



M I C H I G A N
M I N I S T R Y
N E T W O R K

**CONNECTION TEAM
TRAINING MANUAL PLAYBOOK**

This playbook is designed to be more of a training manual that you can adapt to your specific church and needs. We have included areas of connection ministry that you may or may not have.

Please take this material, insert your church name, and change it into whatever would be most useful.

Also, as your church changes and grows, you can go back and modify it again to fit the situation.

*"If getting here a few minutes early makes a difference in
someone's eternity, I think it's a small price to pay."
Thom Ranier*

The purpose of our Connection Team is to CONNECT people with each other and the church.

The role of the Connection Team will be to ensure that every person who enters **[Insert Church Name]** makes a connection with our team members, other church members, and our church as a whole, thereby helping to create an environment in which to experience the power of Jesus.

A welcoming team will intentionally create connection moments before and after service begins. Members of the Connection Team should greet, assist, and care for everyone who attends. They will also address the needs of regular attenders and guests. The team also helps with parking lot guidance, front-door management, operating the information area, maintaining the café and fellowship space, assisting guests throughout the building, and managing the flow of families checking in and out at the Kids' Check-in drop-off area.

As people begin to leave **[Insert Church Name]**, the Connection Team will make sure everyone is greeted on their way out. The main goal of any Connection Team is to provide care, service, and a welcoming process, while also focusing on the church's internal connection areas.

PART 1 - TRAINING

4 TYPES OF PEOPLE WHO COME ON SUNDAY

PERSON #1 - VISITOR

Visitors are people who attend a worship service or event at a church but are not likely to be regularly connected to the congregation (e.g., they live out of town or have another church home). Remember, welcoming is not about growing your church, so visitors deserve special attention even if you never see them again.

PERSON #2 - GUEST

Guests are people who attend worship or another event, perhaps at the personal invitation of someone from the church, who may reasonably be expected to return and get involved in the congregation. Those treated as “honored guests” are likely to return.

PERSON #3 - RETURNER

Returners are people who are relatively new to a congregation—not yet members, no longer guests—interested in connecting with the church and its members. Returners are seeking a way into the life and ministries of the church, so it's important to remove barriers and meet their needs.

PERSON #4 - ATTENDER

Attendees are people who regularly attend and consider this their church home. Even though they have been coming for a while, we must be careful not to take them for granted. They deserve the same level of care and excitement as all the other stages require. However, we also cannot become lost in the familiarity of those relationships and neglect visitors, guests, and returners.

QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK EVERY TIME THEY COME TO CHURCH

QUESTION #1 – Cultural - “Is there anyone here like me?”

If the answer is no, people will feel like they can’t connect or fit in. What should be communicated is, “There are many here like you. We welcome you no matter who you are.”

QUESTION #2 – Personal - “Is there anyone here who is interested in me?”

If the answer is no because the congregation is not prepared to receive the guest hospitably, then the guest will look elsewhere—or may not look again. People need to see and know that we have thought about them and their family in advance.

QUESTION #3 – Practical - “Is this church relevant to my life?”

If the answer is no, then the guest will feel like we didn’t think of them and that they’re unimportant to us. Sometimes people ask this question: **“Are you able to meet my needs/concerns?”** When people walk through the door, they want to know that the people they meet care about them and can help them.

QUESTION #4 – Health - “Is this a safe place?”

If the answer is no, then people will apply that to every aspect of the church. They want to attend a place that is safe and secure. A warm welcome and good communication tells others that this is a place they can trust.

THE TRUTH: When a congregation is highly effective at welcoming people and answers “yes” to the above questions, the message is clear. Guests will feel that people are like them, interested in them, relevant, and that they are safe with us. We want there to be a “yes” every time someone comes in.

THE LIE: A common trap for many churches is believing they are friendly simply because they are friendly to each other. Often, we naturally gather with those we know and like most. When these “huddles” happen, guests might think it will be hard to “break in” to the whole community. We need to be careful to stop this and reach out to those around us.

“The ministry of welcoming is not the responsibility of a few people or a team. It is the responsibility of the entire church family. Creating a welcoming and hospitable climate begins at the curb and continues into the heart of the congregation.” ~

Pastor Aaron Hlavin

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL CONNECTION TEAM MEMBERS

General Requirements/Expectations: A heart for God and a genuine desire to partner with **[Insert Church Name]**'s vision. A team member must possess the following skills:

- The ability to be outgoing and conversational.
- Able to begin and maintain conversations in a healthy way.
- Engage in positive 'small talks/questions' that are focused on learning about their immediate needs.
- Be flexible and able to quickly adapt to various types of conversations and cultural/social elements, relate to a diverse community of people, and remain aware of conversational boundaries/limitations.
- Good listener (abide by an 80/20 rule of listening vs. talking).
- The ability to be teachable for equipping and training for excellence.
- Punctual.
- Must arrive 30 minutes prior to service and remain for 15 minutes after service.
- Know and follow the connection team plans.
- Work well with and under the leadership of the Connection Team Lead.
- Stand for extended periods of time.
- Dress presentably, maintain good hygiene, and wear only the team shirt when serving.
- Assist in keeping the building areas clean and free of trash/spills/messes.
- Intentionally go out of their way to greet/welcome all persons entering or leaving the church.
- Stay in regular communication with the Connect Team Lead (while serving).
- Communicate scheduling conflicts in advance through Planning Center.
- Ensure the Connection Team protocols/procedures are followed.
- Be a team player. Be dependable. Be positive.
- Attend the weekly team huddle before service.
- Greet everyone with genuine warmth and friendliness.
- Must love engaging with people and welcoming them.
- Are to wear the Connection Team lanyards.
- Must know the church layout to assist people to different locations.
- Must maintain a positive demeanor when engaging with people.
- Must meet the high standards of excellence in all areas of service.

DRESS CODE

- Wear proper attire, appropriate casual.
- Nice jeans, no holes, preferably dark color. No low-cut or crop tops, or shorts
- No t-shirts with branding that is not **[Insert Church Name]**.

- No sandals or flip flops (exception: dress sandals for women)
- Keep a warm demeanor - Hurried people make people feel uneasy quickly.

CONNECTION TEAM THINGS TO KNOW

- We think in motions; guests think in moments. Every team needs to proactively plan all the church's movements to ensure they are seamless.
- Each Connection team should break down their connection into scenes and ask:
 - Do they tell a consistent story?
 - Does the story clearly model that the church is prepared for everyone's arrival and is excited to see, know, and assist all who come?
- We function in processes, but we must never make people feel processed.
- Serving is task-oriented, hospitality is emotion-oriented.
- People come back because they “felt” good.
- Lasting impressions are lasting. We must make good impressions.
- Think of others' comfort, not our own preference.
- Approach each person with a “there you are” feel rather than a “here I am” feel.

Three Actions for Each Connection Team Member

1. “Wow one person.” “Think proactively.”
2. “Leave a positive lasting impression.”
3. Say: “My Pleasure” instead of your welcome.

PART 2 - THE CONNECTION TEAM LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

CONNECTION PASTOR/LEADER

The Connection Team follows the leadership of the Connection Pastor/Leader. The Connection Pastor oversees the process, training, and overall vision of connection at **[Insert Church Name]**. All Connection Team Leads report to the Connection Pastor/Leader.

CONNECTION TEAM LEADS

The Connection Leader directly works with the Connection Team Leads. Each week, the Team Leads oversee scheduling and leadership for the team serving during that week.

TRAINERS

Each area (parking lot, front door, worship center, café, etc.) will have a designated trainer who provides insights and direction for onboarding new team members and supports the ongoing development of the team as a whole.

CONNECTORS

This term refers to all individuals serving on the Connection Team.

PART 3 - FOUR AREAS OF OUR CONNECTION TEAM

SERVICE CONNECTORS

Those who serve in this area of connection focus on the foyer, parking lot, and Worship Center.

NEW HERE CONNECTORS

Those who serve in this area of connection serve at the Welcome/Info Center on Sunday mornings.

CAFÉ CONNECTORS

Those who serve in this area of connection serve in the Café on Sundays and Wednesdays.

SECTION CONNECTORS

Those who serve in a designated area (a set of seats) in the Worship Center provide connection and care for those in that area.

PART 4 - THE TASKS

SERVICE CONNECTOR TASKS

(WORSHIP CENTER/LOBBY/ PARKING LOT CONNECTORS/NEW HERE CONNECTOR)

Personnel & Responsibilities (7-9 Team Members Each Week) 2-3 Service Connectors should be stationed at individual back doors of the Worship Center.

Pre-Service

- Make sure the guest reserve signs are placed on the back row of the Worship Center seats on both sides.
- Connectors should be stationed at the doors leading into the Worship Center.
- Greet everyone with a smile and a hello.

- Maintain a clear understanding of where seats are available and be available to guide people to open seats. This will help seat people as quickly and comfortably as possible.
- Walk people to their seats when the Worship Center is full or near capacity.
- When the Worship Center is full, ask people to move in to make room.
- Should the Worship Center be completely full, notify attendees to go to the “overflow room” (if applicable).

Once Service Begins

Those serving in the Worship Center will be joined by those serving in the Lobby & Parking Lot.

