realm®

6 Easy Steps to Visitor Follow-Up

SOLUTION GUIDE

The ministry ideas, how to's, tips, and advice you need to develop an assimilation plan, PLUS... how our software, Realm®, can help you achieve these ministry goals.

Assimilation, follow-up, connecting, onboarding, plugging in...

Whatever your church calls it, *assimilation is the difference between a thriving, growing church community and a stale, stagnate congregation.*

When new or returning visitors fall through the cracks, your church loses its opportunity to make a connection that could lead to life-change and church growth.

People leave or don't return to a church for a variety of reasons. They might not like the music, the preaching, the building, or the "feel." There isn't a lot you can do to change the culture of your church overnight. Not every church is for everybody, and that's okay. But *if your visitors aren't sticking around because they weren't properly welcomed and assimilated, there is something you can, and should, do about it.*

Your church needs a plan to convert first-time guests into engaged participants. That plan should include several key components, giving you assurance that if anyone doesn't come back, it's not for lack of trying.
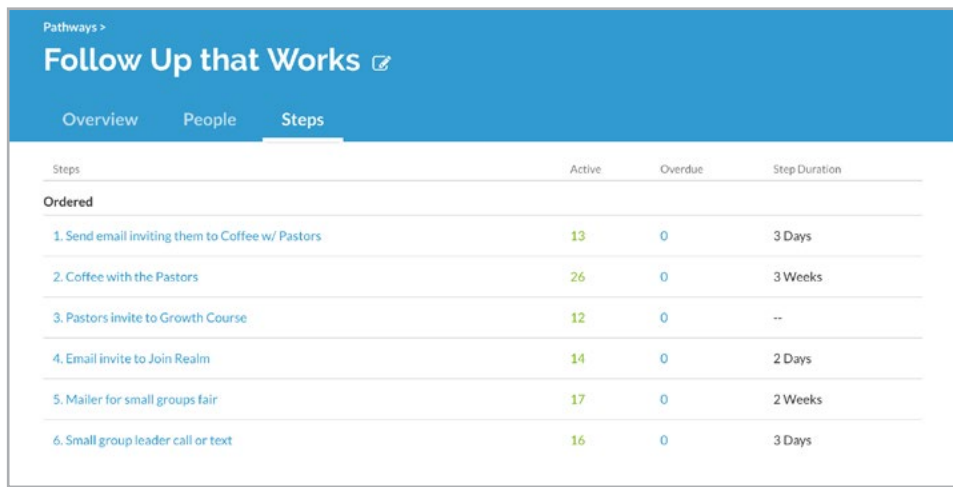
Assimilation Must-Haves

Make a Good First Impression

It's said that you only have seven minutes to make a good first impression. As unfair as that seems, the reality is that during those few precious moments, a new visitor will have decided if they are coming back. To ensure they do, make sure you:

- Have clear, easy-to-read directional signage so they don't feel lost
- Position greeters at intersections and doorways so all people are warmly greeted
- Refine your child check-in systems to avoid long lines and confusion
- Provide clear announcements that let visitors know what to expect
- Offer drinks and snacks.
- Greet warmly, genuinely, and graciously

Initial Follow-Up with Next Steps

Realm gives you a way to make your system simple but strategic. It allows you to track the progress your team makes in connecting with guests and assimilating them into your church.
Let's say you have a new visitor who, presumably fills out some sort of card or kiosk form that captures his or her contact information. Now is the time to reach out in the next few days with a call or email that:

- Is personal and doesn't feel like spam
- Addresses specific prayer requests, questions, or comments they might have
- Arrives within a few days of the first visit
- Offers a next step for the person to take.
  For example, stopping by the welcome center for a free gift on their second visit

A Personal Connection to Get Plugged In

Realm helps you track your team's connection with your guests.
Your team knows your plan because it's written down and easy to reference.

If a visitor returns and continues to come back, it's time to make a greater connection. People don't want to be smothered, but they do want to be noticed. This is when you should have your welcome, hospitality, or first-impressions team:

- Identify them by name before or after service
- Have a conversation about work, family, or where they're from
- Introduce them to another member they can connect with
- Find out how they might want to get involved
- Invite them to your next fellowship event

Automated Check-In

After about a month, it's time to use some online tools to automate follow-up. With Realm, you can identify visitors who return regularly, message them to keep them informed, and encourage them to serve or get involved in a group. If you send a message that checks in with them, it could:

- Entice people to return and get more involved
- Introduce the visitor to all that is happening at your church

