

A FOUR-QUARTER WORKBOOK FOR CHURCH LEADERS

GUEST JOURNEY GAME PLAN

Create a clear roadmap that helps people connect, come back, and take their next step.

BY JOSH ROBERIE




Build *the* Church

BUILDTHE.CHURCH

A NOTE FROM JOSH

How to Use This Handbook

I have watched churches pour their best energy into Sunday and still lose people between a first visit and a real connection. The problem is usually not a lack of care. It is a lack of a clear game plan.

This handbook is designed to help you sit down with your team and draw up that plan. It is not a comprehensive manual for every detail of guest experience. It is a working playbook for deciding what should happen before a guest attends, when they attend, and after they attend - then assigning owners, timing, language, and next steps.

" A great service can inspire a guest. A clear pathway helps that guest belong.

JOSH ROBERIE

USE IT WITH YOUR TEAM

- Work one quarter at a time. Do not try to fix everything in one meeting.
- Write names beside every play. A system without an owner is only an idea.
- Test the journey as a guest, rehearse it as a team, then review the scoreboard monthly.
- Keep clarity and kindness together. Guests should feel guided, never managed.

CHURCH NAME

GAME PLAN OWNER

THE SCOREBOARD

The Four-Quarter Game Plan

Each quarter solves a different breakdown in the guest journey. Together they create one continuous path from curiosity to belonging.

Q1**WIN BEFORE SUNDAY**

Answer questions through the digital front door and prepare for every planned visit.

Q2**MAKE ARRIVAL EASY**

Create a clear street-to-seat experience through the physical front door.

Q3**CREATE CONNECTION**

Move from friendly greetings to real friendships through the cultural front door.

Q4**FINISH WITH FOLLOW-UP**

Turn every response into a timely, personal, trackable next step.

RECORD YOUR STARTING SCORE

Use a recent four-week average. A baseline turns vague concern into measurable progress.

FIRST-TIME GUESTS / WEEK

CONNECTION CARDS / WEEK

24-HOUR FOLLOW-UP %

GROWTH TRACK STARTS / MONTH

TEAM OR GROUP CONNECTIONS / MONTH

FIRST-TIME GUEST RETURN RATE

SCOUT THE FIELD

The Three Doors Every Guest Walks Through

01**THE DIGITAL DOOR**

Your website, social media, Google listing, livestream, ads, and Plan Your Visit process.

What will this church be like?

02**THE PHYSICAL DOOR**

Parking, signs, entrances, kids check-in, connection area, lobby, and auditorium.

Where do I go, and what happens next?

03**THE CULTURAL DOOR**

The warmth, language, relationships, and signals that tell people whether they can belong.

Do I like these people, and will they like me?

**COACH'S WHISTLE**

Do not audit departments. Audit the story a guest experiences across all three doors.

WORKSHEET

Run the Three-Door Audit

Invite someone who does not know your building or systems to complete this audit. Ask them to describe what they saw, felt, and still wondered.

DIGITAL DOOR - WHAT IS CLEAR? WHAT IS MISSING OR CONFUSING?

Website, social, Google, livestream, Plan Your Visit

PHYSICAL DOOR - WHERE DID THE JOURNEY SLOW DOWN?

Street, parking, entrance, kids, lobby, seat

CULTURAL DOOR - WHAT SIGNALS BELONGING OR EXCLUSION?

Language, warmth, anonymity, introductions, friendships

THE FIRST IMPROVEMENT WE WILL MAKE

OWNER AND DEADLINE



Q1

WIN BEFORE SUNDAY

Reduce anxiety, answer practical questions, and turn an unannounced guest into someone your team is ready to receive.



"Giving clarity is super kind."

BRAD HAMPTON

Q1 | BEFORE THEY ATTEND

Make the Digital Door Feel Like an Invitation

Most guests begin by trying to remove uncertainty. Your digital presence should show them a real Sunday, answer the questions they are actually asking, and give them one easy next step.

