



# Maximizing Church Membership Assessment Pack



CONGREGATION & VISITORS



# The Growing Church: Maximizing Church Membership

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How to use "Practical Ministry Skills" by BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS.

At BuildingChurchLeaders.com, we recognize that there is no "one size fits all" approach to church leadership training. Every church—and every team—is unique, with its own set of strengths and challenges that stand between where you are and where you want to be. That is why we have created Training Tracks—to help each church get from where you are today to where you can be tomorrow.

This resource, "Welcoming Visitors," is part of *The Growing Church* Training Track—Level One. When you have completed this training, move on through the other downloads in level one, and then on to levels two and three, which also incorporate multiple types of training content to dig deeper into the specific opportunities and challenges that deal with *The Growing Church*.

**1. Select a learning tool.** This download includes nine assessments on the theme of maximizing church membership.

**2. Select a handout.**

**3. Photocopy the handout.** Photocopy as many copies as you need—you do not need to ask for permission to photocopy any material from Building Church Leaders (as long as you are using the material in a church or educational setting and are not charging for it).

**4. Prepare for the discussion.** We recommend you read the Scripture passages and identify key discussion questions. How will you apply the principles to specific decisions your church is making?

**5. Lead the discussion.** Each handout can be read within 5 minutes. After you have allowed time for reading, begin the discussion by asking one of the provided questions. Be ready to move the discussion to specific issues your church is facing.

Each Building Church Leaders handout can be discussed in 15 or 20 minutes. Your board, committee, or team will still have plenty of time to discuss its agenda.

Need more material, or something on a specific topic? See our website at [www.BuildingChurchLeaders.com](http://www.BuildingChurchLeaders.com).

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# A Fellowship to Fall in Love With

*Membership can thrive at a church that holds the right commitments.*

Acts 2:42–47

*In his book Stop Dating the Church, Joshua Harris urges people to commit themselves to a church that exhibits ten characteristics. Rate your church on them—the more faithfully you display these characteristics, the healthier your membership can be.*

	This characterizes us		This does not characterize us.		
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>1. Ours is a church where God’s Word is faithfully taught.</b> This is a church whose teaching is driven by a confidence in the authority of the Bible and where preachers base their entire sermon on the Bible.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2. Ours is a church where sound doctrine matters.</b> This is a church that values biblical truth, knows what it believes, and is guided by these beliefs in its convictions.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>3. Ours is a church in which the gospel is cherished and clearly proclaimed.</b> This is a church that understands the gospel as more than just “getting saved.” Instead, it sees the gospel as the defining reality to live by every day.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>4. Ours is a church committed to reaching non-Christians with the gospel.</b> This is a church that avoids being selfish and ingrown because it makes a priority of reaching out with the gospel.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>5. Ours is a church whose leaders are characterized by humility and integrity.</b> This is a church in which leaders view themselves first as servants. They are not immune to sin, and they build safeguards around themselves financially, morally, and in every other category to keep from compromise.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>6. Ours is a church where people strive to live by God’s word.</b> This is a church that seeks to build a culture and community of both hearing and obeying. It seeks to make disciples by helping members mature to godly living in every area of life.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>7. Ours is a church where a person can find and cultivate godly relationships.</b> This is a church where people find encouragement, accountability, and care. It should have structures in place that promote godly relationships.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>8. Ours is a church where members are challenged to serve.</b> This is a church that equips and challenges its members to serve and minister.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>9. Ours is a church that is willing to kick a person out.</b> This is a church that will lovingly hold a Christian to her commitments—a church that will love that person enough to put her out of fellowship for the good of her soul.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>10. Ours is a church that someone can join with enthusiasm and faith in God.</b> This is a church that is not perfect, but it accepts people and asks them to join in the work of the church.	1	2	3	4	5

—JOSHUA HARRIS; adapted from *Why Church Matters*, © 2011 by Joshua Harris. Used by permission of Multnomah Publishers Inc.

## Discuss

1. What are the ways that our church promotes godly relationships?
2. Why would a person want to join a church that is willing to kick someone out?
3. Make a list of some of the strengths of your church that you would like potential members to know about when they come for a visit.

# Teaching Authentic Church Membership

*It's time to raise the bar and ask for a serious commitment from your members.*

Ephesians 4:3–6

Ken Sande of Peacemaker Ministries believes the church should be less like a cruise ship and more like a battleship. Rather than emphasizing a casual atmosphere and fun activities, churches need to raise the bar, to focus on a serious mission, and ensure that every person aboard serves a function. Recapturing membership is a vital first step.

