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Membership and Next Steps

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Check every name, pronoun and detail before you use this.

Start here

This kit is about one thing: how a person who walked in as a guest comes to belong. It is a path. Each step has a clear next step after it, and someone there to help a person take it. Work through it in this order:

1. **Read Resource 1** and settle why belonging matters in your church.
2. **Lay out the path** from first visit to membership using Resource 2. It includes what to teach in each step of the class.
3. **Write down what you ask of members** using Resource 3.
4. **Plan the follow-up** using Resource 4, before your first class runs.

Four resources:

1. Why Belonging Matters
2. The Path From Guest to Member
3. What We Ask of Members
4. After the Class

Why Belonging Matters

Connection is the culture

"We make no apologies for being specifically focused on reaching those far from God. We desire to bring the broken home at all costs. We also believe that your connection determines your direction, therefore we are serious about connecting others to our community."

"Connection isn't our cause, it's not what we do. Connection is our culture because it's who we are."

"Connection is not our culture simply because we value friendships, it's because we value heaven."

Passages behind this: Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, John 15:7-17, Romans 12:9-16.

Invitation, not announcement

"Our biggest opportunity isn't organizational. Our biggest opportunity is relational."

"Most people don't take their next step because of an announcement. They take their next step because of an invitation."

- "Come sit with me."
- "Come join our crew."
- "Come serve with us."
- "Come grab coffee."

"Not a church full of attendees. A church full of people who are known."

Passage: Luke 15:1-7.

What the class is for

"Growth Track is how you go from spectator to participant"

That one line is the test for everything in this kit. A membership class is not there to hand out information. It is there to move a person from watching to taking part.

Make it yours

Finish this sentence in your own words: "A person belongs here when they..." If your leaders would each finish it differently, start there before you build the class.

The Path From Guest to Member

The whole path on one page

Here is the path we walk people down:

1. **First visit.** The guest gets a personal text and an invitation to Growth Track.
2. **Growth Track.** Our newcomer class, in four steps: 101, 201, 301 and 401.
3. **A team.** They shadow a team on a Sunday, then start serving.
4. **A Crew.** Our small groups are called Crews.
5. **Membership.** Baptized, in a Crew, on a team, giving, and signed on to the covenant (Resource 3).

Put yours on one page. A guest should be able to see where they are and what comes next.

- Decide ahead of time what the one next step is after a first visit. One, not three.
- Decide ahead of time who sends the personal text and by when.
- Decide ahead of time how often the class runs, so the invitation always has a date attached.
- Name each step in plain words. If a guest needs it explained, rename it.

The first conversation: Connect Four

The path starts with a conversation, not a form. "Go from shallow to the deep waters quickly."

1. **What's your name?** "Listen and remember people's names."
2. **Where do you live?** "Find out where people live, work, and play, and go to them."
3. **What's your story?** "Really listen. Lean in to their past, their present situation, and their future dreams."
4. **How can I pray for you?** "Discover their needs and then meet them. Commit to pray for them. Reach out to them and check on them. Let them know that you are here to carry their load."

"Relationships flourish when you create margin to listen."

Serving before the class

A person can serve on some teams before they finish Growth Track. Leading a team waits until they have finished it.

- Decide ahead of time which teams are easy entry. Pick roles where a new person serves beside someone, not alone.

- Anyone who will work with children or students goes through your child safety process first, class or no class.
- Tell people plainly that leading comes after Growth Track, so nobody is surprised later.

Belonging often comes before the signature. Let people taste it.

What to teach in each step

By the end of all four steps, a person should be able to answer four questions:

1. What does this church believe?
2. Why does this church exist, and what does it care about?
3. What is being asked of me?
4. What do I do next, and who will help me do it?

Here is one way to spread the teaching across the four steps. Leave out anything that does not help answer one of those questions.

101: What we believe

- Teach your statement of faith in plain words. Give the passages by reference and open a few of them together.
- Make the gospel clear. Do not assume everyone in the room has responded to Jesus.
- Decide ahead of time how a person can respond, and who talks with them when they do.

Teach these plainly, because people will ask:

- We practice believer's baptism. A person is baptized after they have given their life to Jesus.
- Baptism is required for church membership.
- Baptism is not required for communion.
- Communion is for believers only.

201: Who we are

Tell your church's story, your mission and your values. Use your own. Here is our mission, as a picture of how short it can be:

"Meet people where they are and point them to Jesus"

Our values each fit in a phrase: Jesus Is Our Message. Connection Is Our Culture. Generosity Is Our Privilege. Worship Is Our Weapon. Servant Leadership Is Our Calling. Prayer Is Our Priority. Honor Is Our Commitment. Excellence Is Our Pursuit.

