



# Celebration Follow-up

## MAKING THE INITIAL CONTACT

**Pray for each Inquirer** before making contact. Consider asking your church prayer team to adopt a name and commit to pray regularly for that person for a month after the Celebration (or longer!).

**Make a personal visit/contact** with each Inquirer to offer encouragement. Adding them to a church mail/e-mail list or sending them a “church information” packet by mail is perfectly fine, but should be accompanied by a personal connection. If at all possible, the Senior Pastor should make the first connection. If that is not possible, or if you receive too many names for the pastor to handle alone, certainly involve qualified laypeople or church staff. Immediate follow-up by several people is better than delayed follow-up by one.

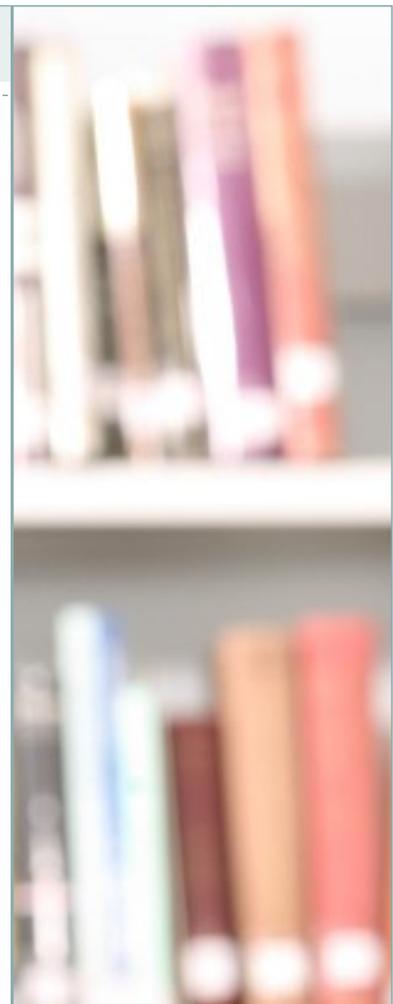
**Starting the conversation:** It’s often easiest to start with open ended statements like, “I understand you attended the Will Graham Celebration and went forward to talk with a Counselor. That’s great. What part of the program (or Will’s message) prompted you to do that?” This will help you gauge what they were responding to and where to take the conversation (their response might be, “He spoke about loneliness, and that’s how I’ve been feeling”). Then offer counsel/encouragement as needed.

**Invite them to church** the very next Sunday, but make it a personal invite. “We’d love to meet you at the coffee kiosk/visitor booth this Sunday (or someplace obvious to a newcomer).” Whoever meets them should offer to sit with them, especially if this person does not know anyone else at the church.

**Determine a personalized follow-up plan**, after connecting and understanding their story:

- Do you have a beginners Bible study you can invite them to?
- Is there a discipleship leader in your church that can mentor this person on a one-on-one basis? Remember that new believers need people more than they need programs.
- Do they need connected with the youth pastor if they are a teenager? Would a mature teen in your church consider befriending them when they visit (consider asking those that attended FM419). Teenagers need to feel included in a group.
- For children, ask to speak with the parents first if following up by phone. Invite the whole family to church and highlight all the great opportunities for their child through your children’s programming. In some cases, it may be more effective for the Children’s pastor to make this contact.

**Return your Pastor’s Follow-up Reports (PFRs)** to the Celebration Office, letting us know of your follow-up efforts.



### **REMEMBER**

As soon as you receive Inquirer names...

⇒ **Make your initial contact with 24-48 hours**

⇒ **Return your Pastor’s Follow-up Reports (PFRs) within one week**



## ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH THE INQUIRER?

Don't overlook Inquirers who are already attending your church, or that have indicated they rededicated their life to Christ at the Celebration. God prompted these people to come forward in a very public manner. Take time to find out why.

1. Do they need a Bible study or a mentoring relationship that can draw them deeper into their relationship with Christ?
2. Are they dealing with specific issues that a mature believer in your church has walked through and can mentor them in?
3. Perhaps follow-up can include some suggested reading material or podcasts that would encourage them to deepen their walk.
4. Maybe God is prompting them to take the next step on their journey by becoming active in service at your church. What are they passionate about? Help them find opportunities to plug in and serve, if appropriate.

*“The best follow-up is immediate follow-up”*

## HAVING A HARD TIME REACHING AN INQUIRER?

We understand some people may be difficult to contact. Here are some tips you can try:

### Optimize phone contacts

Reaching people by phone is becoming increasingly more difficult. Most people screen their calls and may not answer if they don't recognize the number. You may only have the option of leaving a message.

- 1) Try to avoid asking them to call you back (they probably won't). Initially, leave a message letting them know you will try to reach them another day.
- 2) If you consistently get voicemail, try to get creative and make the message actionable. If they do return the call, then you might have an opportunity to expand the conversation. Examples:
  - Some of the men at the church are going to the (sports event, church event, community event, etc.) next month. We'd love for you to join us...can you call me back to let me know how I can get you the ticket/info (or, I can leave it for you at the visitor booth on Sunday...).
  - Our church has some free tickets/registration waivers for new families to our church camp/youth outing/VBS. Please give me a call if you'd like to sign your child up.

### Try other methods of contact.

If you are not getting a response from a phone call or personal visit, try e-mail, text, or sending a note in the mail (if provided). Often people are more responsive to text messages than phone calls.

- If the Inquirer is already connected to your church in some way, try to find the person in your congregation who knows them and ask them to help you with follow-up (some Inquirers may respond better to people they know).
- If the e-mail bounces back or the phone number is out of service – **contact the Celebration office**. We can recheck the original card to be sure something wasn't mistyped during entry.
- If they are a teenager, try texting them (or have your youth pastor connect via social media). Have your teens help you make contact – in smaller school systems, it's likely that one of your teens may know them already.

### Fill out the Pastor's Follow-up Report for each person - No matter what.

Make a copy of the PFR slip for your records and send it back after 1 week - whether you have been able to connect or not. Simply let us know the attempts you have made. We understand that your follow-up efforts are only beginning. The Celebration Office just wants to ensure that earnest attempts have been made to reach each Inquirer. You can always update the office later.

### DON'T GIVE UP

If you feel like you are starting to pester someone (or you have not received a response after two weeks of multiple attempts), you may have to give them a little space.

### BUT

Set a reminder to check in with them in a month or so, or at key times on the church calendar (before major church events or holidays).

Consider sending/ dropping off a book with a note letting them know that you would still be happy to connect with them at any time.

Pray, follow the Holy Spirit's leading, and don't give up completely.