*How well do you teach about membership? After each statement, rank your teaching as poor, good, fair, or excellent.*

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
➤ We teach the importance of making a public commitment to a specific church.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ We teach the benefits of membership for mutual accountability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ We emphasize the importance of membership for growing Christians.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ We teach the interdependence of all members of the body of Christ.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ We teach church membership using the biblical language of family.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ We inform members of our church's discipline policies and seek informed consent to give our church leaders the authority to publicly confront a member caught in sin. (For more information on informed consent, see the Further Resources section.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ In our new members class, we ensure our members are believers and understand the gospel, our church's theology, our polity, our vision, how we address conflict, and our discipline process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ We teach our members the church's expectations for giving, respecting leadership, and serving in the church.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ We support the seriousness of membership by periodically focusing on it—perhaps on a new members' Sunday.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

—KEN SANDE; © 2006 Christianity Today/BuildingChurchLeaders.com

## Discuss

1. How would our church be different if we ranked “excellent” in each category?
2. What are some ways that church leaders, other than pastors, help “raise the bar” of membership?
3. What would it signify if we dedicated one Sunday to the importance of membership? What could we highlight on a day like this?

**MAXIMIZING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

# Why Do People Leave?

*Integrate newcomers into the family so that they grow as faithful practitioners of God's message of hope and love.*

## Luke 15

I was involved in a fascinating study of people who stopped attending church. One curious thing we found was that of all the people who drop out of church, 82 percent leave in the first year of their membership. The first 12 months are a very critical time in the life of both the new member and the congregation.

Upon further study, however, we learned that it is not a random pattern in which people leave during the first year. There are two definite “spikes” when an inordinate number of new members stop attending, one at six months and another at one year.

We interviewed 36 people who had stopped attending their church after six months; then another 36 who had stopped attending after a year. “What happened?” we wanted to know. “Could you tell us your story?”

New members, it turns out, are asking questions. Often they are not even aware of their concerns at that moment. But upon later analysis, the issues became readily apparent.

Consider how your church is answering the below questions during new members’ first six months and year, respectively. Even better, ask actual new members how they feel the church has helped them address these crucial questions:

	Yes	Not Sure Yet	No
<b>Questions New Members Ask in the First Six Months</b>			
“Can I make friends in this church?” <i>New members who stay in church make an average of seven new friends in the first year, those who drop out make less than two.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
“Is there a place I can fit in?” <i>Common age, marital status, family status, special needs, interests, concerns all help newcomers feel comfortable in their new surroundings.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
“Does this church really want me?” <i>After the warm words of welcome and reception into membership, do you actively invite your new members to participate in the roles and ministries of your church?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Questions New Members Ask in the Second Six Months</b>			
“Are my new friends as good as my old ones?” <i>New believers feel increasingly uncomfortable with their old behavior, old habits, and old friends. They're assessing the value and depth of their new relationships.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
“Does the group meet my needs?” <i>They're asking whether the benefit of involvement is worth the cost of time, inconvenience, social discomfort in this new setting.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
“Is my contribution important?” <i>The question now is not one of involvement, but of significance. Do they feel like they're doing kingdom work...or just busy work?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

So, how can churches—your church—do a better job of integrating newcomers? My answer is this: "Do everything you can to ensure that your new members give a resounding 'YES!' to these six questions. If they do, you will see them actively involved in your church for years to come.

—CHARLES ARN; © 2015 Christianity Today/BuildingChurchLeaders.com.

### Discuss

1. Have we noticed any similar patterns in which people leave?
2. How could we help new members answer “yes” to each of these questions?
3. Would it be beneficial to directly address these questions with new members? Why or why not?

# Are You Asking Enough of Your Members?

Challenge your members to love God and each other as the Bible commands.