Give each value one or two sentences. If it takes a paragraph, it is not clear yet.

301: Where you fit

"Crews are the heart of our community, where relationships are formed and faith is lived out together. We believe in doing life in circles, not rows, building supportive groups that encourage spiritual growth, accountability, and genuine connections."

"If serving is beneath you, leadership is beyond you."

- Show the teams a person can serve on, and what each one actually does on a Sunday.
- Show how to join a Crew, and when the next ones start.
- Walk through what you ask of members (Resource 3), including giving. Say it plainly so nobody is surprised later.

401: Find your gifts and your team

This step has a set run of show. Ours runs about an hour.

Before the class: team huddle. Pray together and hand out the handouts. Some months we send the team a short recorded training ahead of time instead.

Introduction (15 minutes). The pastors open and go straight into explaining the spiritual gifts test. Food is served.

Spiritual gifts test (20 minutes). Everyone fills it out, then you debrief it together.

Testimonies (20 minutes). A table host sits one-on-one with each guest and hears their story.

Next steps (5 minutes). Hand out the post-class survey. Explain exactly what happens next and who will contact them. Pray. Point everyone toward Team Rally.

If you use a gifts test, use one you have the right to use.

Roles to fill each month

- **Facilitators:** the pastor and spouse.
- **Service lead.**
- **Table hosts.**
- **Food.**
- **Childcare.**

Food and childcare both remove a reason to stay home.

A blank agenda to copy

Class: Growth Track 401

Date: _____

Location: _____

Team

- Facilitators: _____
- Service lead: _____
- Table hosts: _____
- Food: _____
- Childcare: _____

Before the class: team huddle

- Pray together.
- Hand out handouts. Or send a short recorded training ahead: yes / no
- Arrive by: _____

Run of show

Time	Part	Length	Who leads	Notes
_____	Introduction and gifts test explained (food served)	15 min	_____	_____
_____	Spiritual gifts test and debrief	20 min	_____	_____
_____	Testimonies, one-on-one at tables	20 min	Table hosts	_____
_____	Next steps: survey, what happens next, prayer	5 min	_____	_____

After the class

- Graduate list sent to team leads by: _____
- Next team gathering: _____

Running the class

Decide ahead of time:

- When each step meets. Pick a time a newcomer is already in the building if you can.
- Who teaches each part. The lead pastor does not have to teach all of it, but people should meet him.
- How a person signs up, and who reminds them the day before.

- What every person leaves with: a handout, a name, and a date.

What We Ask of Members

Baptism comes first

Baptism is required for membership. If someone in the class has not been baptized as a believer, that is their next step, and membership follows it.

Communion is a separate question. Baptism is not required for communion. Communion is for believers only.

What we ask of every member

Beyond baptism, we ask every member to do three things:

- **Be in a Crew.** "Best you is found in a crew."
- **Serve on a team.** "From the parking lot to the pulpit, everyone serves. Every role is different but they are all important."
- **Give.** "We don't give out of obligation, but as an opportunity to invest in the Kingdom." "We don't give to a church, we give through a church."

That is the whole list. Short enough to remember, clear enough to say yes to.

When you write your own list:

- Say whether each one is a requirement or an expectation. People can tell when you blur them.
- If you cannot tell whether someone is doing it, do not make it a requirement.
- Say what you ask about giving in the class, out loud, so nobody is surprised later.

Our covenant

Members at our church sign a covenant. It is a short promise a person makes to God and to the church family when they become a member. It turns "I attend here" into "I belong here," and it puts what we ask in writing so everyone hears the same thing.

Ours is adapted from the membership covenant Saddleback Church has shared with pastors for years. Many churches use it. Use it, or let it shape your own.

1. I will protect the unity of our church

- By acting in love toward other members.
- By refusing to gossip.

- By following the leaders.

Romans 14:19; Romans 15:5; 1 Peter 1:22; Ephesians 4:29

2. I will share the responsibility of our church

- By praying for its growth.
- By inviting the unchurched to attend.
- By warmly welcoming those who visit.

1 Thessalonians 1:1-2; Luke 14:23; Romans 15:7

3. I will serve the ministry of our church

- By discovering my gifts and talents.
- By being equipped to serve by my pastors.
- By developing a servant's heart.

1 Peter 4:10; Ephesians 4:11-12; Philippians 2:3-7

4. I will support the testimony of our church

- By attending church and a Crew faithfully.
- By living a godly life.
- By giving regularly.

Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:25; Philippians 1:27; 1 Corinthians 16:2

Read the covenant out loud in the class before anyone signs it. If a line needs explaining, explain it, or rewrite it for your church.