Registration Events

Event Name	Date & Time ▲	Location	Campus	Registered/Capacity
Date Night!!	Aug 19, 2016 (5 pm - 10 pm)	Room 101	Churchwide	15/45
Worship Night ⬩ WORSHIP	Aug 19, 2016 (7 pm - 10 pm)	Room 201	Churchwide	0
Back to School Bash ⬩ FUN	Aug 20, 2016 (11:30 am - 3 pm)	The Sport's Field 1515 Summers Drive Florence, SC	Churchwide	6/600
Indoor Yard Sale ⬩ COMMUNITY SERVICE, MISSIONS	Aug 20, 2016 (6:30 am - 4 pm)	1515 Summers Drive Florence, SC	Churchwide	11
Small Groups Fair	Aug 21, 2016 (1 pm - 2:30 pm)	Room 201	Churchwide	9
At the Carwash! ⬩ MISSIONS	Sep 3, 2016 (7 am - 10 am)	811 S Irby St Florence, SC 29501	Churchwide	10
Small Group Fair ⬩ SMALL GROUPS	Sep 4, 2016 (1 pm - 2:30 pm)	Room 201	Churchwide	0

Realm provides everyone an overview of your ministry offerings.
It shows them what's going on and helps them find things that fit their family's needs.

- Explain some ways they can become more engaged
- Offer an opportunity to connect outside of a weekend worship service
- Highlight the other ministries and missions of the church

Call-Out to be All-In

Realm supports your leaders by providing them a framework for follow-up. Your leaders are busy, but Realm reminds them of the steps they should take to connect with your guests.

Now that you've noticed the visitor is attending more regularly, it might be time to encourage him or her a little more to go beyond Sunday and get more involved. This is an opportunity to harness the efforts of your existing leaders to start calling new people into greater service in the church. Here's how:

- Identify the best next step for the person: small group, serving, classes, etc.
- Have leaders with pastoral leanings call and offer opportunities to newer attendees
- Personally invite newer people to join a group or a service team
- Entertain a new family or couple for dinner out or at your home
- Schedule an activity - such as a hike, a movie, or bowling - with just a few people to make a more personal connection
- Follow up with leaders to make sure everyone is being reached

Realm helps your leadership team hold your lay leaders accountable. It provides talking points for leadership meetings by measuring everyone's progress. Use this data to make sure your leaders are working the plan and to ensure your plan works.

Your church might want to modify these suggestions to fit your context and resources. However you decide to do it, just make sure you lead people from their first visit to total involvement. Don't forget, make it personal!

Easy, right? Just a few simple things you need to do every week, for every guest who walks through your doors. Starting out, your zeal might get the job done but, week in and week out, people will be missed, tasks will be forgotten, and the back door of your church will once again be open for people to slip out because they never connected.

The Solution is an Easy-to-Manage System

To get the job done, you'll need a system in place that provides accountability and opportunities. Realm empowers people to minister by making the path from guest to member clear, holding leaders accountable, and keeping everyone on the same page. Plus, it has:

- Training for greeters and leaders
- Accountability for the leaders who will be following up with new visitors
- Automated responses with personal touches
- A defined discipleship path for every visitor who walks through your doors
- Clear next steps for everyone in your church

If you set a course for your people to follow, then walk it with them. You'll enjoy the fruit of seeing your people connect and your church flourish.

God is bringing people to your church. It's your job to make sure they stick around but it doesn't happen by accident. Determine your church's path for new visitors and set up a system that doesn't let anyone fall through the cracks.

Throughout this guide, you have seen several ways that Realm helps churches reach new people and manage the life and operations of a church. We're excited to share more about our revolutionary ministry tool, Realm.

Realm provides solutions that will make your ministry and life way easier. It is cutting-edge church management software that combines administration, accounting, and community into one system. It also connects your entire church and personalizes each person's involvement in your ministry.
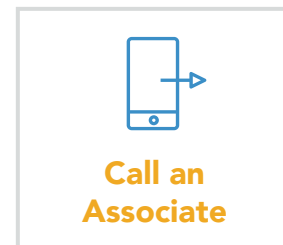
We'd encourage you to explore all that Realm makes possible by taking a demo, walking through a self-guided tour, or speaking with an associate today!

Take a Self-Guided Tour
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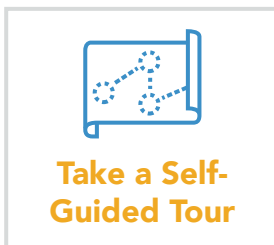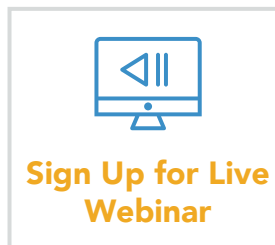
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