First Impressions Manual
When people step onto the campus of Granger Community Church, they come in contact with numerous volunteer teams that are all here to make sure their experience is great. We want our guests to say, “Wow! I’m impressed” within the first 10 minutes of their visit. We want people to know that they are important to us by providing a warm and safe environment for them to take their next step toward Christ.

All of these volunteer teams make up the Granger Community Church’s ministry of First Impressions.

This manual gives you examples of documents we use here on our campus. Feel free to adapt them any way you’d like to fit to your particular church ministry team’s needs.
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Team Summary

FIRST IMPRESSIONS MINISTRY IS ABOUT...

“Creating an atmosphere of warmth and welcome; providing a “safe” environment for people to take their next step toward Christ.”

Ministry Information:

- **Traffic Teams** - These teams, made up of both men and women, serve in snow, rain and sunshine to assist guests in finding an open parking space and orchestrate the large number of cars coming in and out of the campus parking lots.

- **Shuttle Teams** - These drivers are trained in safety and guest services, but do not require a CDL. Drivers provide a warm and comfortable transport from the far ends of campus, communicating high value and welcome to our guests.

- **Usher/Greeter Teams** - These teams serve in a six-week rotation, usually for the entire weekend. They welcome our guests with greetings from the curb to the front doors to the entry of the auditorium. Once inside the auditorium, ushers will offer assistance in finding a seat. These teams distribute bulletins and collect the offerings each service as well. Over 30 people are needed per service.

- **Guest Services** - These teams provide information and facilitate registrations for all classes, next steps, and connection events.

- **Atrium Hosts** - Guided building tours, escorting families to children’s room and overall hospitality that goes beyond the initial greeting and welcome.

- **Weekend Building Services** - These individuals keep the glass sparkling, the sinks clean and the restroom tissue stocked. They keep the facility in newness condition, providing a clean environment and removing distractions for our guests.

- **Bulletin Assembly** - This behind-the-scenes team comes in on Saturday afternoons to assemble thousands of bulletins for our weekend services.

- **Security Team** - These individuals are trained professionals who work in our community with various police departments, but who serve on the weekends.
Roles & Responsibilities

- **Medical Team** - Team currently being developed to ensure that a medical professional is available during services and special events.

- **Point Person** - These persons serve individually each weekend as “communication liaison”
Beyond Hello... role responsibilities

Usher/Greeter

Team vision:

Create an atmosphere of warmth and personal welcome, providing a “safe” environment for people to take their next toward Christ

Please Prioritize...

In order to adequately prepare for ministry with your team, the following are necessary, if not critical:

- Report to skylight area by…
  - 4:00 pm, Saturdays
  - 7:45 am, Sundays
- …for community huddle (prayer, focus, team plan)
- Prior to huddle…
  - Park at far east end of parking lot
  - Retrieve name tag from work room
- Honor your scheduled serving time
- If unable to serve, find your own replacement and notify head usher with details

Curb Greeter Responsibilities:

- Smile!
- Greet as many people as possible
- Shaking hands is not required – read body language
- Approach every vehicle pulling up to the curb, open car doors, offer assistance
- Remain at curb until 15 minutes after service begins; longer if traffic flow dictates
- Take your fun with you - rain or shine, cold or hot!
- When raining, use church-provided umbrellas to escort people to the entry overhang
- Offer wheelchair assistance as necessary; see your leadership team for assistance
- If someone needs further help of any kind, offer personal assistance if possible, or take them to another team member who can help them
- Return to the curb immediately following the service to assist with car doors and loading of cars
Main Door Greeters:

- Smile!
- Greet every person coming through the doors
- Shaking hands is not required – read body language
- If someone needs further help of any kind, offer personal assistance if possible, or take them to another team member who can help them
- Minimum of 2 greeters at the main doors - as many as 4. Do not wedge two doors together. If no one is there to hold the door with you, ask your head usher for help.
- Remain at door 15 minutes after service begins; longer if traffic flow dictates
- Do not prop the interior main doors open except immediately following a very crowded service. Close the doors when the main flow of people has ceased.
- Return to your door position immediately following the service to hold the door for those leaving

Auditorium Door Greeters:

- Smile!
- Distribute bulletins or handouts
- Open doors proportionate to the number of greeters at the doors
- Ask guests to finish beverages and food in the Atrium prior to entering the auditorium. Bottled water is the only exception
- If someone needs further help of any kind, offer personal assistance if possible, or take them to another team member who can help them
- Offer assistance to parents with young children; direct them to age-appropriate ministry

Auditorium Ushers:

- Position 3 ushers at the rear of all aisles 10-5 minutes prior to service time. Serve as greeters at that time
- Approximately 5 minutes prior to service time move down the aisle to assist people with seating, even if the room is not crowded
- Encourage people to sit toward the front, even though there may be adequate seating elsewhere. They’ll be able to see full facial expression up close! Remember, the front row is always open!
- Remain at your aisle through the beginning of the service; people will come late!
- If you section is full, move to the rear of the aisle to direct people to other sections
- Remain at the rear of your aisle during service element black-outs to prevent people from seating themselves and disrupting those already seated
- Watch the flow of traffic and encourage people to move to sections with open seating
- West window aisle usher: gently encourage late-comers to move to sections other than that window section (section 1). We would like to reserve some seats in section 1 for the very late-comers so distractions are minimized
- Two additional ushers should be positioned at the west doors to keep people moving along the back wall as they enter to prevent a back-up at that door. If people are entering during the black-out period, ask them to wait along the wall; we’ll seat them when the lights come up. Greeters who were distributing bulletins at the main auditorium doors can fill this role
Usher/Greeter...continued

Space ushers along the back of the seating sections to keep people moving, usually to the far north sections. It is important to have ushers spaced evenly all the way around the back of the room so guests will know how to get to the ushers that will find open seats.

Seat ushers at the west door and main doors throughout service to assist those exiting or entering.

West door ushers should seat all late-comers; be certain they receive a bulletin.

Those seated at the main center doors should direct people wanting to exit during the service, to use the west doors (allow your good logic to be exercised)

Collecting the offering: we currently need 12 people. Be certain to stay in your aisle until all bags have been retrieved. Head usher should escort the offering to the safe with 3 others to separate the cash, checks and inserts. All 4 people should walk together with the security escort, once the hallway has been cleared.

Maintain order in services, minimizing distractions and interruptions

Head Usher

Role Responsibilities:

Arrive 45 minutes prior to service time on Thursday; 60 minutes prior to Saturday and Sunday service times

60 minutes prior
- Check in with point person
- Pick up radios from point person
- Assure bulletins and offering bags are in auditorium prior to Thursday evening, Saturday evening and Sunday first service
- Meet with service producer; review order of service, check for any changes
- Ensure all lights are on; doors unlocked
- Take radios and attendance sheets to each classroom

45 minutes prior
- Meet with co-leader and all usher/greeter, hospitality teams for prayer, focus, encouragement, updates and team review

Service time

Close main auditorium doors at end of prelude
- Monitor traffic flow with traffic team to anticipate auditorium needs
- Oversee team in seating guests, bulletin distribution, offering collection...coach, praise and train
- Monitor service for…
  - Distracting children
  - Potential volatile situations / persons
- Have 2 individuals complete an attendance count in the auditorium for accuracy
- Count offering bags prior to leaving auditorium
- Radio to point person - ensure hall is “clear”, security officer ready; take offering to safe with 3 team members
Guest Services

How we do what we do
Beyond Hello...  
role responsibilities

Guest Services

Team vision:

Create an atmosphere of warmth and personal welcome, 
providing a “safe” environment for people to take their next toward Christ

Please Prioritize...

In order to adequately prepare for ministry with your team, the following are necessary, if not critical:

Report to skylight area by…
  3:00 pm, Saturdays
  7:45 am, Sundays
  ...for community huddle (prayer, focus, team plan)
Prior to huddle…
  Park at far east end of parking lot
  Retrieve name tag from work room
  Honor your scheduled serving time
If unable to serve, find your own replacement and notify head usher with details

Kiosk Set Up responsibilities:

Hook up and plug in both cash registers and credit card machine to receive payments for registrations. 
Verify that there is $200 in each cash register.
Set up all brochures in an attractive, eye catchy yet not eye obtrusive manner. Please inform Shelley Arredondo with any needed brochures or answers to questions you are unable to answer.
Read up on and familiarize yourself with all information in the bulletin, and on the E-newsletter so that you may be able to answer guests’ questions and provide the best possible guest service.
Re-align the phone system to ring at your information guest to answer any phone inquiries.
Be ready for guests by 1/2 hour before services start on each day.
Smile! Look approachable, friendly, and willing to help at all times.
Guest Services

Weekend responsibilities:

Smile! Look alert, friendly, and willing to assist.
Be knowledgeable and informed to provide the best information and service to any and all guests.
Only two people should be behind the kiosk to take payments through the cash registers.
All other guest service volunteers should come out from behind the kiosk to intermingle with the guests
without the kiosk as a barrier. When a long line begins to form in front of the registers, ask people in
line how you may be able to answer a question for them or expedite their waiting time to provide
more efficient guest service.
When the auditorium is full, help usher/greeters with the set up of the Atrium (chairs, noise level,
worship atmosphere, taking the offering, etc.)
Be able to free yourself up to assist newcomers to the downstairs area for their children, provide a tour
of the facility, etc.
At the end of Saturday evening services and Sunday afternoon services:
  * Follow register procedures for balancing registers, running reports and depositing funds.
Scheduling

Most of our First Impressions teams serve on a six week rotation. Meaning: they serve either all weekend, or as much of the weekend that they can, once every six weeks.