Philippians 3:13–14

Church membership is a sign of Christian discipleship and the means by which it grows. Ask a lot of your members; they are called, after all, to love God with all their heart, soul, and mind, and to love their neighbors as themselves. Rate yourself in each category as proficient, mediocre, or needing work.

	proficient	mediocre	needs work
<b>Time in Attendance</b>			
Members are required to attend worship.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We teach the importance of Christian fellowship and gathering as a community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We teach members the importance of preparing their hearts for worship before they arrive for a service.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Energy in Ministry</b>			
We require members to serve in some capacity of ministry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We help members discern their calling to serve.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We teach members the importance of prioritizing their schedules so that time is made for ministry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Attention in Prayer</b>			
Our members are expected to pray faithfully for the church and its ministries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We teach our members spiritual disciplines that will help build them up in prayer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Members are expected to attend church prayer meetings and to pray when they meet in boards and committees.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Money in Support</b>			
We require members to support the church with their money—just as we teach them to serve the church with their talents and abilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We teach our members to give regularly and generously.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Unity in Diversity</b>			
We teach our members the responsibility of Christians to build up the whole church.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Members are taught that differences in views, understandings, and perspectives are part of community life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Witness</b>			
Members are expected to share the gospel as a corporate body as well as individually.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Accountability</b>			
We teach the importance of Christians participating in groups or friendships that hold them to their Christian commitments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Periodically, we allow members to renew or cancel their membership—thereby highlighting the importance of membership.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

—JAN G. LINN; adapted from *Rocking the Church Membership Boat* (Christian Board of Publication, 2006), © 2006 by the Christian Board of Publication. Reproduced with permission of Christian Board of Publication.

## Discuss

1. How can high standards for membership help someone fulfill their calling to love God and their neighbor?
2. In which area do we need the most work? How can we begin strengthening that area?
3. What are some practical ways leaders can be seen modeling these commitments?

# What Every Christian Should Know

Christians need to know about their faith, and the church gets to teach them.

1 Timothy 4:15–16

Jo Lewis and Gordon Palmer lament the findings of a Gallup poll that concluded “many professing believers remain woefully ignorant about the basic facts of Christianity.” They set out categories—biblical and otherwise—in which Christians should have a basic knowledge. For each, rate how you believe the congregation of your church would score on a scale of 1 (our members are knowledgeable in this area) to 5 (our members have virtually no knowledge in the area).

	Knowledge in this area			No Knowledge in this area	
	1	2	3	4	5
➤ Members have a basic knowledge of common biblical sayings. (Example: they could complete the phrase “Am I my brother’s _____?”)	1	2	3	4	5
➤ Members have a basic knowledge of the books of the Bible. (Example: they could list the books that constitute the Gospels.)	1	2	3	4	5
➤ Members have a basic knowledge of biblical characters. (Example: they could name the first king of Israel.)	1	2	3	4	5
➤ Members have a basic knowledge of famous Christians. (Example: they could tell you what John Wesley is known for.)	1	2	3	4	5
➤ Members are familiar with Christian terms and phrases. (Example: they could tell you what the phrase “I believe in God the Father Almighty” is the beginning of.)	1	2	3	4	5
➤ Members have a basic knowledge of biblical geography. (Example: they could find Bethlehem on a map of ancient Israel.)	1	2	3	4	5
➤ Members are familiar with biblical proverbs and sayings. (Example: they could complete the saying “A good name is better than _____”)	1	2	3	4	5
➤ Members could recite the Ten Commandments.	1	2	3	4	5
➤ Members could list the Beatitudes.	1	2	3	4	5
➤ Members could list Paul’s “fruit of the Spirit.”	1	2	3	4	5
➤ Members could list the seven last words of Christ.	1	2	3	4	5

—JO LEWIS AND GORDON PALMER; adapted from *What Every Christian Should Know* (Victor Books, 1989), © 1989 Victor Books.. Used with permission.

## Discuss

1. Why should the church take on the responsibility of ensuring that all members have at least a rudimentary understanding of the basics of Christianity?
2. How can we model the importance of this type of knowledge to current and potential members of our church?
3. What are some ways we can incorporate this type of education into our new-members’ class?



# A New Members' Boot Camp

*Key components of a class that will educate and incorporate members into your church.*

Ephesians 2:19–22

Our church, New Faith Baptist, was like many others. New members failed to connect to the body and were lost through the back door. Others who professed faith in Christ weren't well grounded before entering positions of leadership. We had grown from 37 to more than 1,000, but many members had not grown much spiritually since they joined the church. We had set the bar too low.

As a college student, I saw people push a peanut across the sidewalk with their noses in order to join a sorority or fraternity, but we had almost no requirements for membership in the church. People joined easily, and they left easily.

The church wasn't ready to require a class as a prerequisite for membership, but we did launch a "boot camp"—an experience for new members. The course quickly became required for full participation in congregational life. We asked new members to wait until they completed the course before joining the choir, the ushers, or men's or women's ministry. The course grew to six months in length, and though it was stringent, 60 percent of those joining the church finished it. Those who did usually stayed, and were ready to serve.