- Communion.
 - As directed from the stage, move to the front of the Worship Center and distribute the elements from the communion trays.
 - Once communion has been given, return to collect the empty cups using the collection baskets after prayer has concluded.
- Offering (if taken in person)
 - Collect the offering when directed from the stage.
 - Come up to the front (with collection bags) and wait for the prayer to conclude.
 - Once prayer concludes, begin to collect the offering by passing the collection bags.
 - Once the collection has concluded, the team should gather at the back of the Worship Center before heading to secure the offering.
 - After the collection, meet at the center Worship Center doors before proceeding to the office for deposit.
 - As a team, head to the office area to empty the collection bags into the lock bags.
 - Always work in pairs when depositing offerings. **NO ONE SHOULD EVER BE ALONE WITH THE OFFERING.**
 - A minimum of three individuals should accompany the offering. One of the connectors should be stationed outside the office door during deposit, while at least two of the connectors are with the offering as they prepare to deposit into the safe.
 - Empty the offering collection bags. Remove any connection cards from the offering bags. Place the cards in [list location]. Place the offering in the lockable bags. Once the offering has been placed in the lock bags, lock the bag and then deposit it in the safe.
 - Once concluded, put the offering collection bags back where they originated from.

Service Connectors should be stationed in the lobby.

- Greet all people with genuine warmth and friendliness.
- Be brief, warm, and kind. Have a “there you are” rather than a “here I am” kind of approach.
- Know the church layout to help those who need assistance get to different locations. 2-3 Service Connectors should be stationed in the parking lot. The purpose of those stationed in the parking lot is to provide a great first impression and a friendly welcome to guests. These individuals are the first point of contact for people each Sunday.

Parking Lot Team

- All parking lot attendants should wear their assigned vests while on duty.
- Make sure the sidewalks and the area near the front doors are swept and clear.
- One team member should wear a radio to stay in touch with the safety team.
- On Sunday mornings when it is raining, bring out umbrellas to escort people from their cars into the building's foyer.

2 New Here Connectors

The purpose of a New Here Connector is to make guests feel welcomed and at ease as they enter **[Insert Church Name]**.

- These individuals must be specially trained to know the layout, function, team members and special information of all things **[Insert Church Name]**.
- These connectors will **ONLY** serve in this area.
- These individuals should wear “New Here” shirts and a connection lanyard.
- Make sure VIP guest bags are filled and ready to be given out to guests.
- Introduce yourself and ask them their name. Direct them where they need to go next.
- If they have preplanned a visit, give them the welcome bag(s) set aside for them. If they have children, make sure their bag includes the additional gifts.
- If they have not pre-planned a visit, then give them a guest bag.
- Take the family/individual around the necessary places within the building.
- Make sure they are aware of their option for a free item from the café.
- Once you lead them to the Worship Center (last stop after all other places have been visited), return to the foyer and repeat.
- As soon as the service concludes, return to the foyer. Be intentional about reconnecting with those you assisted prior to service.

INFORMATION CENTER CONNECTOR TASKS

The purpose of an Info Center Connector is to provide a place for people to go and get information about the church, events, and special activities.

- The Information Center Connectors must be in position at the beginning and end of the service.

- Information Center Connectors are to wear lanyards and position themselves at the round table/counter.
- Be able to assist those with questions.
- Assist individuals in signing up for events, serving, and life groups.
- Help new believers pick out their Bible, journal, and other items designated for them.
- Help people get merchandise (shirts, hats, and other items). These will be paid for at the café.

CAFÉ CONNECTOR TASKS

The purpose of the Café will be to provide a place for people to relax and enjoy fellowship with one another before and after services and events.

- Greet everyone cheerfully and keep the line moving.
- Follow the Café's procedures and training. Specialized training will be provided several times per year.
- Give first-time guests one item or beverage per person.
- All coffee and items are to be of the highest quality, consistent, and served in a timely manner.

WORSHIP CENTER SECTION (50-CHAIR PASTOR) CONNECTOR TASKS

The purpose of a Worship Center Section Connector is to engage with everyone sitting in your designated area within the Worship Center. All individuals in your section should be greeted with genuine warmth and intentionality, missed when they are absent, and given opportunities to build meaningful friendships.

- Following the service, spend at least the first 10 min. socializing within the assigned area.
- Greet each person in your area each and every week. (The best time would be 10-15 minutes before or after service, or immediately as the service concludes).
- Have a conversation with each person in your section each and every week. Be conversational, do not just give them a handshake and move on to the next person.
- Be there mentally, not just physically.
- Remember people's names and greet them by name when you see them again.
- Reach out to individuals whom you notice have not been present at weekly services.
- If you become aware of a significant event they are facing, pause and ask if you can pray with them. USE DISCRETION and WISDOM.
- Pray with the people from your section at the altar if they go up for prayer.
- Assist others in making connections with other people in your section.