Hospitality Check-list

ADVENT PREPARATION, CHRISTMAS WELCOME, AND ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

Campaign Challenge: Pray for One Person. Invite One Person. Welcome Every Person.

Purpose: Prepare the parish to welcome everyone who attends Christmas Mass—regular parishioners, visiting families, Catholics returning after time away, and people exploring the faith. Hospitality is more than a friendly greeting; it is helping every person experience the love of Christ and discover a place in the parish community.

BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Phase 1: First Week of Advent — Build the Team and Set the Vision

Discern and Build a Hospitality Team

Identify a coordinator and recruit parishioners to serve in the following roles:

Hospitality Audit Team

- Review the internal and external campus environment using the checklists below.
- Identify barriers to a welcoming experience and recommend improvements to the pastor and parish staff.
- Pay particular attention to the needs of larger Christmas crowds, visiting families, and people unfamiliar with the parish.

Personal Invitation Team

- Encourage parishioners to identify one person to pray for and invite.
- Coordinate personal outreach through letters, phone calls, text messages, emails, and face-to-face conversations.
- Where appropriate, help the parish reach out to registered parishioners who have not attended Mass in some time.

Communications Liaison

- Coordinate with parish communications personnel to ensure that all campaign materials are delivered according to the Advent timeline.
- Coordinate bulletin announcements, verbal announcements, invitation flyers, pastor and school letters, emails, text messages, and social media posts.
- Ensure that the parish's Christmas Mass times and practical visitor information are accurate and easy to find.

Christmas Together Hospitality Coordinator

- Recruit and organize greeters, ushers, welcome-table volunteers, and other hospitality ministers.
- Coordinate volunteer assignments for each Christmas Mass.
- Ensure volunteers understand their roles and the importance of warm, respectful, nonintrusive hospitality.

Prayer Team

- Pray for the success of Christmas Together and for the people parishioners hope to invite.
- Encourage the parish to pray throughout Advent for those who may be seeking hope, community, or a renewed relationship with Jesus Christ.

Begin the Hospitality Audit

Use the internal and external environment checklists below to assess the parish's current experience. Identify immediate improvements and assign responsibility for completing them before Christmas.

Phase 2: Second Week of Advent — Prepare the Parish and Campus

External Campus Environment Audit

Check each item as it is completed.

- ☐ Church campus is clean, safe, and in good repair.
- ☐ Deferred maintenance or cosmetic distractions have been addressed where possible.
- ☐ Landscaping, walkways, and entrances are clean and well maintained.
- ☐ Parking areas are clearly marked and easy to navigate.
- ☐ Signage clearly identifies church entrances, buildings, restrooms, and other important destinations.
- ☐ Exterior signs and the parish marquee display accurate Christmas Mass times and clear welcome messages.
- ☐ Signage avoids confusing terminology or insider language unfamiliar to visitors.
- ☐ Consider designating convenient parking spaces for guests, older adults, people with disabilities, and families who need additional assistance.
- ☐ Walkways and entrances are accessible, well lit, and clear of obstacles.
- ☐ A plan is in place to manage parking and traffic during high-attendance Christmas Masses.

Internal Campus Environment Audit

- [ ] Restrooms are easy to find, clean, and stocked with toilet paper, soap, paper towels, and other necessary supplies.
- [ ] Family restrooms or changing stations are available and stocked where possible.
- [ ] A clearly designated space is available for parents with young children, if the parish offers a cry room or similar space.
- [ ] Spaces for families are clean, welcoming, and stocked with appropriate materials.
- [ ] Information about children's spaces and family facilities is easy to obtain.
- [ ] Pews and worship spaces are clean and ready for Christmas visitors.
- [ ] Worship aids are available, if used, and include the information needed to participate in the Mass.
- [ ] Welcome materials and parish information are current and easy to locate.
- [ ] Bulletin boards and displays contain accurate, up-to-date information.
- [ ] A clear location or process exists for newcomers who want parish information or registration details.
- [ ] Sound systems and microphones have been tested.
- [ ] Lighting is working throughout the church and gathering spaces.
- [ ] Accessibility needs have been considered, including seating and routes through the church.
- [ ] There is a plan for handling unusually large crowds while maintaining safe and respectful access to the church.