*Below is a checklist for the requirements and curriculum of a new members' boot camp. Use it to evaluate your current class or a class you are planning. For each statement, check either "We do this," or "We do not do this."*

	We do this	We do not do this
Require class attendance for all new members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Focus on spiritual growth and discipleship.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divide aspiring members into classes (or groups) in which they will go through "boot camp."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set aside time for regular, weekly meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Select import topics for members to learn about (for example, New Faith Baptist selected the topics of Old Testament, New Testament, church polity, stewardship, the spiritual disciplines, and pastoral care).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appoint knowledgeable laypersons to teach the topics—either as individuals or in teams.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schedule opportunities for new members to make up courses they missed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Celebrate the addition of new members as a church with a special service, dinner, or reception.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

After New Faith Baptist adopted this program, they became known as the church with the tough new members' class. But people truly joined.

—FRANK A. THOMAS; © 2006 Christianity Today/BuildingChurchLeaders.com.

## Discuss

1. How is our current membership class similar to the class outlined above? How is it different?
2. What are the benefits of having laypersons teach in the new members' class?
3. What commitments would church leaders need to make in order to see a class like this be a success?

# Church Membership Matters—Legally

*If your church is ever involved in a dispute, your membership role is of vital importance.*

Romans 12:4–5

Members hold a great deal of power over the decision-making process in most churches. In any number of legal situations, your ability to distinguish who is actually a member is extremely important.

Answer each of the following questions with a “yes” or “no.” The greater the number of “yes” responses, the better condition your church is in from a legal perspective.

	Yes	No
➤ Does your charter, articles of incorporation, or bylaws clearly set forth how membership is determined and what membership rights and privileges are granted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Does your charter, articles of incorporation, or bylaws clearly set forth how membership is terminated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Do you maintain a current list of active voting members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Does your charter, articles of incorporation, or bylaws set forth a procedure for the discipline of church members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Is a member’s right to resign restricted once discipline has begun?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Does your charter, articles of incorporation, or bylaws contain a binding arbitration procedure for resolving membership disputes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Is the church incorporated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Key Points

- Members make many church decisions. Failure to clearly identify your voting members can create serious problems, especially when controversies arise. Your charter or bylaws should clearly specify not only how membership status is attained, but how it is terminated.
- Churches have a constitutionally protected right to discipline members, but that right ends when a member resigns. A church’s charter or bylaws can restrict a member’s right to resign once discipline has begun.
- Members are potentially liable for the acts of other members in the course of church work if the church is not incorporated under state law.
- Churches can apply biblical principles for resolving disputes. Such practice can minimize broken relationships, bring spiritual accountability, and save costs associated with going to court.

—JAMES COBBLE AND RICHARD HAMMAR; © 2006 Christianity Today/BuildingChurchLeaders.com.

## Discuss

1. What do our “no” responses reveal about membership at our church?
2. When was the last time we updated our church documents? How often should we update them?
3. Are our members aware of their responsibilities to the church? How can we better educate them?

# Here Today, Gone Tomorrow

Look out for the behaviors that precede a member's leaving the church.

Romans 15:1–2

When an active member begins to withdraw from your church, he or she will probably pull out in the following order:

- A drop in worship attendance
- Withdrawal from major committees and boards
- Pulling out of Sunday school
- Pulling their children out of Sunday school
- A letter of resignation
- Withdrawal of pledge or tithe

Here are some strategies for addressing members who exhibit these behaviors. Rate your church in each category on a scale of 1 (we do this well) to 5 (we do not do this well).

	Do this well			Do not do this well	
	1	2	3	4	5
➤ Church leaders make contact with members on a regular basis.					
➤ Leaders listen for “cries for help”—statements that express hardship or difficulty in a particular area.	1	2	3	4	5
➤ Leaders analyze behavior that might reveal cries for help.	1	2	3	4	5
➤ When pastors and leaders meet, they are given the opportunity to share the names of members who they are worried may become inactive.	1	2	3	4	5
➤ We have a team of people dedicated to reaching out to inactive members.	1	2	3	4	5
➤ Leaders are trained to pick up cries for help as they socialize with members on Sunday morning.	1	2	3	4	5
➤ Leaders who reach out to inactive members are equipped to deal with the hurt and anger that prompted the member to become inactive.	1	2	3	4	5

—JOHN SAVAGE; © 2006 Christianity Today/BuildingChurchLeaders.com.