QUESTIONS YOUR GUEST IS ASKING

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Will anyone here look or live like me? | ☐ What should I wear? |
| ☐ Where do my children go, and will they be safe? | ☐ Will I be called out or embarrassed? |
| ☐ Where do I park and enter? | ☐ What will the service feel like? |

THE DIGITAL-DOOR CHECKLIST

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Real photos and video from a real Sunday | ☐ Current service times and exact location |
| ☐ Clear kids-ministry information | ☐ A short Sunday walkthrough or livestream |
| ☐ One obvious Plan Your Visit action | ☐ A simple statement about guest anonymity |

THE THREE UNANSWERED QUESTIONS ON OUR CURRENT WEBSITE

THE ONE CALL TO ACTION WE WANT EVERY PROSPECTIVE GUEST TO TAKE

OWNER / DUE DATE

Q1 | FROM UNANNOUNCED TO EXPECTED

Build a Plan Your Visit Play



A Plan Your Visit tool gives you a jump start on connection.

INCREASING GUEST ENGAGEMENT 301

Collect only what helps you serve the guest before arrival. Then use it. A form that disappears into a database is not a guest journey.

MOMENT	MESSAGE OR ACTION	OWNER	WHEN
Form submitted	Immediate confirmation with service time and address		Immediate
Personal welcome	Short video or text from a pastor or host		Same day
Prepare arrival	Alert parking, kids, and connection teams as needed		Before Sunday
Reminder	Where to park, enter, check in children, and meet the team		Day before
Guest arrives	Greet by name and guide to the next location		Sunday
No-show	Warm message with an easy invitation to try again		Next day

**COACH'S WHISTLE**

Automation delivers the message. A person delivers the care.

Q1 | WORKSHEET

Write the Pre-Arrival Communication Flow

WHAT WILL THE CONFIRMATION MESSAGE SAY?

Thank them, confirm details, reduce uncertainty

WHAT WILL THE PERSONAL VIDEO OR TEXT SAY?

Name, welcome, what to expect, where to meet

WHAT WILL THE SATURDAY REMINDER INCLUDE?

Parking, entrance, kids, service time, reply option

WHAT WILL THE NO-SHOW MESSAGE SAY?

Warm, guilt-free, easy to reschedule

WORKFLOW OWNER

HOW COMPLETION WILL BE TRACKED



Q2

MAKE ARRIVAL EASY

Create a clear, calm street-to-seat experience that helps guests know where to go without feeling singled out.



"Always lead, never point."

DUSTIN DOZIER

Q2 | WHEN THEY ATTEND

Audit the Journey From Street to Seat

Walk the entire route as if you have never visited before. At every stop, ask whether the next move is obvious and whether a real person is ready to help.

1

STREET

Can guests see the church and correct entrance in time?

2

PARKING

Are first-time spaces and traffic direction unmistakable?

3

ENTRANCE

Do banners and people confirm they chose the right door?

4

KIDS

Can parents understand safety, check-in, rooms, and pickup?

5

CONNECTION

Is the guest tent or basecamp obvious and inviting?

6

SEAT

Will someone guide them to the auditorium and help them settle?

**COACH'S WHISTLE**

People should not have to be brave to find the front door, check in a child, or ask for help.

Q2 | THE ARRIVAL ESSENTIALS

Make the First Visit Easy to Navigate

These are simple plays, but simple does not mean automatic. Decide what each one looks like at your church.

**CLEAR PARKING AND ENTRANCE BANNERS**

Guests can identify the correct turn, parking area, and entrance without guessing.

**A KIDS-MINISTRY INFORMATION SHEET**

Explain check-in, security, background checks, classrooms, allergies, and pickup.

**AN OBVIOUS GUEST CHECK-IN TENT**

Give new people a visible, safe place for questions, gifts, and next steps.

**A WELCOME TEAM READY TO GREET AND GUIDE**

Place prepared people at every transition, not gathered in a team huddle.

**A WAY TO SELF-IDENTIFY**

Welcome new people as a group and invite individual response without pointing anyone out.

