Ushers and Greeters: A Warm First Welcome

Inclusion training can make everyone more comfortable

Ushers and greeters are often the first people that newcomers encounter from your congregation. This initial interaction is important, and some brief inclusion training can help ensure that it goes well—for newcomers and ambassadors alike.

The following tips can help ushers and greeters feel more comfortable and confident:

- **Be prepared.** Before each service, make sure that large print materials are readily available. If you have assistive hearing devices, make sure they are prominently displayed and that ushers know how to use them.

- **Be welcoming.** Genuine warmth and friendliness are more important than following a certain protocol. Too often, interactions with those who appear to have a disability are stilted because the greeter is concerned about making a mistake in communication. As Ginny Thornberg writes in *That All May Worship*, “What do you say when you meet a person with a disability? How about: ‘Hello.’”

- **Speak directly to the person with a disability,** even if they are accompanied by an assistant or a sign language interpreter. Do not speak as if the person with a disability is not present. If this person is an adult, speak as you would to any other adult. Avoid greetings that you might use with a child.

- **Be quick to offer help but do not assume that it is needed.** Ask if you can be of assistance and then let the person describe what would be helpful. If someone who is blind asks you to guide them to a seat, do not take their hand and pull them. Instead, extend your arm and tell them that you are doing so. Then, let the person take hold of your arm and follow.

Other resources on usher and greeter training:

- [Usher Training.RespectAbility.pdf](https://prezi.com/5u8tjsyvxnoq/high-holy-days-inclusion-training/)