**Introduction**

Hi, this is Pastor [Name], and I want to welcome you to our greeter training video. What we hope to provide in this video are the things you need to know to do the ministry of greeting here at [Church Name] effectively.

I’d encourage you to walk through this video segment by segment, and hopefully we will have provided you everything that you need to be effective in this ministry. Again, thanks for helping us as a greeter.

**WHY: Present the church’s vision / value of welcoming guests**

Let's talk for a minute about why this ministry is so important here at [Church Name]. The ministry of greeters is frontline work.

This is a core part of communicating what we believe God has put in our hearts in serving him. You know, by now that at [Church Name] we believe in belonging, and that it's our responsibility to reach out in love and to accept and, and to welcome every individual that God gives us opportunity to minister to. That “belonging that is the beginning of believing and becoming?” Well, that starts right here at the front door. That starts on the front lines every weekend when people will walk through the door for the very first time.

You as a greeter are in the center of that opportunity. You may very well be that morning God's smile or God's hand extended, or just that embrace that draws somebody in to begin to experience the love God really wants to show them. So, at the very top of the list of what's important here and why this matters so much is our whole philosophy and your place on the front lines of getting that job done.

The second reason why this ministry of greeting is so important is all about first impressions. I mean, we all make impressions and we look at first impressions every day of our lives, whether it's maybe a new restaurant we try, or a friend that we meet, somebody who comes across our path and, and we begin immediately to form ideas of what we think they're like.

Well, as a greeter, you're a part of the first impression that somebody will have of [Church Name]. Now, they've already driven on the property and already our building has begun to create an impression, and certainly how we've cared for the yard out front may communicate some things, but you are the first human contact. You are the individual—you and your friendliness establish what this church is all about.

Think about that in your own home. When somebody comes to visit your home for the very first time, you, you want to greet them with your very best. You want to go the extra mile, particularly in those first moments, to put them at ease and help them to feel comfortable in your home.

Well, it's much the same being a greeter here at [Church Name].

We want people to feel at ease, to feel comfortable, to feel that this is a church that wants me to be here, and that's the impression that we want to leave through the ministry of our greeters.

Finally, the third reason why this ministry is so important is that studies tell us that people will make the decision of whether they want to come back to a church. And they'll make that decision within the first 11 minutes that they have arrived at a church for the first 11 minutes. That's an average. That means that for every person who waits and makes that decision later in the morning, maybe during the sermon or during the music, for every one of those, there are several people who've already decided when they walk in the door, whether this is a place they want to be. And so that impression that that first moment is so critical and you are right there, you are frontline ministering to them, showing them what kind of people we really are.

Those are some of the reasons why the ministry of greeting is so essential and why we're so glad to have you helping us with it.

**Effective Greeter Ministry**

Let's talk about the secret to effective greeter ministry. This is so important. The secret to being effective as a greeter is to see the entire moment through the eyes of the guest. Now, let's face it, here in the lobby at [Church Name], you and I, we’re on home turf. We're familiar with everything that's here, and this all feels normal to us.

But when someone walks in the door, their mind is buzzing with questions. Everything around them looks new and, and unfamiliar. To be effective as a greeter, you and I have to see that. We have to understand what this looks like to them. And that means to be thinking about what are they wondering? What are their needs? What are they concerned about as they walk in our door?

We have to be very careful not to be focused on what we think *our* needs are, the things *we* want them to do, or the things that *we* think they have to know. Instead of that, we should take a step back and say, “What does this experience feel like for them?”

And everything else we're going say in this training video is going focus on seeing this moment through their eyes. That's when we become effective, when we realize this is their moment, not ours.

**Before your greeting time begins**

You know, the first time I walk into a place, it's amazing the things that will catch my eye,

particularly things that look out of place. For example, if I walk into [Church Name] and I see something like maybe paper that's, that's on the ground, or I see somebody's Bible laying out over on a ledge, or something that makes the entry area look a little bit untidy.

It's amazing that I will notice that even though I'm not a person perhaps that will notice that in any other setting, but when I'm taking someplace in for the first time and I'm experiencing that initial moment, all these things jump out at me. So, as a greeter, it's very important before you start your shift or your time on a Sunday morning as a greeter to look around, make sure the area is clean. Make sure that it makes the right impression as somebody walks in the door for

the very first time, because they will see what a lot of us who are here every week tend to overlook. They'll see those things that we've gotten used to seeing and they'll notice when they seem out of place.

