>If not yet a Christ follower, commit / recommit your life to Christ.</p> <p><b>Become a Disciple</b></p> <p><b>"Follow Me"</b></p> <p><b>Rites:</b> Baptism Receive Communion (if you haven't already) New Member Celebrations Episcopal "Letter of Transfer"</p>	<p>If Unbaptized →</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for Baptism</li> <li>• Speak with Pastor</li> <li>• Make a prayer of commitment &amp; tell someone!</li> <li>• Take Baptism class and be baptized! You become officially a member!</li> </ul>
	<p>If Already Baptized →</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as above, only no need to be rebaptized.</li> <li>• Make a prayer of commitment / recommitment &amp; tell someone</li> </ul>
	<p>Both and For all new or renewed Christians</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn about church's mission, vision and values and decide to commit to living out your Christian life in this community as a member.</li> <li>• Take classes and join groups to help you grow.</li> <li>• Begin (or continue) to live out the promises of the Baptismal Covenant: engaging in worship, discipleship, fellowship, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, witness, service, compassion and justice.</li> </ul>
<p>Commit to <b>Deeping Discipleship</b></p> <p><b>"Abide in Me"</b></p> <p><b>Rites:</b> Confirmation, Reception, Reaffirmation</p>	<p>All the Baptized</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commit to regular worship</li> <li>• Practice Spiritual Disciplines</li> <li>• Join a Small Group for discipleship study, fellowship, support, &amp; prayer</li> <li>• Commit to service in the church               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Spiritual Gift Assessment class helps</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Serve in Outreach to those outside church</li> <li>• Commit to giving back to God in stewardship</li> <li>• Commit to prayerfully support the church's leaders, members and ministry               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Do your part to carry the vision.</li> <li>◦ Become "ambassador for the church and for Jesus Christ.</li> <li>◦ Deal with difficult issues quickly and directly. Constructive criticism and good-will problem solving.: ( i.e. gossip, sabotage, backbiting are not marks of a disciple.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Commit to <b>Disciple Making</b></p> <p><b>"Go and Be &amp; Bring to Me"</b></p> <p><b>Rites:</b> Commissioning for Ministries in the church and the world. For a few: Ordination</p>	<p>All Growing Disciples</p> <p>In Conjunction with, and being stretched by, their Spiritual Gifts, Passions, Ability, Experience and Personality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model your commitment to Christ by living out your Baptismal Covenant. Minister to others.</li> <li>• Seek ways to actively share your faith in word and deed. Tell your story. Share God's Love.</li> <li>• Invite others into deeper levels of discipleship (teaching, mentoring, discipling, exhorting)</li> <li>• Give sacrificially of your time and talent to God's mission in this congregation.</li> <li>• Reproduce yourself for ministry.</li> <li>• Model humility and servant leadership</li> </ul>

*Baptism Count  
Episc stuff  
depends on needs*



### MEMBERSHIP STATUS CODES

When changing a person's status, make a note of it in Individual or Family Comments.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	NOTES	NEWSLTR
M1	Baptized Member	In the Baptized Member section of our Register.	Y
M2	Confirmed Member	Includes those who have been Received.	Y
M3	Transfer Pending	[Don't count in Parochial Report, because their membership is still with another Episcopal Church]	Y
M4	Inactive Member	M1/M2 who in the last 12 months has not attended or made any financial gifts; or who has moved or changed churches, but not transferred out.	

P1	Initial Prospect	Initial code until they have either decided to transfer membership or otherwise become active in the life of the church; these are the folks we focus on for membership	Y
P2	Active Non Member	A prospect who has not yet decided to become a member, but active in the life of the church. Spouses or family members who may belong to other churches but who give, serve or regularly participate at St. G's	Y
P3	Inactive Prospect	A prospect or non-member who has decided not to attend St. Gabriel's, or has not returned within a year of last visit, and not contributed in last year.	
P4	Inactive Family Member	Immediate family of members/prospects/staff who do not attend or participate	
P5	Occasional Attendee	Comes irregularly. Not really "initial," not really "regular". Use after at least 1 year of association	Y

