

CHURCH LOBBIES



SIX ZONES for CONNECTION

*How your church's physical space
can help build relationships,
cultivate hospitality, and
inspire generosity.*




ASPEN
GROUP



RELATIONSHIPS START HAPPENING when a person first walks through the front door of your church. Engaging in a church experience is about developing a deep relationship with God *and* fostering meaningful connections with others.



Our church lobbies play a critical role in building true community by giving people space and comfort to build connections, which is an essential aspect of growing together as the Body of Christ. Your lobby can be a place that not only helps grow those relationships, but encourages people to practice and model hospitality and generosity.



This resource will guide you through six ways your church lobby can help build relationships, cultivate hospitality, and inspire generosity.

ZONE ONE

WELCOME CENTER



What kind of first impression is your church conveying before someone even enters your building? Your virtual front door—the internet—is where people will likely get a first glimpse of your church, but upon entering the building you want to make sure people feel confident navigating your space.



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Church Lobby Zone 1: The Welcome Center



watch the video!

Visible signage and clear drop off points into the building, as well as accessible entryways for people of all abilities are crucial to establishing a positive church experience.



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Upon entry to the building, it's important to have a designated space where first time visitors and guests can access information about your church and be guided where they need to go. You may opt for a traditional information desk, outfitted with greeters to answer questions, or a simple space supplied with a monitor and printed information.



The number one job of a lobby is to make people feel welcome and to build relationships. It's about building a culture of radical hospitality that permeates the entire congregation.

Consider creating casual groupings of furniture around your welcome center. This allows people to navigate the space at their pace and invites them to relax and take some time to connect with others.



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Whatever type of welcome center you choose, make sure it has easy access from the front door and clear entry points to other physical areas of the building, such as worship, kid's check-in, classrooms, and restrooms. ●

ZONE TWO

HOSPITALITY



Relationships are often built around food and drink, so refreshment plays an important role in relationship building and the discipleship journey. Hospitality areas help to lower barriers, giving people a comfortable, non-threatening space to authentically connect with others.



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It's important to not just think of your café as a place that provides food and drink. Making sure your people have been trained to love others well, engage them in conversation, and draw them into community is crucial to being a church that models true hospitality.

Church Lobby Zone 2: Hospitality Areas



watch the video!



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Whether you have a simple, self-serve coffee bar or a larger café with various food and drink options, it's important that your hospitality area has high visibility from the front door and is accessible from the lobby and worship venue.



The best way to engage and connect people coming through our church doors is by giving them a space where the entire congregation can model love and hospitality.

CHURCH LOBBIES: 6 ZONES FOR CONNECTION



During a recent lobby renovation, [The Orchard](#), in Barrington, Illinois (pictured here), positioned their beverage machines front and center and incorporated vending machines, so refreshments can be available even when their full-service counter isn't open. Offering food and drink even when your café isn't staffed shows that you understand how people will use your space and communicates the importance your church places on hospitality.



CHURCH LOBBIES: 6 ZONES FOR CONNECTION



The best opportunity your church has for engaging people and connecting them into your body is by showing them how well you love them. Having an inviting and functional café will allow your staff, volunteers, and the entire congregation to communicate their love and model true hospitality. ●

ZONE THREE

FAMILY ROOM



Family Rooms are multipurpose spaces that are becoming essential to the church lobby experience. These quiet spaces are typically in close proximity to the lobby, worship, and café, and offer an alternative space for people who want to get off on their own or gather in smaller groups. They can even act as a worship space for those who don't feel comfortable in a larger worship venue.



Church Lobby Zone 3: Family Rooms



watch the video!

The Family Room is a unique space that can offer a variety of casual, comfortable furniture and can be outfitted with technology. They're perfect for worship overflow, for those who have sensitivity to larger groups, or for newcomers who don't feel comfortable in a more classic worship setting.



CHURCH LOBBIES: 6 ZONES FOR CONNECTION

These quiet rooms can be the most sought-after spaces in a church facility. Their proximity to the front door, lobby, and café makes them convenient for Sunday mornings and activities during the week as well. They can be used as a meeting space for church staff or small groups, a place for volunteer sign-ups, or a quiet space to work independently.



The Family Room communicates the concept of radical hospitality by letting people know you care about families, connection, and that people can experience church at their pace and comfort level.



