

GROWTH POINTS

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Now What? Follow Up after the Holiday

Holidays like Easter, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Halloween (Fall Festival?), Thanksgiving, and Christmas often draw more guests than any other time of year.

The challenge?

Many churches see those guests once and never again. So remember . . . the holiday isn't the finish line; it's the starting point for building relationships. If you don't follow up intentionally, you miss an opportunity for long-term church growth.

Consider using some of the following ten strategies for follow-up this year.

1. Capture Contact Information.

Collect names and contact details in a way that feels natural and welcoming, e.g., connection cards, QR codes, or digital forms. Offer a simple incentive, like a free gift, to encourage participation.

2. Send a Timely Thank-You.

Within 24–48 hours, mail or email a warm, personalized thank-you. Express appreciation for their visit and acknowledge the holiday experience they attended. Make sure it feels personal, not automated.

3. Provide Clear Next Steps.

Invite guests to an upcoming sermon series or event that's relevant to felt needs—marriage, parenting, overcoming stress. Be specific: "Join us next Sunday at 10 a.m. as we . . ."

One key is to begin a new series ON the holiday, Never END the series on a holiday. Why? As Paul Harvey used to say, you want to entice guests to return to hear "the rest of the story."

4. Make It Relational.

A follow-up call or text from a staff member or volunteer can open doors for conversation. Keep it short and friendly: "Thanks for joining us on Easter. How can we pray for you?"

5. Engage Children's Ministry Contacts.

If guests had children, send a note from the children's director. Include a picture of their child's class or a small take-home devotional. Take a picture of their child with the teacher and send it with an invitation to come again. Parents respond when their kids are loved and remembered.

6. Use Multiple Touch Points.

A single letter isn't enough. Plan a series: thank-you note, email about the next sermon series, invitation to a social event, and personal call. Space them out over 2–3 weeks.

7. Equip Your Congregation.

Encourage members to personally reach out to friends they invited. A lunch invitation or simple conversation can deepen the connection far more than a church office email alone.

8. Evaluate and Pray.

Meet with your team to review what worked and what didn't. Pray by name for guests. Ask God to open hearts for future connection.

9. Create a "Guest to Friend" On-Ramp

Offer a short newcomers' lunch or dessert night within two weeks. Share the church's story, introduce staff, and provide a safe space for guests to ask questions. Make it informal and relational—people come back for relationships, not just programs.

Engage Guests with a felt need. Offering something helpful beyond the holiday Sunday demonstrates that your church cares about everyday life. Think about hosting relevant workshops e.g., managing stress, marriage enrichment, budgeting, or grief support.

10. Build on this major principle:

"Churches that implement thoughtful follow-up see more guests return, more relationships formed, and more lives changed through the power of the Gospel message."

Holiday outreach is too important to improvise or *wing it* on the run. Get a quick start by asking and answering the following questions before the holiday.

1. Do we have a clear system for capturing guest information?
2. What specific next steps might we offer guests within two weeks after a holiday?
3. Who is responsible for follow-up?
4. Who will track and enter guest information?
5. How can we personalize our follow-up to make it more relational?
6. How can we encourage guests to return?
7. What's the best way to share the Gospel with our unchurched family and friends?
8. What will your *Thank-You* letter or email say?
9. What events will you promote for guests to return.

Holidays bring guests; follow-up helps make disciples. Healthy churches grow when they connect people beyond the big event.

A thoughtful, prayerful follow-up strategy turns a one-time visitor into a lifelong participant in the family of God.

The goal isn't just better numbers; it's helping people find a spiritual home and meet Christ through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Growth Points is published twelve times a year. Subscription price is \$29 (US Funds) per year. Permission is granted for use in a local church. For other reprint usage, advance permission must be obtained.

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