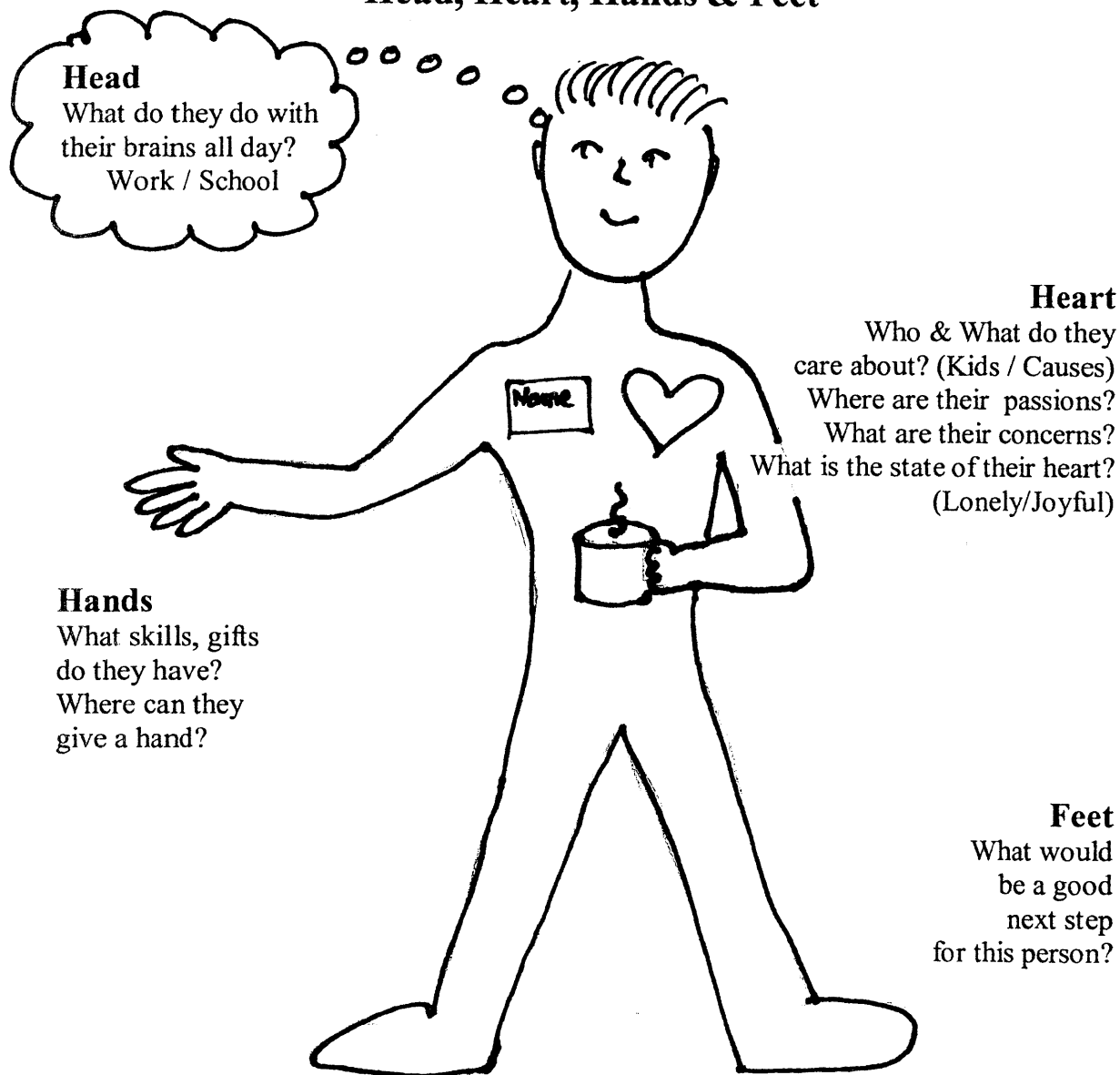
O1	Friends	Visitors from other churches or faiths who support or attend occasionally; Regular visiting family of members who occasionally give or work for the benefit of the church. Interested community members. Anyone else we want on our regular mailing list.	Y
O2	Contributor Only	Gives money only: Infrequent visiting Family of members, Alternative Gift Market, occasional gifts; memorials. (Move to O1 if gives 2x / year or more)	
O3	Misc. Activities Only	Only known through one or two peripheral activities, has not attended worship, not appropriate to categorize as P1 or O1. No newsletter.	
O4	Deceased	Be sure to include date in relative field.	
O5	Transferred Out	Be sure to include date in relative field.	
O6	Clergy / Churches	Bishops, Clergy & Churches receiving newsletter	Y
O7	Inactive non-member	Any non-members who are inactive, moved, etc.	
O8	Staff	Clergy, Seminarians, Staff Members	Y

X1	Business Partners	Vendors; Businesses; Churches or clergy not receiving newsletter	
X2	Former Staff		

## Welcoming and Incorporating Conversations

- Listen more than talk. Ask open questions
- Keep eye contact, pay attention, don't look over their shoulder for your friends.
- Keep posture open when talking to others
- Ask about *them* - their interests, their passions, what brought them
- Share, as appropriate, parts of your own journey, story, and interests.
- Answer questions about the church that they ask, but try not to oversell your church. It's about them, not you.

### Head, Heart, Hands & Feet



Why do we need to welcome new people?

- Jesus did it - our job is to tell the story

- they have a message for us / we have something to learn from them

Incorporation - becoming part of the Body of Christ

The Peace - keep it simple & short

- educate people what it's for ⇒ not fellowship time

Name tags - a way of "taking attendance"

(  
- ~~put~~ all should be the same - easy to read  
- put in a different basket when leaving

- have blank ones & markers for new pple → have lots of ways that pple can make themselves known  
→ cards, tags, guest bkz...

Regulars should take the back of the parking & the front of the church. The "safe" spaces

are for guests. Teach regulars how to greet guests.

Hi, my name is ...

I've been here for ... how 'bout you?

Have we met before?

Offering (intro) → our offerings ~~go to~~ support the work of <sup>this</sup> church in ~~the~~ this community. If you are a guest this morning, don't feel obligated to put anything in the plate, this worship is our gift to you.

have a class for "new comers" → general terms, church tour, expectations, congregation history  
~ 2x / yr.

marriages - a great opportunity to evangelize. If one of the couple isn't baptized, that's an opportunity to offer them an invit<sup>n</sup> to talk about that.

give existing members business cards <sup>(6-10)</sup> w/ basic ~~church~~ svc / locn info w/ instructions to give them out to neighbours / colleagues

no need to set hard limits on ministry jobs, but it's imp<sup>t</sup> to have eval<sup>n</sup> periods & options to renew, & ensure they are mentoring / encourag<sup>g</sup> others  
⇒ be intentional about renewal / continuation