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Hickory Creek Church, in Frankfort, Illinois (pictured here), incorporated a Family Room with a double-sided fireplace. On the lobby side there's a warm and comfortable space to relax and connect. On the other side of the glass is a private, light-filled room with views of their pergola shaded patio.



CHURCH LOBBIES: 6 ZONES FOR CONNECTION



Incorporating a Family Room into your church lobby plan communicates the concept of radical hospitality by letting people know you care about families, connection, and that people can experience church at their pace and comfort level. ●

ZONE FOUR

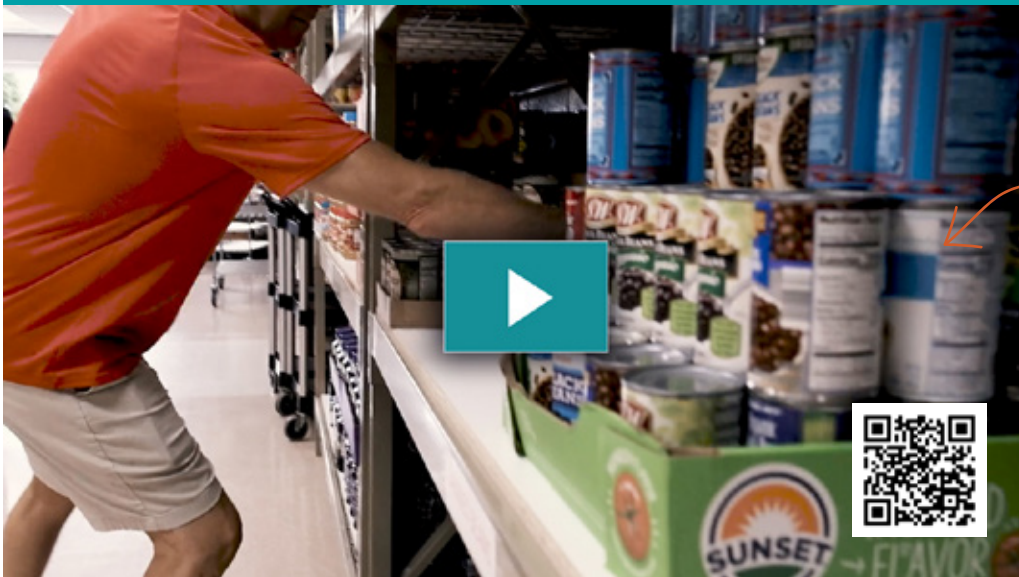
GENEROSITY



The church lobby is shifting to not only be a space to connect with others, but to also be a place to inspire and demonstrate the concept of radical generosity. Offering drop off zones at highly visible and locations in the lobby for food and clothing donations is a great way to help the congregation learn about the needs of the community and motivate them to get involved on a deeper level.

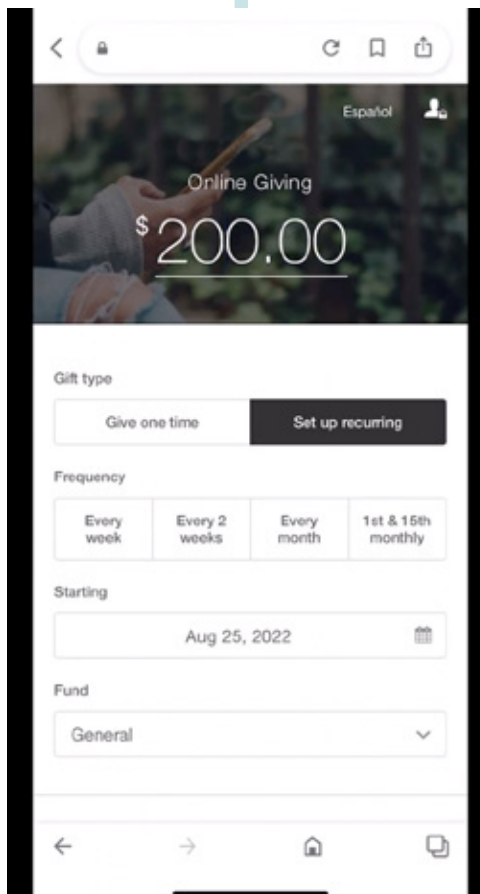


Church Lobby Zone 4: Generosity Zones



watch the video!

When the pandemic hit, many churches moved to online and electronic ways of tithing. Some churches have stopped passing offering plates altogether and are opting for mobile giving or tithing kiosks located in the lobby. These forms of giving offer people a convenient and non-threatening way to tithe, especially making it easy for newcomers and first-time givers.



