



Tips for Inviting Friends or Neighbors to Your House of Worship

One of the most meaningful and impactful ways to connect and share your faith with your friends and neighbors is to invite them to your house of worship for a special event or service. Many Americans have not had an opportunity to visit a place of worship of a tradition other than their own, so an invitation will be warmly received and a great starting point for relationship-building.

Ensure that your community members know that visitors may be attending an upcoming service. If you have greeters, ushers, or a building manager, remind them that you are expecting visitors who may not know the norms of your community or practice. For example, if you have separate entrances for men and women, make sure this is clear for guests so that they do not inadvertently use an incorrect entrance which could cause embarrassment; if you have communion or the sharing of blessed food and drink during your service, be explicit about whether and how it is appropriate for guests to participate; if parts of the service take place in a language other than English, consider providing a written or verbal translation, or an overview of the meaning and significance of what is happening.

After the service, encourage guests and congregants to engage and dialogue over coffee, donuts, or snacks. Many communities regularly hold a coffee hour or brunch after a service, and this is a great setting for people to get to know each other, build relationships, and ask questions to deepen their understanding of the other's community, beliefs, and practices.

Places of worship have services at different times of the day and week. As a guide:

- Islam: Jumah prayers are typically held around or after noon on a Friday. If the community is large, there may be two services, one after the other.
- Judaism: Shabbat services may be held on Friday night or Saturday morning, depending on the denomination.
- Christianity: Church worship services take place at various times on a Sunday, typically in the morning and sometimes in the early evening. Some churches have Saturday evening services also.
- Hinduism: Many Hindu communities do not have congregational services on a particular day of the week, but rather encourage individual practice throughout the week, with communal services to mark special celebrations and events at various times of the year.
- Sikhism: Similarly, many Sikh communities encourage individual practice throughout the week rather than communal worship on a particular day. Nonetheless, many Gurdwaras have their highest attendance on Sunday.
- Buddhism: Different Buddhist denominations have different schedules of practice. Many American Buddhist communities have communal services on Sunday.