**COACH'S WHISTLE**

Do not just be a friendly church. Be a church where people find friends.

Q2 | WORKSHEET

Draw Your Street-to-Seat Route

For each stop, name the sign, person, or handoff that makes the next move clear.

STOP	WHAT THE GUEST NEEDS	SIGN / PERSON / HANDOFF	OWNER
Street	See the turn and correct entrance		
Parking	Know where to park and walk		
Entrance	Know they are at the right door		
Kids	Trust the process and team		
Connection area	Find help without pressure		
Auditorium	Find a seat and understand the service		

THE BIGGEST FRICTION POINT WE WILL REMOVE FIRST

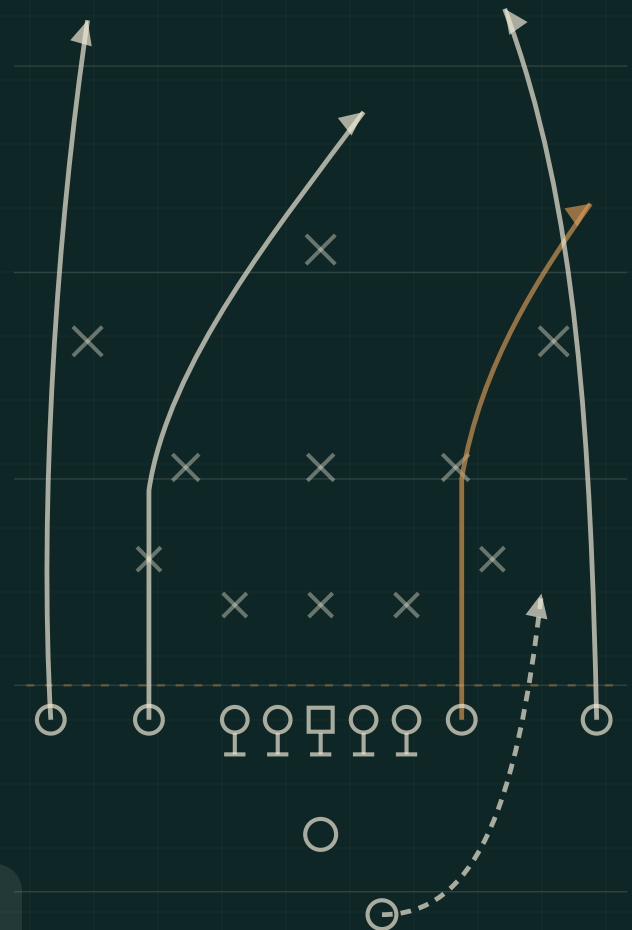
OWNER / DEADLINE



Q3

CREATE CONNECTION

Build relational bridges from a warm greeting to Growth Track, a team, a group, and a real sense of belonging.



"Nothing makes a person stick to a church more than finding a friend."

VICTOR EHIEMERE

Q3 | THE CULTURAL DOOR

Move From Friendly to Friends

A greeter can create a warm moment. A connector can create a relationship. Your goal is not to pressure a guest into a commitment. Your goal is to help them meet people and understand one clear next step.



They are God's guests.

MICHAEL MURPHY

A FRIENDLY CHURCH

- Smiles and says hello
- Answers a question
- Points toward a location
- Leaves connection to chance

A CHURCH WHERE PEOPLE FIND FRIENDS

- Learns a name and story
- Walks with the guest
- Makes a relevant introduction
- Invites one clear next step

THREE QUESTIONS A CONNECTOR CAN ASK

How long have you been attending? | What brought you today? | Who would be helpful for you to meet?



COACH'S WHISTLE

No pressure, all warmth. Walk with people to the degree they want you to.

Q3 | VIP TEAM PLAY

Build Your Connector Team

Recruit people who naturally build trust, then train them for intentionality. Their only assignment is to notice, connect, guide, and hand off.

WHO NATURALLY MAKES NEW PEOPLE FEEL COMFORTABLE?

List 5-10 potential connectors

HOW WILL CONNECTORS RECOGNIZE SOMEONE WHO MAY BE NEW?

