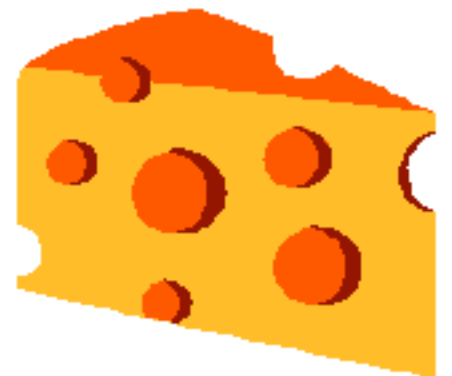




U.S. CONGREGATIONS

**Like Cheese to a
Mouse:
Luring New
Worshippers**



**What can new
people tell
communicators and
congregations?**

U.S. Congregational Life Survey



- 2,234 congregations
- 300,000 worshipers

U.S. Congregational Life Survey



- All 50 states
- All sizes of congregations
- Over 50 denominations and faith groups

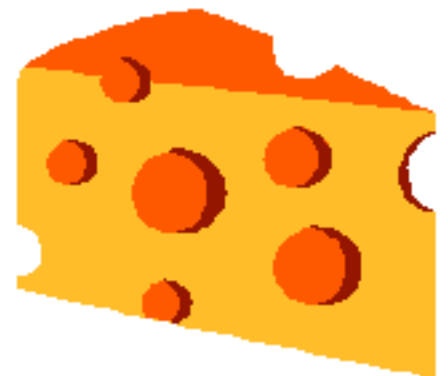
U.S. Congregational Life Survey



- Focus on worshipers
- Focus on more than numerical growth
- Focus on multiple strengths
- Focus on resources for congregations

Myth #1

Most people have been attending their congregation for years and years.



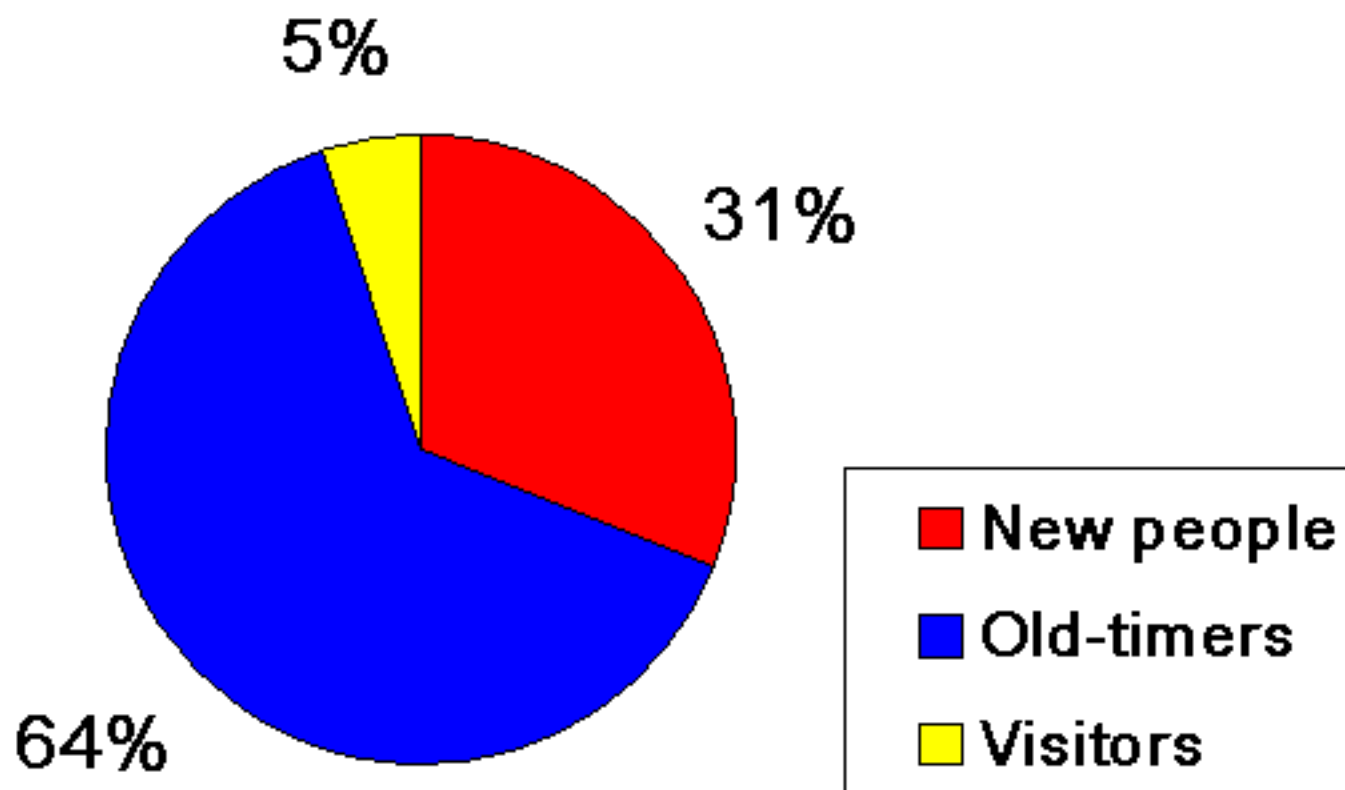
Who are New People?