Launch Personal Invitations

- [ ] Introduce Christmas Together through parish communications.
- [ ] Distribute invitation flyers and make them available digitally.
- [ ] Encourage parishioners to pray for one person and begin thinking about a personal invitation.
- [ ] Share the Christmas Mass schedule and explain how guests can find information.
- [ ] Begin identifying volunteers who can assist with personal outreach and hospitality.

Phase 3: Third Week of Advent — Invite Intentionally and Train Volunteers

Personal Invitation Campaign

- ☐ Launch or intensify personal invitations through letters, phone calls, texts, emails, and conversations.
- ☐ Send pastor and school invitations, as appropriate.
- ☐ Encourage parishioners to invite one person personally rather than relying only on general announcements.
- ☐ Encourage parishioners to offer to sit with their guests and introduce them to others.
- ☐ Ensure invitations communicate the date, Mass times, location, and any helpful visitor information.
- ☐ Provide parishioners with sample invitation language and conversation starters.
- ☐ Continue praying for the people being invited.

Hospitality Team Training

- ☐ Train greeters, ushers, welcome-table volunteers, and other hospitality ministers.
- ☐ Review assignments for every entrance and Christmas Mass.
- ☐ Practice welcoming people warmly without overwhelming them or insisting on a conversation.
- ☐ Review how to help guests find seating, restrooms, children's spaces, and other facilities.
- ☐ Review procedures for assisting older adults, people with disabilities, and families who need additional help.
- ☐ Explain how to respond to questions and direct visitors to someone who can help.
- ☐ Review procedures for collecting contact information and prayer intentions respectfully, without pressuring visitors.
- ☐ Ensure volunteers understand that every person is responsible for helping others feel welcome.

Prepare the Parish Community

Remind parishioners that hospitality is everyone's responsibility.

- [ ] Leave designated guest and accessible parking spaces available as planned.
- [ ] Smile and greet people, including those they do not recognize.
- [ ] Move toward the center of the pew when appropriate to make room for others.
- [ ] Be attentive to families and individuals who may be unfamiliar with parish customs.
- [ ] Practice courteous parking-lot behavior before and after Mass.
- [ ] Avoid assuming that visitors know when to stand, sit, respond, or proceed for Holy Communion.
- [ ] Encourage parishioners to offer help without drawing unnecessary attention to visitors.

Phase 4: Fourth Week of Advent — Finalize Preparations

Communications and Final Invitations

- [ ] Publish the final scheduled bulletin announcement.
- [ ] Deliver the final verbal announcement before Christmas.
- [ ] Share the final social media post and send reminder emails or texts, as planned.
- [ ] Verify that Christmas Mass times are consistent across the bulletin, website, signage, emails, and social media.
- [ ] Ensure visitors can find information about parking, accessibility, children's spaces, and other practical needs.
- [ ] Encourage parishioners to make a final personal invitation and offer to accompany their guests.

Hospitality Readiness

- [ ] Finalize volunteer schedules and confirm assignments for each Mass.
- [ ] Ensure greeters are assigned to every entrance, including less frequently used doors.
- [ ] Finalize usher assignments and review seating, Communion procession, and crowd-flow plans.
- [ ] Prepare welcome materials, parish information, connection cards, and Christmas Mass-times cards.

- [ ] Prepare a welcome table, if appropriate, in a visible and accessible location.
- [ ] Prepare a process for receiving prayer intentions or requests for further contact.
- [ ] Prepare clear directions to restrooms, children's spaces, and other facilities.
- [ ] Confirm that worship aids, if used, include the responses of the people, music, and helpful instructions for visitors.
- [ ] Review instructions for the Sign of Peace and the Communion procession where appropriate.
- [ ] Ensure liturgical ministers, musicians, cantors, and choirs are prepared.
- [ ] Select familiar and welcoming Christmas music appropriate to the parish's liturgical celebration.
- [ ] Confirm any reception or gathering planned after Mass, including volunteers who will welcome and sit with guests.
- [ ] Ensure guests who do not stay after Mass can leave comfortably without feeling pressured to remain.
- [ ] Conduct a final walkthrough of the campus and church.
- [ ] Brief all volunteers on the overall mission: help every person experience the love of Christ.

