

Step-by-Step Newcomer Follow-up

When newcomers visit a meeting, often they are actively looking for a faith community. Studies show that most newcomers who visit two or three times will become involved in a congregation. Contact with newcomers increases the chance of second and third visits because it shows that the meeting cares enough to reach out. Below is a step by step way to make contact with newcomers.

The following might feel a bit too structured for some Friends. They are only suggestions, though they are based on findings from QuakerQuest and studies of meetings/churches who are successful at welcoming in retaining newcomers.

Some of this might be seem more appropriate for large meetings, but most of the guidelines will work for smaller, new groups, as well. Use the ones that fit with your abilities to do well and your meeting's culture.

The important thing is to be intentionally welcoming. Small, new groups may assume that a newcomer will become absorbed without special attention. But, a newcomer can feel as isolated (and maybe more so, if the group feels like a tight family) in a small group as in a large one.

- On the day a newcomer visits, a Friend welcomes them, gives a tour of the meetinghouse, with an emphasis on the location of restrooms, childcare, description of the day's events (Meeting for Worship, coffee time, adult religious education, etc), and information on upcoming events. The welcoming Friend should sit with the newcomers during worship, introduce them to other Friends, and then invite them to coffee or whatever social event follows meeting for worship.
- On the day they visit, have someone from the meeting make a personal phone call or send an email thanking them for attending.
- On Monday, send a signed letter from the clerk of the meeting or ministry and counsel thanking them for coming. Send a current meeting newsletter along with this letter.
- On Thursday, a short personal note or email is sent inviting the newcomer to attend the next Sunday.
- During the second, third, and fourth weeks (which means you need to track visits!) another informational piece is via postal mail or email. The other information could be an invitation to a special educational opportunity, a notice about a small group, or other creative idea that fits the context of your meeting. If your meeting does not have such opportunities you may want to create them as part of developing your welcome program.

- After three visits, add newcomers to the meeting's mailing list.
- Once a month or quarterly (depending on the number of newcomers), have a lunch group for newcomers. Invite all newcomers to meet for lunch with a group of meeting members. Provide time for them to ask questions, share their experience so far, etc.

Connect

Connect with FGC:

- FGC has resources to support new and existing groups
- FGC can help a group connect with other local Quaker groups
- FGC can help you get listed on QuakerFinder.org to help others find you

FGC staff and volunteers are happy to talk with you about this, or any other issue, your meeting or worship group is facing. Please contact us by emailing us at newmeetings@fgcquaker.org or phoning 215-561-1700.

This document was downloaded from the website of Friends General Conference. Explore the many resources and opportunities we offer for Quakers, Quaker meetings, and all interested individuals. Go to www.fgcquaker.org.