Now it took us a while to get to this point. Before we had people assigned to a particular service.( an 8:45am team, a 10:15 team, etc.) That worked OK, but there was no community or fun for the volunteers with this method. Volunteers were just coming in, serving for their time slot, leaving, and maybe not even conversing with or seeing any of the other people on their team. We were more occupied with the task being done than the people serving/ performing the task.

It took us almost about a year to transition to this new six week rotation, but here’s what’s working now. Volunteers come in 1 complete hour BEFORE their scheduled serving time. They meet together, and led by the weekend’s team leader, they have devotional time, prayer time for each other and the people coming into our facility that weekend, they go over emergency procedures and role responsibilities. This gives them a sense of community and they are able to build some relationships. That way the next time they serve, they can follow up on each other, each other’s prayer requests, celebrate or cry with each other, etc.

Although this schedule is working well for the majority of our teams, not all teams serve with this schedule.

Our Medical team volunteers serve about once a month, and they serve during the service they attend only.
Training of Volunteers

All volunteers serving on a First Impressions team are required to have attended our Core Class 101, and are encouraged to attend 201 and 301. Our Point team members and our Atrium Hosts team members are required to have attended our Core Class 301 before attending a “Beyond Hello” Orientation.

The “Beyond Hello” Orientation (attached) is held once every 6 weeks or so on a Sunday morning while services are going on. The class goes for about 2-1/2 hours. The first hour or so is spent learning the ministry’s mission, why we do what we do, why we don’t do this and that, and general information shared among all First impressions teams. Then, during the time frame when people are leaving one service and new people are coming in for the next service, the volunteers are actually out in the common area, our Atrium, observing the existing volunteers. The are actually looking for “Wow” moments that they just learned about, and for opportunities for improvement. This observation period is for about 30 minutes. Then we all resume to our conference room and more information is learned specific to whatever ministry team they are interested in serving on. Team Leaders for each ministry area come at the end, introduce themselves and serving schedules are passed out to the new volunteers.

The remainder of the training happens on the job, just in time, while serving.
**First Impressions**

First impressions are lasting impressions. We’ve left restaurants, hotels, and stores because of our initial impression.

- It smelled badly.
- It was dirty.
- Beyond dirty, it was unsanitary.
- It just seemed unsafe.
- The first person we met didn’t care.
- There was no one to meet. No one.
- We waited. And waited. And waited no longer.

Some of these places we’ve endured for the first visit, but as we left we knew: we’d never be back!

**First Impressions are _______ (automatic)**

- You see a movie trailer.
- You hear a song.
- You meet someone for the first time.
- You hear a kid in a public place.
- You experience a social gathering.
- You hear a sermon.
- You see someone’s house.

What are you thinking? What sticks? What are your First impressions?

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**Our First Impression Matters...**
Again, first impressions are __*(lasting)_ impressions.

If the impression isn’t positive... we may not stay. We may not return.

And people have left churches for the same reason—that initial impression. It wasn’t positive. And it was lasting.

It was the last time they were there.

None of us wants this.

**Who are the people with these “First Impressions”?**

People like us. Just like us.

So what do we call them?

- Guests?
- God-chasers?
- Curious?
- Visitors?
- Customers?

_______________________________________

Who is our “customer”...our guest, our visitor?

*Using your “profile” outline, develop a composite of the person coming to GCC for the first time...consider:*

- **Yourself**
- **What does this person do Monday - Friday?**
- **Where does he/she shop?**
- **Who are their friends?**
How old are they?

Do they attend school? Where?

What about family? Children? Schools?

What goals does this person have?

What about needs?

Our GCC Mission: Helping people _______(take their next step toward Christ)__________________________
____...together.

Creating an atmosphere of ___(warmth)____ and ___(personal acceptance)__; providing a “__(safe)____” environment for people to see, know and follow Christ.”

Create a place void of ___(distractions)___________________________

so the new person becomes receptive and stays ___(open)______________.

Be ___(authentic)______ ...real people who are ___(friendly)

and ___(personable)______.

The “First 10 Minutes” Principle...

We want him / her to say ___”WOW”___ ___ ___!!

I’m ___(impressed)_______________________________!!
The ___(goal)___________ we’re after is for our ‘customer’

to faithfully follow Jesus.

The stakes in this ‘market’ are high!

68% of customers who go elsewhere do so
because of their perception of ___(indifference)___________.

_____ (96%) ____________ of customers tell others - not

the organization - about a bad experience.

4% of customers tell someone in the

___(organization)___________________________.

Guest Complaints should be valued...

As opportunities to improve and resolve.
So we can interrupt the chain event—dissatisfied guests will tell 15
others.
Because over 85% of dissatisfied guests can be Wow-ed!