What members can expect from you

A commitment runs both ways. Write down what the church promises its members beside what you ask of them. For example: to teach the Bible, to pray for them, to care for them in a crisis, and to tell them the truth about the church's money and decisions.

Saying yes

Decide ahead of time:

- How a person becomes a member: signing the covenant, a conversation with a pastor, or both.
- Who confirms baptism, and how.
- Whether new members are welcomed in front of the church.

- What members can do that others cannot, such as lead, teach or vote. If the answer is nothing, ask what membership means in your church.

When someone is not ready

- Thank them for coming. Do not pressure them.
- Name the one step in front of them. Often it is baptism, or simply more time.
- Keep them in a Crew and on an easy entry team.
- Decide who checks back in with them, and when.

After the Class

The class is not the finish line

"It would be knowing that every person who walked through our doors got connected.

They found a friend.

They found a crew.

They found a team.

They found a place to belong.

Nobody got overlooked."

Use those four as your check on every person who finishes the class: a friend, a Crew, a team, a place to belong. If you cannot tick them off for someone by name, they are not connected yet.

The goal

Everyone who finishes Growth Track is invited quickly by a team lead. Not by an office. By the person they will serve beside.

The follow-up process

By the end of the day on the Wednesday after the class:

1. **Check the list.** Each team lead checks the graduate list for people who chose their team.
2. **Message first.** Reach out through your church's messaging app.
3. **No reply in 24 hours? Call.**
4. **Still nothing? Email,** and leave your number.
5. **Mark the list** when you have made contact.

Keep that list private. It has real people's details on it.

The conversation

- **Introduce yourself.** "Hi, my name is ____, from [church name]. I'm the ____ team lead."
- **Celebrate them.** They finished Growth Track. That matters.
- **Tell them what's next.** Make sure they know about Shadow Sunday, where they shadow a team this Sunday, and about the next Team Night.
- **Start simple, then go deeper.** Ask a few of these:

- Can you make it to Shadow Sunday?
- Do you have any experience in this area?
- How often would you like to serve?
- Which part of the team interests you most?
- Where are you from? What's your story?
- Have you served in a church before?
- **Always ask if they have questions.**
- **Be friendly and excited.** It's contagious.
- **Hand them off if it fits.** If they would fit better on another team, connect them to that team lead yourself.
- **Offer to meet in person.**

A first message you can copy

Hi [name], this is [your name] from [church name]. I lead the [team] team. Congratulations on finishing Growth Track. I saw you picked our team and I'm so glad. This Sunday is Shadow Sunday, and I'd love for you to come serve alongside us and see how it works. Can you make it? Any questions, just ask. I'm happy to grab coffee too.

Change it so it sounds like you.

The heart behind it

This is a big moment for the person you are calling. They just said yes to taking part.

- Even if they decide not to serve, show real interest in them.
- Be vulnerable. Tell them what you are still learning.
- Remember this is discipleship, not recruiting.
- Be grateful, expectant and ready.

See them, bring them, celebrate them

- **See them.** "Nobody gets overlooked."
- **Bring them.** "Everyone deserves a place to belong."
- **Celebrate them.** "Honor builds healthy teams."

"People stay where they feel valued. People stay where they feel appreciated. People stay where they feel celebrated."

Say a new team member's name in front of their team. It costs nothing.

Who owns the path

Give the whole path to one person, so a guest is never handed from one department to another. Here is the role as I wrote it for our church. It can be staff or a volunteer.

Purpose. To develop leaders, systems and processes that ensure individuals are engaged in their next steps, from first-time visitors to team leaders, while embodying [church name]'s culture, vision and values.

What they bring.

- Ability to build relationships to assess, advise and direct individuals toward their next steps.
- Proficient in recruiting, equipping and developing leaders to lead successful teams and groups.
- Strong leadership and team management skills.
- Commitment to the church's culture, systems and vision.

What they do.

- Oversee and resource the leaders of the set-up, connect, Growth Track, baptism and security teams.
- Oversee the vision for the class and ensure the process is well-resourced, communicated and executed with excellence.
- Ensure participants have clear next steps and effective follow-up plans developed by team leads.
- Refine onboarding for new members, ensuring clarity and alignment with the church's culture.
- Personally connect with new people on Sundays and reach out to them during the week.
- Identify, recruit and develop new leaders every year.
- Regularly evaluate and refine systems and processes to align with the church's mission and vision.
- Pray for and spiritually support the team members and leaders.

Decide how many hours a week the role gets.

Check the path once a season

- How many guests came, how many took the class, and how many are now in a Crew and on a team?
- Where do people drop off? Fix that step first.
- Ask three people who finished the class recently what was confusing.
- Ask one person who did not finish it why.