Incorporation Process Assessment

This assessment looks at the incorporation process as three phases: welcoming, orienting, and integrating. They are distinct phases as well as ongoing, overlapping processes.

The bias of this assessment is that parishes need a way that incorporates people that increases the likelihood that people will become mature, adult Christians in this tradition of the Church.

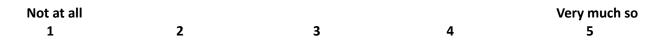
Welcoming & First Contact

These very initial encounters provide the visitor with an opportunity to experience what being part of this community will be like.

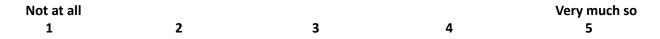
1. The parish has a **defined parish culture**. We know who we are as a community; we have ways of being and doing that are widely "owned" in the parish. We have a sense of identity and integrity. [Note: Without the boundaries of a defined parish culture we have nothing to welcome people into]

| Not at all | | | | Very much so |
|------------|---|---|---|--------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

2. Visitors are **invited to find a space** in which they make themselves at home. The tone is receptive and open rather than impatient, intrusive or passive. It is an invitation to join a community with worthy way of life; a life in which the person may be changed.



3. The visitors' first impression is usually of a grounded, calm community rather than of busyness and rush. The focus is around the Eucharist and coffee hour. There are usually no meetings or adult education activities competing for attention.



| about to be done (in | formation on the pa | rmation handed a visitor arish is available but not etin and a sheet saying: | | _ | |
|---|---|---|--|---------------------------------|--|
| you as you become - Children: Children in church school (location - Communion: If you | familiar with the flow may stay with their fam ited at) would like to receive co | nily during the Eucharist or pommunion | participate in the child ca | are (located at) or | |
| - Coffee hour - There the location) | is a time of community | y and social contact just after | the Eucharist. Please jo | in us. (Give directions to | |
| Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much so 5 | |
| some competence. I | t has the potential t | s the structure, climate a to catch people up in son to participate without pr | nething beyond then | • | |
| Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much so 5 | |
| 6. The preaching usually has a good pace, style, sense of ease, and length. It connects the tradition with life. There is an authenticity about the preacher and what is said. | | | | | |
| Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much so 5 | |
| | | luttered; is beautiful; fits move about without awk | | ize and style of | |
| Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much so 5 | |
| example, asking for te-mail, phone). The | the minimal amount process is quick and participation in par | act information that is e t of information needed I easy, for example – we d ish groups. [Note: If the p | for a next step – nam don't bother to ask f | ne, or information that fits | |
| Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much so 5 | |

| Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much so 5 |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| | | vely; people appear to be people would receive in a | | _ |
| Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much so 5 |
| We have lots of name responsibility for thit is primarily about the | netags available for is (they have the gif ne community's nee | nd newer attendees, by members and visitors to it and some training in hold do not connection. It's a may of people. That needs to | put on. There's a pespitality and listenir costly informal time | erson or two who accept ng). [Note: A coffee hour allowing people to |
| Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much so 5 |
| 12. The priest make | s contact with visit | ors at coffee hour and fol | lows up with the pe | rson within the week. |
| Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much so 5 |
| 13. Other: | | | | |
| Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much so 5 |
| 14. Other: | | | | |
| Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much so 5 |

9. We are good at **getting visitors to come to coffee hour**.

Orienting

An opportunity, in a very basic and initial manner, to become familiar with and connected to the people and ways of this parish. The person is trying to get a sense of whether he or she will fit in here. Early on they begin to explore a place within the community and to develop the core competencies needed to live in the community. This is the beginning of the parish's effort to orient people for a fuller relationship with Christ and his Church. As known and lived in the Episcopal Church.

1. **Information on parish life is available**. This may be a packet or a handbook with information on parish guilds and organizations, educational & spiritual formation opportunities, sacramental standards, and so on. The information is also on the web site.

| Not at all | | | | Very much so |
|------------|---|---|---|--------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

2. There is an **orientation to participation in the Eucharist** available on a regular basis (might be an occasional session of 40 minutes just after the Eucharist and/or booklets that describe the ways in which members of the congregation can participate) [Note: This is not an "instructed Eucharist" that cuts across the community's usual worship and is theoretical in tone. It is about how people in the congregation can participate – in the spoken parts, in silence, in the use of the body]

| Not at all | | | | Very much so |
|------------|---|---|---|--------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

3. A gathering that is partly social and partly educational; done as needed, at least once every 3-4 months. It may be a social event at the rectory – with priest and 2-3 parish leaders who are good at such events. Or it could be a newcomers class in the parish hall.

| Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much so 5 |
|-----------------|---|---|---|-------------------|
| 4. Other: | | | | |
| Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much so 5 |
| 5. Other: | | | | |
| Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much so 5 |

Integrating

This is about integrating a person into a healthy and faithful community. It assumes there is ongoing attention to the formation of the parish community and that people may be integrated into that process. The parish needs an ability to help people enter more deeply into the Christian life; to assist them in forming a spiritual discipline (rule of life;) and in developing increasingly mature habits for Christian living. A very useful resource in doing this is a foundation course for adults. A foundations course is a substantial educational and training program that is repeated over the years and is used to incorporate people into the parish and the spirituality of the Episcopal Church.

| educational and tra | • | ion course for adults. A j repeated over the year al Church. | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| 1. New people and lartionale for it. | ong-term members h | nave regular opportunit | ies to develop a spir | itual discipline and a |
| Not at all | _ | | | Very much so |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. New people and with others. | long-term members h | nave regular opportunit | ies to build relations | hips and friendships |
| Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much so 5 |
| daily and weekly rit and forms of persor | t uals Holy Eucharist nal devotions that fit t | nave regular opportunit t, praying the daily pray the person's personality tionship to who we are | ers of the church wit and provide ways o | h the church (Office), f reflecting that |
| Not at all | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much so 5 |
| • • | - | develop an awareness th t most people's ministry | • | catives of Christ and his ith friends, and work |
| Not at all | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much so 5 |
| parish life. For some | e that will be focused | are helped to establish a on the basics of Sunda accepting a leadership | y Eucharist, pledging | |

Not at all 1 2 3 4 Very much so 5

6. Other:

Not at all 1 2 3 4 Very much so 5

7. Other:

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much so 5

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