How to Value Complaints...

When you see a potential situation—fix it before it’s a problem
When you see someone annoyed, and they don’t say why—ask.
Give them your name and a way to contact you—own it.
Offer or request options
Repeat your willingness to help and bring resolve— “please call
me”
Make suggestions for permanent change, so the issue doesn’t arise
again.
Assess, review in team, learn and get up and go again!
H__(Hello)_____________________
personal acknowledgement
eye contact
to shake or not to shake
give some space…
bust up your party!

E__(engage)____________________
pick up on need or interest
they approach you
drop what you’re doing / hand off…
ye’re all that matters

L__(listen)_____________________
not about my agenda
ACTIVELY
don’t interrupt
don’t assume

L__(listen some more)___________
body language - eyes
ask clarifying questions
rephrase the question
get names of family…

O__(offer assistance)____________
respond to request
…with patience
personably
take them, don’t point them
pay attention to kids
make them your responsibility
let them know where you’ll be after service
ask - “anything else”?

Blue Rules vs. Red Rules
Red Rules are rules that cannot be broken.

Blue Rules exist to maintain a smooth operation and overall pleasant experience.

What are your red rules, that really should be blue rules?

(ex: airport scene from “Meet the Parents”: movie clip)

Identify an experience your guests have with your greeting / usher / hospitality teams:

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Examples of how the Point Team person is in radio contact with other teams.
Emergency Response

USHER / GREETER TEAM

Emergency Response Plan: Weekly Review

In the event of an emergency Usher / Greeter team members will be stationed at each entry/exit of the auditorium to facilitate traffic, potential evacuation or lock-down initiatives. It is imperative this sheet and map (on reverse side) be reviewed weekly with each Usher / Greeter team.

Fire

False Alarm

- After the alarm has sounded, persons wishing to leave the opportunity should be deterred at all exits until the alarm has been cleared. Speak reassuringly to parents: “The safety of their children will be best served by awaiting more information from trained personnel.”
- Once the Point Person indicates that the alarm has been cleared, the Head Usher will pass a note (previously prepared and available at the Information Kiosk) to speaker on platform indicating that there is no emergency. Speaker should indicate to auditorium crowd that it was a false alarm and that everything is OK in the children’s ministry areas. In instances where there is a guest speaker, the staff or layperson who introduces the guest speaker should handle all emergency announcements.

Fire Emergency

- The Head Usher will pass the “Fire Alarm” card (previously prepared and available behind the stage and at the Information Kiosk) to speaker on platform.
- The Speaker will read a prepared statement, advising parents to not leave to get their children. “They are already in the process of leaving the building.” Further instruction will be given to parents about picking up their children. Evacuation instructions for the auditorium will then be initiated.
- All ushers (positioned by name, using the map on the reverse side) will assist the evacuation process by directing people to the exits as follows:
  - All individuals in wheelchairs will exit the room first through the main doors at the back of the auditorium. They will exit the building through the south side of the Atrium nearest the parking lot.
  - Persons seated in the two center sections will then leave the auditorium and the building through the same doors and exits.
  - Those seated in the far north section of the auditorium will exit through the north exterior exits.
  - Those seated on the west side of the room will exit through the west doors and exit the building to their immediate right, just outside the auditorium.
- Once the auditorium area has been vacated, the ushers will turn off the lights and close all the auditorium doors.
- After this process is completed, the Head Usher will radio the Point Person to confirm that the auditorium has been evacuated.

Tornado Watch

- The Head Usher will assign the ushers to sections of the auditorium and/or exits to the designated shelter areas, using the map on reverse side.
- The ushers should be prepared to direct people to the shelter areas if a Tornado Warning is issued.
**TORNADO WARNING**

If there is a Tornado Warning issued, the Point Person radios all volunteers to indicate the need to proceed with moving people to the designated shelter areas.

- In the event of a warning, the Head Usher will hand the “Tornado Warning” card (previously prepared and available behind the stage and at the Information Kiosk) to speaker on platform.

**EVACUATION**

- The ushers will assist with the evacuation by directing people to the exits then leading people to the unfinished area in the lower level.
- Once in the unfinished area, ushers should direct people away from the entrances to allow people to enter more quickly.
- After this process is completed, the Head Usher will radio the Point Person to confirm that the auditorium has been evacuated.

Usher Assignment Map follows
If you are interested in getting more information on any of our First Impressions volunteer teams or interested in setting up additional training either at your facility or at our facility, please contact Shelley Arredondo, Experience Specialist at Granger Community Church, 574-243-3500 or SArredondo@gccwired.com.
MORE

If you are interested in getting more information on any of our First Impressions volunteer teams or interested in setting up additional training either at your facility or at our facility, please contact Shelley Arredondo, Experience Specialist at Granger Community Church, 574.243.3506, x338 or sarredondo@gccwired.com.