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Finding new and creative ways to give communicates to your congregation, neighbors, and the community that you're a church of radical generosity.

Chaplestreet Church, in North Aurora, Illinois (above), utilizes a donation box in the lobby so people can conveniently give to their ministry program, **Shepherd's Heart Care Center** (right). The addition of this giving and information center in a highly visible area of the lobby, brings awareness to the needs of the community and encourages people to get involved.



Making these zones front and center in your lobby brings importance to the concept of giving and lets everyone know they can be a part of building a culture of radical generosity. ●

ZONE FIVE

OUTDOOR SPACES



One way to expand your connecting space is to burst open the lobby doors and expand your family room to the great outdoors. Natural environments are proven to lower anxiety and promote physical and emotional wellbeing. Bringing the indoors outside can be a way for people to enjoy nature, but still feel connected to the building. It also gives your facility more useable space when the weather is nice.



Church Lobby Zone 5: Outdoor Spaces



watch the video!

When planning for a patio, consider the different ways people will use the space, and offer a variety of seating options. Mix café tables with high-top tables and include comfortable lounge chairs and couches. Pay attention to the quality of the outdoor furniture you're purchasing so it will be sturdy enough to handle the volume of people using it and stand the test of time and outdoor elements.



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Make sure to add cover from the hot sun via flexible shades, pergolas, or built-in structures.

Consider positioning your patio front and center on your property. This conveys a welcoming vibe to passers-by and helps to reinforce that you're serious about the concept of radical hospitality.



Positioning your patio front and center on your property conveys a welcoming vibe to passers-by and helps to reinforce that you're serious about the concept of hospitality.

CHURCH LOBBIES: 6 ZONES FOR CONNECTION



Chapel Pointe, in Hudsonville, Michigan (pictured here), planned their 2019 facility expansion around the great outdoors. The building has sweeping views of the surrounding forested landscape, an outdoor balcony café space, courtyards, and a patio with a double sided fireplace.

Inside, a two-story lobby space features plenty of glass to let in natural light and provide views of the beautiful scenery, and features birch accents and other natural elements to bring the outdoors inside.



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Including trees, landscaping, walkways, and outdoor gathering spaces into your facility plan gives people options for how they can build connections at their pace. Bringing focus to the great outdoors helps to promote physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing, and helps to break down barriers to building authentic relationships with others. ●

REFLECT

*Are your outdoor spaces offering a place
for people to gather and connect?*

*How can you use your outdoor spaces
to encourage rest and respite, inspire
creativity, and help to foster deep
interpersonal connections?*

*In what ways can you bring the
outdoors into your indoor space?*

ZONE SIX

NEXT STEPS



In worship, we're often inspired, convicted, and encouraged to take a next step. That could mean signing up for a mission trip, or joining a small group, or looking into volunteer opportunities. Having a Next Steps or Action Center in your lobby, with close proximity to the worship venue, gives people an opportunity to engage and take the next step in their faith.



Church Lobby Zone 6: Next Steps & Action Centers



watch the video!

Next Steps areas can look very different depending on how people will navigate your space. You may want to have a designated area where a small group or missions leader is available to answer questions and help sign people up for ministry opportunities. Live-person interactions are great for Sundays when people are feeling inspired and motivated to seek out ways to live out their faith.



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For those less busy times, you might want to have an area outfitted with monitors or touchscreen devices where people can explore on their own.

Some churches offer books and take-aways at various spots in their café and lobby space.



The Next Steps zone is an opportunity to help people to grow in their faith, get involved in ministry, and take on leadership roles.

CHURCH LOBBIES: 6 ZONES FOR CONNECTION



The Next Step zone is an opportunity to help people to grow in their faith, get involved in ministry, and take on leadership roles.

Your lobby is pivotal to welcoming people in, helping them to make deep connections with others, leading them to worship, and engaging them in seeking out ministry opportunities and growing in their faith. ●



WE'RE HERE TO HELP

We hope this guide has inspired you, but how can you take the next step toward maximizing your church's lobby space? This is an area where you'll want to [reach out to an expert](#). It's best to start those conversations as early as possible, so your connecting spaces can be addressed as part of the full vision for your facility. We'd love to dream with you and help you make the most of your lobby so it can help support ministry, build relationships, and bring people closer to God.



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