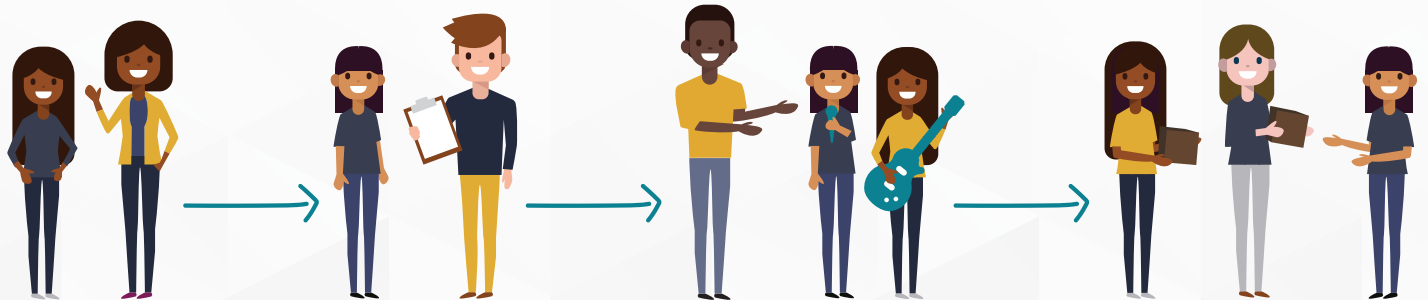




Why is it important to have an on-ramp to the Avenues?

There is a place for everyone in the body of Christ. An essential aspect of our life in Christ is inviting others into following and participating in ministry with Jesus. In the GCI development process, we see “Engage” as the first step to creating an on-ramp for inviting others to following Christ. When we engage with others, we create an environment of invitation, considering the person’s God-given gifts, passions, and experience.



How do we create on-ramps for others to participate in the life of the church?

ON-RAMPS FOR THE HOPE AVENUE

Getting new guests to visit your church services requires a combination of welcoming engagement, effective communication, and creating an inviting atmosphere. Here are some strategies to attract and encourage new visitors:

- » **Engaging Website:** Most people will visit your website before visiting your church facility. Your web presence is the new front door of your church. Ensure your church website is informative, up-to-date, and easy to navigate. Include service times, directions, and information about what visitors can expect during a typical service. 
- » **Warm and Inviting Welcome:** Equip greeters to offer a warm and friendly welcome to everyone who enters the church. A friendly smile and genuine hospitality can make a significant difference in someone's first impression.
- » **Personal Invitations:** Encourage your current church members to invite their friends, neighbors, and coworkers to attend services. Personal invitations are powerful and can make potential visitors feel more comfortable attending. 
- » **Sermon Series and Topics:** Plan sermon series on relevant and engaging topics that resonate with the needs and interests of the community. Promote these series in advance to generate interest.
- » **Church Signage:** Ensure that your church building has clear and visible signage, indicating service times and contact information. A well-maintained exterior can create a positive impression.
- » **Guest Follow-up:** After the visit, follow up with guests to express gratitude for their attendance. Offer to answer any questions they might have and let them know about upcoming events or opportunities to get involved. 
- » **All Avenue Team Involvement:** The first point of contact with your congregation will not be through your Sunday worship service. Collaborate with your fellow Avenue Champions to invite guests of Love Avenue events and Faith Avenue connect groups to attend your worship gatherings.

The Essentials

Creating on-ramps into the Avenues is an essential part of discipleship because it helps new guests transition from being visitors to becoming committed followers of Christ. Here is a key point to remember:

- » **Hope Avenue:** Remember, attracting new guests is just the first step. Creating a welcoming and inclusive environment during the service and providing opportunities for newcomers to connect and build relationships within the church community will increase the likelihood of them becoming regular attendees.

ON-RAMPS FOR THE FAITH AVENUE

Engaging others to participate in church connect groups can be a vital aspect of discipleship, as well as building a strong and supportive community within a church. Here are some effective ways to achieve this:

- » **Announcements During Church Services:** Make regular announcements during church services about the connect groups available, their meeting times, and how to join. Use multimedia tools such as slides or videos to capture attention and make the information easily accessible.
- » **Themed Connect Groups:** Create connect groups centered around specific themes or interests that resonate with members of the congregation. Examples could include parenting, Bible study, prayer, young adults, seniors, or hobbies.
- » **Newcomer Integration:** Develop a system to integrate newcomers into connect groups, ensuring they feel welcomed and supported as they get connected within the church community. Having a specific new member connect group is a great best practice.
- » **Connect Group Launch Day:** Organize a connect group fair where members of the church can meet and interact with connect group leaders. Each connect group can set up a booth or table with information about their focus, schedule, and location. This allows people to learn about different groups and choose one that aligns with their interests.
- » **Personal Invitations:** Encourage existing connect group members to invite their friends, family, and fellow church members to join their groups. Personal invitations can be more effective in encouraging participation.
- » **Testimonials and Success Stories:** Share testimonies and success stories from current connect group members about the positive impact of being part of a connect group. Personal stories can inspire others to join and experience similar benefits.



The Essentials

Creating on-ramps into the Avenues is an essential part of discipleship because it helps new guests transition from being visitors to becoming committed followers of Christ. Here is a key point to remember:

- » **Faith Avenue:** Remember, building connections in connect groups is not just about getting people to join but fostering a sense of belonging and community within the church. Encouraging genuine relationships and providing a safe space for spiritual growth are key components of successful connect group ministries.

ON-RAMPS FOR THE LOVE AVENUE

Engaging the community around your church to attend church events requires intentional engagement and effective communication. Here are some strategies to help attract your neighbors to your church events:

- » **Neighborhood Mapping:** Understanding the focus neighborhood God is calling you to minister in, is one of the most important parts of a missional life. Understand the needs and interests of the local community. Conduct surveys or interviews to identify what events or programs would be most appealing and beneficial to them.
- » **Focused Engagement:** Tailor your invitations and promotional efforts to specific segments of the community. Consider demographics, interests, and geographical areas to reach the right audience effectively.
- » **Local Collaboration:** Partner with other community organizations, schools, or non-profits for joint events or initiatives. This collaboration can expand your reach and build trust within the community.
- » **Personal Invitations:** Encourage church members to personally invite their friends, neighbors, and coworkers to attend events. Word-of-mouth recommendations can be very influential.
- » **Neighborhood Service Projects:** Organize community service projects or engagement activities to demonstrate the church's commitment to the well-being of the neighborhood. This can create a positive impression and open doors for further engagement.
- » **Event Ambassadors:** Recruit enthusiastic volunteers from your congregation and the neighborhood to act as event ambassadors. They can actively promote events within the neighborhood and serve as points of contact for inquiries.
- » **Incentives and Giveaways:** To encourage participation, offer small incentives or giveaways to attendees, such as free refreshments, event-related merchandise, or raffle prizes.
- » **Follow-up and Feedback:** After each event, follow up with attendees to express gratitude for their participation. Ask for feedback to understand how you can improve future events based on their suggestions.



The Essentials

Creating on-ramps into the Avenues is an essential part of discipleship because it helps new guests transition from being visitors to becoming committed followers of Christ. Here is a key point to remember:

- » **Love Avenue:** Remember, genuine engagement with your focus neighborhood goes beyond just promoting events. Building long-term relationships and showing a genuine interest in the community's well-being will strengthen the church's impact and attract more people to attend future events.