Cleanliness is an extremely important part of being a greeter. In fact, let me encourage you, you are authorized to clean up things as you see them. If you come in on a Sunday morning and the Saturday night crew left a mess, take care of it before that first visitor comes in the door. Cleanliness really matters.

**Entrance Greeters**

Being a greet at the front door is a very important ministry. Obviously, you're the first face to represent all of us who are inside, but there are some ways to do this, to do it right, to do it most effective. What, let me talk to you about that.

First of all, your focus at the front door is very simple. You really have only two things to get accomplished here. Number one is you want to greet every individual as they walk in the door, greet them with a smile, look them in the eye, say, “Hey, it's great to have you here this morning. Good to see you, glad you could join us”—something that engages them and helps them to see that you really are glad.

Maybe you want to extend a hand and shake their hand. Let me encourage you to, if you can, to speak to the children who come with them. You know, “Hey, buddy, it's good to have you here,” or, “Don't you look nice?”

Glad to have you at [Church Name], whether they're visitors or part of our regular crew, everything should be positive right here at this door as you welcome people into church.

The second thing that maybe you'll be doing would be handing them a bulletin as they come in, and that'll give them a sense of, of what's happening that morning, as well as, of course, the events of the week.

But it's really only those two things. Greeting them, handing them that bulletin, and making sure they come inside. This isn't a moment where perhaps you'll get a name, or you'll spend time in conversation. Instead, this is a moment simply to welcome people in and to help them know that their day is going to be a marvelous day here among the people of the church.

Now, here are some little things that that matter: First of all, if you are the front door greeter, you're going to be here by yourself. This is a one-person job. If two or three folks gather here and clog this entryway, that it may be intimidating to people walking in for the first time. As they walk in, they might think, “Wow, there are three big guys standing there in the doorway!” That that's not a way to make guests feel at home. So you're going be working this moment by yourself. If you've got friends and others who want to have a conversation with you,

Let me encourage you to ask those friends to wait until you're done with this time of ministry, this isn't a time to be distracted by, by other conversations.

This is a time to be singularly focused on every individual walking in the door. Make them feel at home. Let them know you're glad they're here, and then welcome them into the building. This is why you're here. You set the tone for their entire morning.

**Inside Greeters**

If you're helping us here in one of the inside posts as a greeter, let me tell you, you've got a very challenging job because as people come in, your primary task is to figure out how they want us to help them. Remember, we want to be guest-focused, not focused on our ideas or what we think should happen, but on what they're feeling, what they're thinking, and in this case, what they're needing. So the first thing you want to do is greet them by introducing yourself and extend a hand and say, “Good morning. Welcome to [Church Name]. Give them your name. Say, “I’m really glad you're here.”

And then offer simply to help by saying to them, “Are there ways that I can help you this morning?

If you think that there's somebody that's brand new to the church, it's okay to say something like, “Can I help you find your way this morning?” Or, “Are there ways that I can assist you?

It’s probably *not* a good thing to say, “So are you new this morning?” Because maybe they’re somebody who has been coming a while, but you've not met them. But simply offering yourself to help—that's the first way to find out *how* you can help them. And again, remember, we're guest focused.

**Specific instructions about where to be**

Some things that we want to do differently than we've done in the past. First of all, don't stand behind the counter. Let's use that over there as our supply area for when we need it. But come and greet folks head on, reach out and be close to them. Be willing to reach out and shake their hand.

Don't stand behind a counter. That automatically communicates some distance between you. And the other thing that we're not going to do anymore is write down their name on name tags. For some folks, that feels a bit intrusive or perhaps makes them feel as though we're asking too much of them as they walk in the door. And so we're going to simply be about making them feel at home.

Think about how you do that at your house. Somebody walks into your home for the first time, and you're just so glad to see them. And you might say things to them there like, can I take your coat? Or, you know, come on in and, and just caring about how they feel in the moment. Well,

the same attitude works for being a greeter. Simply try to be available to them to help. That's the most important thing to be thinking in this initial contact.

So now you've had that moment of greeting them and telling them your name. And perhaps they've responded in kind and now you've asked them, “Are there ways that I can help you?” Well, here's the moment where you want to be armed with some practical information.

You want to be able to, to know how to tell them where their children perhaps would go at this particular hour. Or if they are looking for somebody in particular.

You want to be able to give them an idea of perhaps where that person might be found. It's very, very important as you greet someone, as they're walking into a new place, that wherever they need to go, offer to go with them. Don't simply say to them, “Well, you know, that's around the corner,” or “That’s down in room 104,” and then launch them into some journey in this foreign building where they may or may not find their way.