CHRISTMAS

Phase 5: Christmas Celebration — Welcome Every Person

Greeters

- Staff every entrance being used for Christmas Masses.
- Welcome people with a smile, a warm greeting, and a helpful attitude.
- Be attentive to visitors without being overbearing or insisting on lengthy conversations.
- Offer directions and assistance when needed.
- Thank people for coming as they leave, when appropriate.

Ushers

- Help people find seating and make room for late arrivals.
- Encourage parishioners to move toward the center of pews when appropriate.
- Direct visitors to restrooms, children's spaces, accessible seating, and other facilities.
- Assist with the Communion procession and crowd flow.
- Follow parish procedures for counting Mass attendance, if applicable.
- Remain attentive to safety, accessibility, and the needs of families and older adults.

Welcome Table Volunteers

- Set up a clearly marked, accessible welcome table if the parish is using one.
- Make parish information and welcome materials available.
- Provide information about next steps, such as parish activities, newcomer gatherings, Alpha, or other appropriate opportunities.
- Make connection cards available for people who wish to provide contact information.
- Make prayer-intention cards available or provide a way to request prayer.
- Receive contact information and prayer requests respectfully; do not pressure visitors to share personal details.
- Ensure a clear follow-up process for people who request contact.

Worship Experience

- Ensure worship aids, if used, are readily available.
- Provide clear and accessible guidance for participating in the Mass.
- Ensure liturgical ministers are prepared and know their responsibilities.
- Ensure sound, lighting, seating, and other practical arrangements are ready.
- Include a warm welcome to visitors at an appropriate point in the celebration.
- Invite people to connect with the parish after Mass without making them feel obligated.
- Ensure all liturgical practices remain faithful to the Church's liturgical norms and the parish's established practice.

Hospitality Beyond Mass

- Offer a reception or coffee gathering after Mass if planned and feasible.
- Prepare parishioners to sit with guests and engage in friendly conversation.
- Make it easy for people to participate without feeling obligated to stay.
- Provide a clear and natural next step for anyone interested in learning more about the parish or reconnecting with the Church.
- Ensure volunteers are available to answer questions and help visitors find their way.
- Thank guests for celebrating Christmas with the parish.

AFTER CHRISTMAS TOGETHER

Phase 6: Week After Christmas — Follow Up and Continue the Relationship

Personal Follow-Up

- Thank volunteers and parishioners who contributed to Christmas Together.
- Follow up personally with guests, returning Catholics, and newcomers when they have provided contact information and permission to be contacted.
- Respond to prayer requests according to the parish's established process.
- Offer appropriate next steps, such as a newcomer gathering, parish event, Alpha, or an opportunity to speak with a parish team member.

- Encourage parishioners to continue relationships with the people they invited.
- Share stories of welcome and connection while respecting people's privacy.

Gather Feedback and Improve

- Review attendance counts, if collected.
- Gather feedback from hospitality volunteers and parish staff.
- Review visitor feedback that was voluntarily provided.
- Identify what worked well and what could be improved.
- Review parking, signage, seating, communications, and volunteer coverage.
- Identify any follow-up requests that still need attention.
- Document recommendations for the next seasonal campaign.

Build a Lasting Culture of Hospitality

- Continue welcoming people warmly at every Sunday Mass.
- Maintain a welcome table or other newcomer connection process where feasible.
- Include reminders about hospitality in parish bulletins, homilies, and other communications.
- Reinforce the principle that everyone is responsible for helping others feel welcome.
- Begin planning how to carry lessons from Christmas Together into the Easter Together season.

The goal is not simply to welcome people at Christmas. It is to help every person encounter Jesus Christ, experience genuine Christian hospitality, and discover a place in the life of the parish.