

A Visitor Can Feel Like a Fish out of Water

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Imagine yourself as a visitor in your congregation. How would you answer these questions?

1. Assuming I had no understanding of the Christian faith, how would I know what to do and what is going on here?
2. If I'm from a different Christian tradition, would I know what to do and what is going on here?
3. Was I invited to sit with someone?
4. Did I know where to sit? Would I know if I had young children? If I were in a wheelchair? If I were hard of hearing?
5. How would I know when to stand or sit?
6. Would it be clear what I am permitted to do as a guest? (e.g., receive Holy Communion).

7. How would I find out what the communion practices are here? Where do I receive the elements? How will I be given them? When and how do I return to my seat? Do I need to fill out a communion registration card? Are my children allowed to participate?

8. Would I feel more like a spectator or a participant?

10. When and how would I be greeted during the service?

11. Would I consider the atmosphere more a solemn assembly or a celebration?

12. What opportunity would I have to give my name and address?

13. How easy would it be to hear the words and the music?

14. Would the service make me feel part of the community or like an outsider?

15. How alive, vital, challenging, and applicable would the sermon be for my life?

16. What respect would be given to my need for privacy? What if I wanted to keep my anonymity or didn't want to be chummy?

THE ANXIOUS PARENT:

17. How evident and welcomed would my children be in the worship service? What would be done to encourage children to worship?

18. How would children be involved in the worship service?