Making Your Website Newcomer Friendly

One of the most helpful things your meeting website can do is give potential newcomers a glimpse of what they can expect if they decided to visit. Below are some tips for making your website newcomer friendly.

1. How Long Does Worship Last? It's wise to give newcomers an idea how much time they'll be committing for a visit. A schedule (Meeting for Worship at 10:00, Coffee Time at 11:00, Religious Education at 11:30) lets them know that they can come for an hour – or more than two! Post this schedule on the front page. You can say more if you have a "Newcomers Page" or "What You'll Find if You Visit" page.

2. What's the Dress Code? Let people know how they should dress if they want to feel comfortable. Of course, we're happy when anybody, no matter what they're wearing, comes to worship, but each meeting generally has an unstated, but understood, dress code. This is not about conformity, but it's about welcoming and care. No one wants to arrive in a suit and tie if no one else is wearing something similar – oops, over-dressed!

   One good way to communicate this is to have photos of your members in worship, at coffee time, or in adult education classes. Again, you can say more if you have a "Newcomers Page" or "What You'll Find if You Visit" page

3. What's Worship Like? A short, jargon-free explanation is really helpful to newcomers. The words unprogrammed, semi-programmed, and programmed don't mean much unless a newcomer "speaks" Quaker.

4. What About Our Kids? Are children welcome in worship? Is there child care? Religious education for children? Inquiring parents want to know.

5. Do You Look Like Me? If your meeting is multicultural, display photos that show your diversity. If you're not, don't use stock photos that show a diverse membership. Use photos of the members and attenders of your group whenever possible.

6. How Do I Find You? Make sure a map (preferably one that is interactive and allows the user to get directions for her/his location) is on your home page. It should also be on a "Newcomers Page" if you have one.

   Your meeting's address, telephone number, and email information should also be on the homepage. All should actually connect to a person who can respond in a timely manner to whatever is asked or commented on there.

Your Website Can Dissuade Potential Newcomers from Attending

Your meeting's website can provide newcomers with the information they need to feel comfortable visiting. You also need to be aware that a website can imply that they're not welcome or important. Be careful what messages your site is sending.

Make sure the site is always correct and current. Check to

- Make sure all links work and are up to date

- Ensure that all the information is current. If you list contacts (clerks, etc), is that information up to date? The same with events. You don't want it to be early autumn see that your site is still promoting a previous spring's event.

Research shows that 90% of people looking for a new faith community to attend do so via the Internet. So it makes sense for all Friends meetings to have a web presence that is helpful and current for those who are looking for Quakers in their area!

If you need assistance setting up a website, contact the Friends at the QuakerCloud.

Connect

Connect with FGC:

- FGC has resources to support new and existing groups

- FGC can help a group connect with other local Quaker groups

- FGC can help you get listed on QuakerFinder.org to help others find you

    FGC staff and volunteers are happy to talk with you about this, or any other issue, your meeting or worship group is facing. Please contact us by emailing us or phoning 215-561-1700.