

# Closing the Back Door

Guest Follow-Up, Assimilation, and Digital  
Pathways to Discipleship

## IBSA Training Series – Session 2 Workbook

***IBSA* | Leaders**

# How to Use This Workbook

Welcome to Session 2 of the Guest Services Training Series: **Closing the Back Door**. This 10-page workbook delivers high-impact strategies to help your team build a relational, sustainable follow-up system—so guests become part of your church family.

## Purpose

To help your team close the gaps that make guests feel unseen—and create pathways that lead to community, care, and Christ.

## Who It's For

- Greeters, follow-up teams, and connection leaders
- Guest services or first impressions volunteers
- Pastors, directors, and communication teams

## What's Inside

- Clear session summary and lesson content
- Coaching language and reflection prompts
- Customizable scripts and digital tips
- Fill-in worksheet and action plan

## How to Use It

- Team Huddles: Use 1 lesson per week with 15-min discussions
- Training Workshops: Complete in one focused session
- Solo Study or Coaching: Assign for onboarding or review

## Tone & Format

- Conversational, Scripture-rooted, and practical
- Designed for easy printing, sharing, and leading

# Session Summary

## Big Idea

Your church doesn't just need more guests—it needs better follow-up. The goal isn't attendance. It's transformation.

## Key Teaching Themes

- **Follow-up is discipleship**, not just admin
- **Assimilation is relational**, not programmatic
- **Digital presence matters**—your website is your new front door

## Core Scriptures

- Matthew 9:9 – Jesus' invitation to Matthew: "Follow me."
- Romans 15:7 – "Welcome one another as Christ welcomed you."
- Acts 2:42–47 – The early church and relational connection

## Common Challenges























- No clear next steps for guests
- Over-reliance on automation
- No assigned relational handoff

## Four-Stage Follow-Up Pathway

1. **Immediate (24 hours)** – Text or email saying "We saw you."
2. **Intentional (3–5 days)** – Note, call, or invite to connect.
3. **Pre-Weekend (Saturday night)** – Reminder text or check-in.
4. **Ongoing (2–3 weeks)** – Coffee, small group, serve invite.

## Final Thought

Every touchpoint is a chance to disciple. Every follow-up is a chance to say, "You matter here."

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# Lesson 1 – Follow-Up That Forms



## Why Follow-Up is More Than a Task

Follow-up isn't just administrative—it's spiritual. When someone visits your church, it's not enough to shake their hand and hope they return. Follow-up is how we say, "You are seen, and you matter." It's the beginning of discipleship, not just data collection.



## The Four-Stage Follow-Up Model (Expanded)

### 1. Immediate (0–24 hours):

- Text or email: "We're so glad you came. Let us know how we can serve you."
- Purpose: Signals attentiveness and warmth.

### 2. Intentional (3–5 days):

- Phone call, handwritten note, or invite to a welcome lunch
- Purpose: Moves from acknowledgment to relationship

### 3. Pre-Weekend (Saturday night):

- Text from a team member or pastor: "We're excited to see you tomorrow!"
- Purpose: Reminds and re-invites in a personal way

## 4. Ongoing (within 2–3 weeks):

- Coffee meetup, small group intro, or invite to serve
- Purpose: Offers a clear path into community



### Coaching Cue

Ask your team: “What’s one follow-up moment you remember that made you feel valued?”



### Practice Prompt

Choose a guest who visited recently. Role-play each of the four stages as a team. Assign roles. Use real language.



### Volunteer Voice

“It wasn’t the welcome gift that brought me back—it was the text from a real person asking how they could pray for me.”

# Lesson 2 – Assimilation that Sticks

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# From Attendance to Belonging

Assimilation isn't about collecting names—it's about helping people find spiritual family. Many guests leave not because they didn't enjoy the service, but because they didn't know what to do next.





# Three Pathways to Discipleship-Based Assimilation

## 1. Small Groups

- Community creates consistency.
- Follow-up text from a group leader: “So glad you joined us—coffee this week?”
- Highlight a group weekly that matches the current sermon theme.

## 2. Community Events

- Informal moments often open relational doors.
- Use light gatherings—game nights, service days—to ease guests into relationships.
- Connect events directly to sermons (e.g., preach on parenting, offer a Parent Lab).

## 3. Mentoring Relationships

- One-to-one care is often the most powerful next step.
- 4-Week Assimilation Model:
  - Week 1: Coffee or lunch
  - Week 2: Attend a group or event
  - Week 3: Share one Scripture or story
  - Week 4: Help them choose a next step



## Leader Insight

Don't just promote programs—prioritize people. Assimilation starts with **intentional invitation**, not just systems.



## Discussion Starter

Ask: “Who are 1–2 guests we’ve seen recently who may be ready for a personal invite?”

# Lesson 3 – The Digital Doorway

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# The Church's New Front Door

Your website, search results, and social media are often the first impression guests have of your church. In a digital-first culture, hospitality begins long before a guest walks into your building.