Behavior and context, not assumptions

WHAT QUESTIONS AND LANGUAGE WILL THEY PRACTICE?

WHICH LEADERS, GROUP HOSTS, AND TEAM LEADS SHOULD THEY KNOW?

Build an introduction map

CONNECTOR TEAM LEADER

WEEKLY HUDDLE TIME

Q3 | ONE CLEAR PATH EVERY SUNDAY

Install a Predictable Monthly Rhythm

Random dates make guests wait and make announcements harder to remember. Give people a predictable next step every Sunday: Growth Track on Weeks 1-3 and Party With the Pastor on Week 4.

WEEK 1

MEET THE CHURCH

Story, vision, beliefs, leadership, and the pathway from attending to belonging.

WEEK 2

DISCOVER YOUR DESIGN

Personality, spiritual gifts, and how God has wired each person to contribute.

WEEK 3

FIND YOUR PLACE

Choose a Dream Team or small group, then stay for the connection party after class.

WEEK 4

PARTY WITH THE PASTOR

Help new people meet the pastors and friends, then invite them to Week 1 next Sunday.

Fifth Sunday decision: Decide in advance whether it becomes a bonus connection Sunday, baptism focus, serving celebration, or another defined play.

Q3 | THE BRIDGE TO BELONGING

Run a Three-Week Growth Track

Growth Track is not the whole discipleship process. It is the on-ramp that helps people understand the church, discover their design, and choose a place to build relationships and serve.



The only two things that shut the back door are community or mission.

NOAH HERRIN

WEEK	PRIMARY OUTCOME	CONTENT	CLEAR NEXT STEP
1	I understand this church.	Story, vision, beliefs, leaders, pathway	Return for Week 2
2	I understand my design.	Personality, spiritual gifts, team style	Return for Week 3
3	I know where I can connect.	Dream Teams, small groups, personal handoffs	Attend connection party

NON-NEGOTIABLES

- ☐ Same time and place each week
- ☐ No registration required
- ☐ Food when it crosses a meal
- ☐ Children are planned for
- ☐ Small attendance is celebrated
- ☐ Every participant receives a personal handoff



COACH'S WHISTLE

Week 2 is a natural place to use yourteam.church so people discover their design and a team where they can thrive.

Q3 | WORKSHEET

Write Your Growth Track Game Plan

CONSISTENT DAY, TIME, ROOM, FOOD, AND CHILDCARE PLAN

WEEK 1 - KEY OUTCOME, CONTENT, AND NEXT STEP

WEEK 2 - ASSESSMENT, DISCUSSION, AND NEXT STEP

WEEK 3 - TEAM/GROUP OPTIONS AND PERSONAL HANDOFFS

WEEK 3 CONNECTION PARTY - HOSTS, SETUP, AND INTRODUCTIONS

Q3 | WEEK 4

Party With the Pastor: The 5-5-5 Play

Keep it warm, brief, and easy to repeat. The win is not a long presentation. The win is a friend, a clear impression of the church, and an obvious invitation to Growth Track next week.

5 MINUTES

MAKE A FRIEND

Table hosts welcome by name, find common ground, and begin a real conversation.

5 MINUTES

MEET THE PASTORS

Share your story, heart for people, and what guests can expect from the church.

5 MINUTES

MAKE THE NEXT STEP

Invite every guest to Growth Track Week 1 next Sunday and help them act now.

FEEDER SYSTEM

Sunday invitation card -> same-day personal video or text -> Friday reminder -> stage reminder -> signs and smiling hosts -> named table host -> Growth Track card or QR code.

WHERE AND WHEN WILL THE PARTY HAPPEN?

WHO WILL HOST TABLES AND MAKE INTRODUCTIONS?

WHAT WILL THE PASTORS SAY IN FIVE MINUTES?



COACH'S WHISTLE

The party is a relational bridge, not another class.



Q4

FINISH WITH FOLLOW-UP

Respond quickly, route every request to the right person, and track the handoff until the guest knows what to do next.