## Discuss

1. How do we currently find out if a member is becoming inactive? What are some ways we can find out earlier?
2. What are the current methods we use to reach out to inactive members?
3. List three important things to find out from a member who is becoming inactive. List three things that it is important to communicate to that member.

# The Causes of Inactivity

Know what to look for in your members' lives and reach out to them in their pain.

Matthew 18:12–14

When someone begins taking their membership less seriously, it's often because they've experienced an anxiety-provoking event—feelings of hurt or fear that cause them to pull back. These events can occur between a person and the church, between two members, or within a family. Below is a list of the four basic types of anxiety. For each type, brainstorm the form that anxiety could take between a member and the church, another member, or within family—see below for an example in each category.

**Reality anxiety.** This anxiety is based on some real, specific event. Normally the event is a snub or a lack of church care when a member most needed it.

With the church: *(example: the pastor used the member as a negative example in a sermon.)*

---

With another member: \_\_\_\_\_

Within a family: \_\_\_\_\_

**Moral anxiety.** This type is more difficult because it isn't as obvious. Moral anxiety arises when people experience behaviors they believe are wrong or sinful.

With the church: *(example: A member's sin makes her feel unworthy to go to church.)*

---

With another member: \_\_\_\_\_

Within a family: \_\_\_\_\_

**Neurotic anxiety.** Neurotic anxiety is pain caused by the imagination. Someone may claim, "I don't go to church because the pastor doesn't like me." The feeling might be based on reality, but the chances are it's neurotic—only in the person's head.

With the church: *(example: a member believes the church administrator is dishonest.)*

---

With another member: \_\_\_\_\_

Within a family: \_\_\_\_\_

**Existential anxiety.** Existential anxiety is that feeling brought about by the thought that some day you may not exist, or that even if you do, your life may be meaningless. We hear the refrains, "The church has lost its meaning for me," and "The sermons don't mean anything anymore, Pastor." These are example of existential anxiety taking form.

With the church: *(example: a member believes the church isn't relevant to young people.)*

---

With another member: \_\_\_\_\_

Within a family: \_\_\_\_\_

—JOHN SAVAGE; © 2006 Christianity Today/BuildingChurchLeaders.com.

## Discuss

1. Describe a time when events in other spheres of your life affected your desire to go to church?
2. Why is it especially important for leaders to recognize and minister in situations of anxiety such as those listed above?
3. How can church leaders respond to members in each of these situations?

## Further Resources

Books, websites, and other material to build the strength of your church's membership.

📖 [BuildingChurchLeaders.com](http://BuildingChurchLeaders.com): Leadership training resources from Christianity Today.

### **The Growing Church Training Track**

*Level One:* Usher/Greeter  
Welcoming Visitors  
Connecting Newcomers  
Turning Visitors into Attenders  
Maximizing Church Membership

*Level Two:* Is Our Church Discipling?  
Building a Culture of Discipleship  
Turning Attenders into Committed Members  
Cultivating Active Church Members  
Discipling Emerging Adults

*Level Three:* Mentor  
Mentoring  
Mentoring  
Training New Leaders  
Mentoring New Leaders

📖 [LeadershipJournal.net](http://LeadershipJournal.net): This website offers practical advice and articles for church leaders.

📖 [PeacemakerChurch.net](http://PeacemakerChurch.net). The website of Peacemaker Ministries includes resources for building strong relationships between churches and their members:

- “Relational Commitments” (example: Word or PDF)
- “Informed Consent”

**Fusion: Turning First-Time Guests into Fully-Engaged Members of Your Church** by *Nelson Searcy and Jennifer Henson*. This innovative, practical guide is full of how-to information, testimonials from the recently assimilated and from participating church leaders, examples of the assimilation materials used, and check points to make sure newcomers are fully integrated into the life of your church community. (Gospel Light, 2008; ISBN 978-0830745319)

**Rethinking the Church** by *James Emery White*. This takes every aspect of how a church functions and forces the reader to check his or her assumptions. Check out the chapters on “Rethinking Evangelism” and “Rethinking Discipleship.” (Baker Books, 2003; ISBN 9780801091650)

**Membership Matters: Insights from Effective Churches on New Member Classes and Assimilation** by *Charles E. Lawless Jr.* This book provides a case-study approach to an effective assimilation strategy and new members class. (Zondervan, 2005; ISBN 0310262860)

**Why Church Matters: Finding Your Place in the Family of God** by *Joshua Harris*. A book that encourages Christians to find a healthy church and commit themselves to its authority. (Multnomah, 2011; ISBN 9781601423849)