# Three Must-Haves for Digital Discipleship

## 1. Guest-Friendly Website

- Simple navigation (Plan Your Visit, I'm New, Kids Info)
- Real photos of your people—not stock images
- Clear, current service times and location

## 2. Digital Connection Tools

- Google Forms or Planning Center for guest cards
- QR codes linking to “Plan Your Visit” or “Prayer Requests”
- Auto-response emails: “We’re glad you reached out—here’s what’s next.”

## 3. Social Media That Connects

- Share stories, not just announcements
- Use volunteer spotlights, quotes from the sermon, and short video clips
- Stick to a simple 3-post weekly rhythm: Message Recap, Midweek Story, Weekend Invite



## Tool Tip

Free tools like Google Sites, Canva Websites, and Carrd make it easy to create welcoming online spaces with no coding required.



## Team Check-In Questions

Can guests easily find service times and kids info online?

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Is our guest form short and friendly?

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Does our social media feel human and encouraging—or just promotional?

# Common Mistakes & How to Fix Them



## Mistake #1: Over-Automation

**Problem:** Guests receive a digital touch—but no human interaction.

**Fix:** Use automation to support people, not replace them. Every auto-response should trigger a human follow-up.

## Mistake #2: No Relational Handoff

**Problem:** A guest fills out a card but no one follows up personally.

**Fix:** Assign every guest to a team member. Make it someone's name, not just "someone's job."



## Mistake #3: No Clear Next Step

**Problem:** Guests get friendly messages but no invite to anything.

**Fix:** Every message should lead somewhere—Welcome Lunch, coffee meetup, small group intro, or serve opportunity.



## Leadership Insight

"When you own the gaps, you grow the culture."



## Team Talk

What mistake do we most relate to right now—and what can we change this month?



# Your Follow-Up Blueprint Worksheet



# Design Your Follow-Up Flow

Use this page to map out how your church will follow up with guests in a way that is personal, intentional, and aligned with your discipleship values.

## 1. Immediate (0–24 Hours)

What message will you send?

Who sends it?

What platform (text, email, call)?

- Message: \_\_\_\_\_
- Person Responsible: \_\_\_\_\_
- Method: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Intentional (3–5 Days)

How will you make the guest feel known?

- Step: \_\_\_\_\_
- Team Member/Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Pre-Weekend Reminder

What kind of message will go out before Sunday?

- Message/Format: \_\_\_\_\_
- Sender: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. Ongoing (2–3 Weeks)

How will you guide them to community?

- Next Step Options (circle all that apply):
  - Small Group
  - Welcome Lunch
  - Coffee with Leader
  - Serve Opportunity
- Contact Follow-Up Assigned To: \_\_\_\_\_



## Notes or Adjustments:

Volunteer Scripts & Templates

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# Text & Email Templates

## **Welcome Text (Day 1):**

"Hi [First Name]! Thanks for visiting [Church Name] today. We loved having you with us. Let us know if you have any questions!"

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## **Follow-Up Email (Day 3):**

Subject: Great to Have You at [Church Name]!

Hi [First Name],

It was such a joy to see you this past Sunday. We'd love to get to know you more—if you have questions or want to connect, just reply to this email. We're here for you!

Blessings,[Your Name], Guest Services Team

## **Pre-Weekend Reminder Text (Saturday Night):**

"Hey [Name], looking forward to seeing you tomorrow at [Service Time]! We saved a spot for you!"

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## **Phone Call Script**

"Hi [Name], this is [Your Name] from [Church Name]. I just wanted to say how great it was to have you visit. How was your experience? Is there anything we can do to help you feel more at home here?"

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## **Invite to a Next Step**

"Hi [Name], we're hosting a Welcome Lunch this Sunday after church—low-key and family-friendly. I'd love for you to join us. Can I save you a spot?"

# Action Plan & Notes Page

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# Your Follow-Up Challenge

Choose one guest from the past month. Walk through all four stages of follow-up:

1. **Send the immediate message** (within 24 hours)
2. **Make the intentional contact** (note, call, or invite within 3–5 days)
3. **Pre-weekend reminder** (short, warm Saturday message)
4. **Ongoing connection** (invite to coffee, group, or class within 2–3 weeks)

Write their name here: \_\_\_\_\_

Who will follow up? \_\_\_\_\_

Timeline for each step:

- Step 1: \_\_\_\_\_
- Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_
- Step 3: \_\_\_\_\_
- Step 4: \_\_\_\_\_



## Team Notes

Use this space during huddles or coaching to jot down ideas, observations, or names.



## Weekly Review Questions

- What's one win from this week's follow-up?
- Who slipped through the cracks?
- What system or tool needs improvement?



# Final Word

Following up isn't just kindness—it's Kingdom. When we see people, serve people, and invite people into community, we open doors for life-change.

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You're not just following up.  
You're following Jesus into the  
lives of those He's already  
pursuing.