

## OFFICIAL GUIDE TO THE WELCOME

The welcome is one of the most critical elements in our services. It's a personal time when someone from our church welcomes people, mostly guests, to the service. A typical welcome lasts about 90 seconds to 2 minutes and helps set the tone for the entire service.

The welcome should contain three of the following elements.

**Every welcome begins with introducing yourself and welcoming people.** For example, I might say:

My name is Michael and I am the Lead Pastor here at Oak Leaf Church. I am so glad to see you this morning. It's going to be a great day."

**Next, you should move to a vision moment.** This could be a story, an e-mail, or a mini-teaching point. You could highlight an outreach event that just happened, or a way that we were able to serve the community. You could pass along a comment that you heard. This is an opportunity to remind people why Oak Leaf Church is here. If this element is included, you can leave off the fourth element. Here are some examples of something you might say.

This week, I got an email from a lady in our church who was so excited that her husband was finally excited about going to church. She said she used to beg him to go to church, but now, he wakes up early to help set up.

- OR -

Last week, we were able to pass out helium balloons to more than 1,000 children at the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Festival at Dellinger Park. It was so cool to see so many people from our church serving the community. We set up a free moonwalk and had the opportunity to personally invite dozens of people to Oak Leaf Church. I'm proud of the fact that our church wants to serve the community, to make life better for everyone in Bartow County.

- OR -

This church is here for one reason, and that's to lead people from where they are to where God wants them to be. One thing I know about a crowd this size is that there are people from all different walks of life. There are people here today who are far away from God and something or someone drew you here today. Our prayer is that you would take a step towards Jesus this morning.

**Third, welcome guests and explain the connection card.** Let people know that guests are expected and invited. Ask people to fill out the connection card and to drop it in the offering buckets when they are passed at the conclusion of the service. You could highlight the check boxes or the prayer request/comments line. You might say something like:

I know many of you here today are here for the first time. Thank you so much for taking your friend's offer to join us. Make yourself at home and let us know if we can help you in any way. If you will do us a huge favor and fill out the connection card. There are some boxes that you can check if you'd like more information. At the end of the service, we will have a time of giving and you can drop that card in the buckets.

- OR -

I had the opportunity to meet a few people in the lobby who were here for the first time. If you're a guest with us today, we want you to know that we got here early to set all of this up just for you. When you came in, we gave you a handout. On that handout is what we call a connection card. Sometime during the service, if you'll fill that out for us, that would be great. You can drop it in the offering buckets at the end of the service.

Finally, if you did not cover a vision element, you could end the welcome by describing an on ramp in our church. Let people know that there are lots of ways to connect and get more involved. On ramps include, the partnership class, the backstage tour, or show up to set up. You might say something like:

For those of you who have been attending for a while and wondering about how you can get more involved, we've got a great opportunity coming up for you. In two weeks, we're going to offer a backstage tour. While the service is going on, a staff member will show you everything happening behind the scenes. It's a great way to meet people and learn how everything works around here. You might see something that peaks your interest.

- OR -

Many of you have wondered how you get more involved here at Oak Leaf Church. Attending the service is great, but you want to go to the next level. Well, we've got a partnership class coming up next week. If you're interested in learning more about partnership (which is what we call membership around here), you can sign up for that class on your connection card. It happens right after the second service, and food and childcare or provided. You'll meet the staff and learn what it means to be a member of Oak Leaf Church.

After you are finished, you will segue way into the next element on the program. You might ask people to stand up and say hi to someone around them, or you might pray.

**So, every welcome includes THREE elements:**

- 1. An introduction and welcome**
- 2. Talk about the vision OR discuss an onramp**
- 3. Welcome guests and explain the connection card**

## **Here's a sample welcome.**

Good morning everyone. My name is Michael and I'm the lead pastor here at Oak Leaf Church.

We moved to Cartersville in April of 2005 to start a new church, not because this town needed another church, but because we wanted to create a place where regular people could find grace and hope. We like to use the phrase "a real church for real people." This last week, I got an email from a lady who reluctantly agreed to come to church with her friend. "Just this once," she told her friend. She told me that she was blown away by the friendliness of the people and the non-judgmental attitude of the church. She told me her 5 year old daughter now wants to Will's worship CD in the car instead of Hannah Montana. So to everyone of you who is inviting and bringing people to church...thank you!

For those of you who are guests today, I want you to welcome you. Thank you so much for giving us a try. Make yourselves at home, feel comfortable and enjoy the service. I'd like to ask one favor from you...on the bottom part of the handout we gave you, there's a little perforated section. If you would fill that out for us sometime this morning and drop it in the offering buckets, that would be great. If we can help you in any way, just let us know.

There's so many new people here today and I know some of you are looking for ways to connect. You want to meet people and get more involved. Well, in two weeks, we're going to be doing a backstage tour. During the services, one of our staff members will tour you around the campus and introduce you to some great people doing some great things. It's a no pressure look at some of the ways you could get involved. If you're interested, stop by the connection point on your way out and sign up.

Before we sing a few songs together, I want you to stand up, find someone around you and say hi. Then Will and the band will lead us in some songs.