But saying something to them like, “Your child is in our preschool class. That's our train room. We're going to have lots of fun this morning,” or, “Can I walk with you and show you where that is?” And if they respond with a yes, then do exactly that. Go with them. If they say, “No, I think we can find it,” then offer them some direction. You know, it's okay at that point to say, “It's just a couple doors down on the right. Please let me know if you have difficulty finding it.”

Again, just thinking about what this feels like to them. They're the ones in a new place. If you get the opportunity to walk with somebody, that's a huge plus, because that gives you more opportunity to get to know them and to address the questions they might have about this new place they're in. But remember, at every moment it's about *what do they need to know*?

Think about it link this: When you go shopping and you're standing in a store and you're looking at some stuff, and here comes a salesperson, and at that moment, you don't really have questions. That salesperson will say, “Can I help you?” And you may respond, “No, I'm just looking.”

Well, a lot of people feel that way when they walk into a church, especially a church with a full parking lot that looks like it's a big place. They probably come in hoping to maintain some level of anonymity as they walk in. Don't be afraid of that. We don't have to get tons of information from them. We don't have to make them feel uncomfortable in order then later to make them feel comfortable. Let's make them feel comfortable from the very first moment. And you do that simply by caring about what they care about and helping them in ways that they feel they need help.

**Name tags** (potentially specific to a church’s context)

Here we are at the name tags. A staple of life here at Church Name.

I'm going to be honest with you: sometimes our name tag system is very beneficial. It helps us to keep track of folks when they're absent, and it helps us to get to know each other faster.

But there are also moments where our name tag system can be a hindrance, and that's often when we're dealing with somebody who's here for the first time.

This is something we do, and what I want us to be careful with is that we don't impose what we do on guests who walk in the door. Remember, we're here to focus on what they're concerned about, what they're interested in. So while we still want to get their name, we're not going to do the handwritten name tag or say, “Hey, come over here to the desk. I need to get some information.” That sounds way too much like it's about us and not at all about them.

So what we want to do is find an effective way to make them feel comfortable without forcing them into this system.

Here at [Church Name], you know when they go in the auditorium, they're going to fill out a guest card. We hope that they'll do that. That's one way that we will get their name to the name tag list.

Another way that we're going to get their name is to provide you with a little hand-sized notepad so that when you are visiting with someone and, and they tell you their name, they say, you know, “My name is Dave Jackson, and this is my wife Carol.” And you can say, “You know what? Let me write that down really quick. I don't want forget your name,” and maybe even jot down the children's names. But again, it's just something really simple, really fast in your handwriting as you're walking them down the hall.

Now, if you don't get their name, that's okay. They didn't want to give it, figure that out as quickly as you can. If they don't want to give you information, please don't force them to, because that almost for sure guarantees that they're going to feel uncomfortable, and it will contribute to a decision perhaps never to come back to our church. So keep focused on what they are needing and what information they are willing to give. And if along the way you can just make that little note.

Then, after you have guided them to the auditorium or their children have made it to their classes and, and you come back ready to greet the next guest, you can take that little note page and put it over in our visitor center and keep it there. So later in the morning, when you have a minute, you can write their name on a sheet and, and we will have their name that way. But if you don't get their name, that's okay. We have other opportunities to get their name. We want to make sure at whatever point they give us that information that they're comfortable providing it.

Let’s talk a bit about practical information, things that the guest will want to know. When I've interviewed folks, talked with them about their first experiences, whether it's here or visiting other churches, this is one area that is very important to the guests. There are things that a guest may want to know, and you are that first opportunity of information.

One of the questions they may have is, “What's going on right now?” Well, as a greeter, you, you need to be aware of what's happening right now. We have Sunday school, perhaps, happening right now, or our Sunday school hour is just about to end and our morning worship service will begin here in just about 15 minutes, or whatever the practical information is of the moment. That's information you want be able to offer if they ask for it. Certainly, you want to be able to tell them where their children are going to be and, and how they will need to come and collect their children at the end of the morning and those kind of things. Again, trying to understand what information they need.

Maybe they have a baby to come here to the [Church Name] nursery. It's great, if you can, to walk them to that place and, and in a sense, hand them off to that nursery worker who can then go ahead and communicate other information that they might need.

A couple of things that people will want to know is, “Where is the auditorium? Now you may say, well, pastor, it's obvious. It's right there. We all know where it is, but we've been here before. And so don't assume that they will find their way. Don't assume that just because all the traffic's flowing this way, that they'll be comfortable following where everybody's going.