"Connection is discipleship."

DUSTIN DOZIER

Q4 | EVERY CHECKBOX CALLS A PLAY

Design a Connection Card That Works



When people give their details, it is more than information. It is an expression of trust.

MICHAEL MURPHY

Simplicity wins. Ask only for information your team will act on. Every option should route to a specific owner, message, timing, and next step.

RECOMMENDED CONTACT FIELDS

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ First and last name | ☐ Email |
| ☐ Mobile phone | ☐ Preferred contact method |
| ☐ Adults / children in household | ☐ How they heard about the church |

ACTIONABLE RESPONSE OPTIONS

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ I am new | ☐ I decided to follow Jesus |
| ☐ I am interested in baptism | ☐ I have a prayer or care need |
| ☐ I want to attend Growth Track | ☐ I want to join a Dream Team |
| ☐ I want to find a small group | ☐ I would like to meet a pastor |



COACH'S WHISTLE

Do not add a checkbox until you can name who responds, when they respond, and what happens next.

Q4 | WORKSHEET

Draft Your Connection Card

LET US HELP YOU TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP

OPENING SENTENCE - WHY SHOULD SOMEONE COMPLETE THIS CARD?

CONTACT FIELDS WE WILL COLLECT

HOW WE WILL PROTECT AND USE THE INFORMATION

RESPONSE OPTION 1

RESPONSE OPTION 2

RESPONSE OPTION 3

RESPONSE OPTION 4

RESPONSE OPTION 5

RESPONSE OPTION 6

WHERE AND HOW WILL THE CARD BE COMPLETED OR RETURNED?

Q4 | ROUTE EVERY RESPONSE

Build the Checkbox Communication Flow

Use this starter matrix to define the first move. Customize the message and timing for your church, then document the full workflow in your church-management system.

CHECKED OPTION	FIRST RESPONSE	OWNER / TIMING	DESIRED NEXT STEP
New guest	Thank-you email plus personal text or call	Next Steps / within 24 hours	Return Sunday + Week 4 party
Salvation	Celebrate, send resource, offer a conversation	Pastor / same day or next day	Baptism + discipleship
Baptism	Send date, preparation, and contact person	Baptism lead / within 24 hours	Register and attend
Prayer or care	Acknowledge privately and route appropriately	Care pastor / same day	Personal care plan
Growth Track	Confirm week, room, childcare, and reminder	Growth Track / immediate	Attend next available week
Dream Team	Personal team-lead introduction	Team lead / 24-48 hours	Shadow or first serve
Small group	Match and introduce to a group leader	Groups lead / 24-48 hours	Attend a group
Meet a pastor	Offer Party With the Pastor or schedule a call	Pastoral care / within 48 hours	Conversation completed
Plan Your Visit no-show	Warm, guilt-free invitation to try again	Guest team / next day	Choose another Sunday

Q4 | MESSAGE BUILDER

Write Warm, Clear Follow-Up

A good follow-up sounds human, names the next step, and gives the person an easy way to respond. Use these frameworks as a starting point, not as a robotic script.

FIRST-TIME GUEST TEXT

Hi [Name], this is [Name] from [Church]. Thank you for joining us Sunday. How was your experience? I would love to answer any questions and help you find your next step.

PHONE CALL OUTLINE

Ask if it is a good time -> thank them -> ask about their experience -> listen for what they need -> offer one relevant next step -> confirm follow-up.

NO-SHOW TEXT

Hi [Name], we missed you Sunday and hope everything is okay. We would still love to welcome you. Is there another Sunday that would work better?

WRITE THE FIRST-TIME GUEST EMAIL SUBJECT AND OPENING

WRITE THE VOICEMAIL YOUR TEAM WILL LEAVE



COACH'S WHISTLE

Aim for high touch without hassle. Ask permission, listen well, and record the handoff.

Q4 | OWNERSHIP AND REVIEW

Turn the Play Into a Repeatable System



The how was documented and the why was documented.

