



# GCI CHURCH HACKS

# A WELCOMING CHURCH



Have you considered how it might feel to be a first-time guest in your local worship service? Or to attend a connect group or church event for the first time? While long-time members may be very comfortable surrounded by familiar faces and friends, it is easy to forget how that first encounter with church might feel. This month's Church Hack shares best practices for developing welcoming Hope, Faith, and Love Avenues.

## A WELCOMING HOPE AVENUE



- » Invest in developing an established integration ministry. Integration is an intentional process to create a welcoming environment for guests. Trained greeters, clear signage, and intentional follow up are developed to create a welcoming environment. Check out our [Integration Ministry Church Hack](#) for more tips on building out an integration team.
- » Make every attempt to ensure there are no barriers that prevent access or participation. Check out our [Accessibility Matters Church Hack](#) to read more about why inclusion is important.



## A WELCOMING FAITH AVENUE



- » Invite neighbors to join your Connect Groups. If your church has a mom's group, senior adults games group, or some other lifestyle-type group, don't keep it to yourselves—invite your neighbors to join you! This is a great way to build relationship with people seeking community but may feel unsure where to begin. As you invite your neighbors to be part of these groups, take the time to get to know them and ask how you can be a good friend to them.

# A WELCOMING LOVE AVENUE



If your church desires to reach the people in your community, take the first step and extend a welcome to your neighbors. Here are some ways your church may want to consider:

» **Be a Neighbor**

- You are a member of your focus neighborhood. Join your neighbors in community events, get to know local business owners, and take time to invest in relationships. Check out our [The Art of Being a Neighbor Church Hack](#).



» **Volunteer Often**

- You don't have to host every event. Find local events or organizations that need help and provide support. This is a great way to build partnerships in your community.



» **Host Your Own Events**

- Develop an event that your neighbors would enjoy like a family movie night, sports tournament, or back to school block party. Choose an event that connects back to a ministry within your church. For example, if you plan an event for youth, make sure you have a children's ministry in your congregation for guests to regularly participate in afterward. [This Church Hack can help you plan an event.](#)

Beyond any strategy, a welcoming posture and loving environment that reflects the heart of Christ is the most important element in creating an inclusive church culture. When we interact with neighbors and guests, do we see that person as someone precious to Jesus and precious to his Church? It makes a difference.