Communicate with them the things that they need to know. Perhaps they'll want to know where restrooms are.

If you get the opportunity to walk with them down the hallway, it's a good thing to point out just to let them know right around this corner are restrooms. If you need that, again, practical information, these are things that probably you already know. And if you don't, we'll make sure that information is available in your resource center here for visitors so you can have that information memorized every morning when you begin your work as a greeter.

I'm going to tell you that your experiences as a greeter on any Sunday morning may vary from one moment to the next. You may have somebody that you try to welcome to the church who seems a bit abrupt and isn't interested in your help. That's okay. They'll figure out other things as they walk in.

And you may have another person who wants to stand and visit with you and tell chunks of their life story to you in that moment. Again, let the guest in this place, dictate how you respond in the ideal opportunity.

You get the opportunity to walk them all the way to the auditorium. Again, telling them who you are. And just so glad to have you here and, and here's where the restrooms are and here's where your children will be in class and here's the auditorium. And if there's any other way I can help you, you know, my name's [Name], and I want you to know, we're just really glad to have you here and let me know if there's anything I can do for you.

That's a great success as a greeter is to get the opportunity to walk with them and just to tell them a little bit about the things they're interested in knowing. Don't force yourself on people. Don't make them feel uncomfortable. Don't let them have the idea that you have an agenda that you're trying to fulfill. We're not salespeople in this role. We're simply welcoming folks here to [Church Name].

And on that, let me tell you how I approach it, particularly a Sunday morning. When I come to church, in any of our main services, the people I am looking for most are people I have never met. I'm always glad to see every member of the church.

And I enjoy shaking every hand out on the sidewalk that I can and, and greeting people, and the folks whose stories I know, touching base with them briefly, but on a Sunday morning, I'm looking for people that have never been here before, people who I can extend friendship to. That's your ministry as a greeter.

And you'll have the friends that perhaps they'll see you in the hallway. But when you're on duty as a greeter, try to help train your friends to understand that you have the same focus that Pastor does, that now is not a time necessarily for you to engage a conversation about the

ball game or, or some activity or to get into some detailed conversation about things going

on in their life.

Ask them to hold that until you have opportunity to fulfill your ministry as a

greeter and then have those opportunities to share with friends. Remember, when you're a greeter, you're in the same focus that, that I'm in. You're looking for those folks that need your help, looking for those people who don't know their way and simply extending warmth and love to them and hospitality.

When we have somebody visit our homes, we do that. I, you know, my wife and I have had many different people in into our homes, and certainly the first time somebody comes into our home, we not only want to be focused on them, but we expect everybody in the family to be focused on them. We expect our children to understand that we have guests in the home and to be available to assist them and to help them. And that's the mindset we want to get all the way through the church.

When we gather and worship that when someone's a guest, we want be focused on caring for them. You know, after they've been here a while and they know their way, then they'll, they'll need less help in that regard. And they can, after a while, even begin to join us in helping others.

But while they're a guest, we want to give them our absolute best attention. And you're on the front lines in that ministry.

Well, here we are at the end of the hallway as a greeter. If you've walked somebody this far, you've had a great opportunity to make them feel welcome here at [Church Name] as that conversation ends. And this would be true, even if the conversation has to end further up the hallway, it's very important that you close this opportunity with a greeting, saying to them a final time, “Well, you know, it's so good that to have you here today. Remember, my name's [Name], and if you need anything, I'm going to be right out here, and I'm available to help you any way I can.”

And just one more time, in that moment, telling them your name and offering to be available to them, should other issues come up, should other questions arise in their mind. Maybe when you introduced yourself at the front door, maybe there was so much they were taking in that your name didn't stick. So it's okay to just say it again and reinforce that you're available to help them any way they need.

You have in these few seconds done everything you know how to do to make somebody feel comfortable in this foreign place. Thanks for helping us do that. It may well be the key to how open they are to receive all of the new things they will experience once they're in worship with us.

**Conclusion**

Thanks for taking time to watch this training video for us. We really want you to be equipped to be able to do an effective job and know that you're going to enjoy this ministry more when you're confident of exactly how to do it right.

If you have ideas, things that you think could enhance the greeter ministry, be sure to share those with your greeter coordinator. But remember, our most important focus is our guests and what they're feeling and how we can help them as they walk in the door. Again, thanks so much for helping us. Appreciate your ministry here at [Church Name].