ROBE PIERRE

A simple standard operating procedure helps volunteers know what winning looks like and helps leaders coach without ambiguity.

ONE-PAGE SOP OUTLINE

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Purpose and pastoral why | ☐ Trigger: what starts the workflow |
| ☐ Owner and backup owner | ☐ Steps in order |
| ☐ Timing standard | ☐ Approved language or template |
| ☐ Required handoff | ☐ Where completion is logged |
| ☐ Escalation for sensitive needs | ☐ Quarterly review date |

WEEKLY SCOREBOARD

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ First-time guests | ☐ Connection cards |
| ☐ Follow-up completed in 24 hours | ☐ First-time guest returns |
| ☐ Growth Track starts | ☐ Growth Track completions |
| ☐ Dream Team connections | ☐ Small-group connections |
| ☐ Party With the Pastor attendance | |

WHO REVIEWS THESE NUMBERS, WHEN, AND WITH WHOM?

PUT IT ALL ON THE BOARD

Your One-Page Guest Journey Game Plan

Write the one-sentence win, the key play, the owner, and the measure for each quarter. This is the page your team should revisit every month.

Q1 | WIN BEFORE SUNDAY

THE WIN

THE KEY PLAY

OWNER

MEASURE

Q2 | MAKE ARRIVAL EASY

THE WIN

THE KEY PLAY

OWNER

MEASURE

Q3 | CREATE CONNECTION

THE WIN

THE KEY PLAY

OWNER

MEASURE

Q4 | FINISH WITH FOLLOW-UP

THE WIN

THE KEY PLAY

OWNER

MEASURE

IMPLEMENTATION

Install the Game Plan in 30 Days

DAYS 1-7**SCOUT**

Walk the three doors, record baseline numbers, and identify the biggest breakdown.

☐ Complete**DAYS 8-14****DRAW THE PLAYS**

Build Plan Your Visit, street-to-seat handoffs, and the connection-card options.

☐ Complete**DAYS 15-21****ASSIGN AND REHEARSE**

Name owners, train connectors, rehearse scripts, and test each communication flow.

☐ Complete**DAYS 22-30****RUN AND REVIEW**

Launch the rhythm, follow up quickly, review the scoreboard, and adjust one thing.

☐ Complete

THE 30-DAY START DATE

THE REVIEW MEETING DATE

FILM STUDY

Sources and Further Listening

This handbook draws from Build the Church coaching materials and conversations with pastors and practitioners. Quotes have been lightly trimmed only where needed for layout.

- **Guest Journey Game Plan with Brad Hampton**
Build the Church Podcast companion interview transcript supplied for this project.
- **The Roadmap to 1,000 with Roberson Pierre**
buzzsprout.com/1976889/episodes/19700017
- **Maximize the Four Stages of Connection with Noah Herrin**
buzzsprout.com/1976889/episodes/19656446
- **Building Connection Systems That Grow Your Church with Dustin Dozier**
buzzsprout.com/1976889/episodes/19589722
- **The VIP Team with Michael Murphy**
buzzsprout.com/1976889/episodes/19512243
- **Party With the Pastor with Victor Ehiemere**
buzzsprout.com/1976889/episodes/19485847
- **Increasing Guest Engagement 101, 201, and 301**
Build the Church coaching curriculum by Josh Roberie. Available through Build the Church coaching.
- **Shepherding principle**
Proverbs 27:23: Know the condition of your flocks and give careful attention to your herds.

**COACH'S WHISTLE**

Keep learning, but do not wait for a perfect system. Draw the next clear play and run it well.



FINAL WHISTLE

CLARITY IS KINDNESS IN ACTION.

Your guest journey does not need to be complicated. It needs to be clear, personal, repeatable, and owned.

BUILD YOUR GAME PLAN

For a free coaching consultation, email Josh at josh@buildthe.church.

HELP PEOPLE FIND THEIR PLACE

Use YourTeam.Church to help every volunteer discover their design and find a team where they can thrive.



KEEP LEADING AND BELIEVING STRONG.