Radical Christian Hospitality
Large Parish Track

How do we connect and welcome potential new members when the current membership does not know each other?

It is about individuals building relationships with individuals.
First Encounter Ideas:
1. Watch for a person’s body language.
2. Make eye contact.
3. Introduce yourself- small talk.
4. If the other person introduces themselves and comments, continue the conversation as long as the person is interested.
5. If you have coffee and donuts after mass, ask if they are going or invite them to come and sit with you.
6. When you see that person again, be sure to approach and acknowledge their presence.

Keys to building authentic relationships (one or two people):
• Be intentional and deliberate in your effort. Love is hard work and requires courage.
• Begin by caring about people as people (not potential parish members) with no strings attached.
• Be relationship-oriented not results-oriented (hidden agenda). Manipulating people is not consistent with Christian love.
• Pray for the person.
• Make time for the person and try to understand his or her feelings.
• Look for concrete ways to communicate God’s love.
• Be open (do not stereotype.) Listen. Work to understand the person. We do not want to try to meet needs that do not exist, and fail to see the real needs that do.
• Be non-judgmental.

Excerpts from Beyond the First Welcome Visit by Gary L McIntosh
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