New People

- Began attending the congregation in the last five years
- Not visitors
- Not “old-timers”

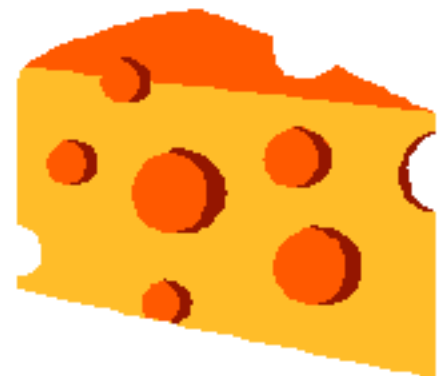


New People



Myth #2

Congregations attract new people who are very similar to the people who already attend there.



How do new people
compare to
“old-timers”?

New People vs. Old-timers

New People are *more likely* to:

- Be younger
- Be employed or a student
- Be single
- Have no children
- Be racial ethnic



New People vs. Old-timers

New People are *less likely* to:

- Attend services weekly
- Participate in small groups or community service activities
- Hold a leadership position
- Be a member
- Participate in decision making
- Give 5% of income to the church

New People vs. Old-timers

New People are *more likely* to:

- Have grown in faith in last year
- Have invited someone to worship
- Report increasing participation
- Believe the pastor inspires action
- Have stopped attending for 2 years or more

New People vs. Old-timers

New People are *just like* Old-timers:

- Gender
- Education
- Time spent in private devotions
- Spiritual needs met in congregation
- Have strong, growing sense of belonging

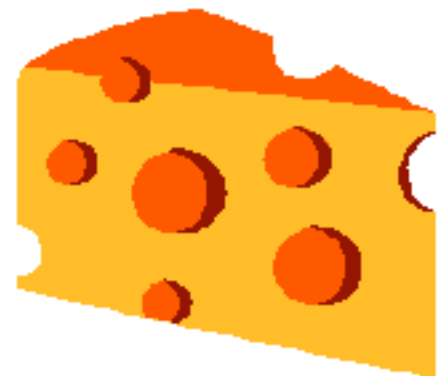


WHAT'S WITH THE SECURITY?
DON'T THEY WANT VISITORS?

YES, BUT THEY DON'T WANT THE KIDS TO ESCAPE

Myth #3

Large congregations have a larger proportion of new people.



Who attracts the most
new people?

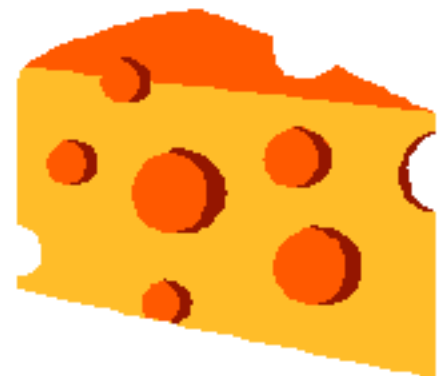
Proportions of New People

- Regardless of size, congregations attract about one-third new people
- Conservative Protestant churches attract a larger percentage of new people—almost 40%



Myth #4

Most new people are new to the faith.



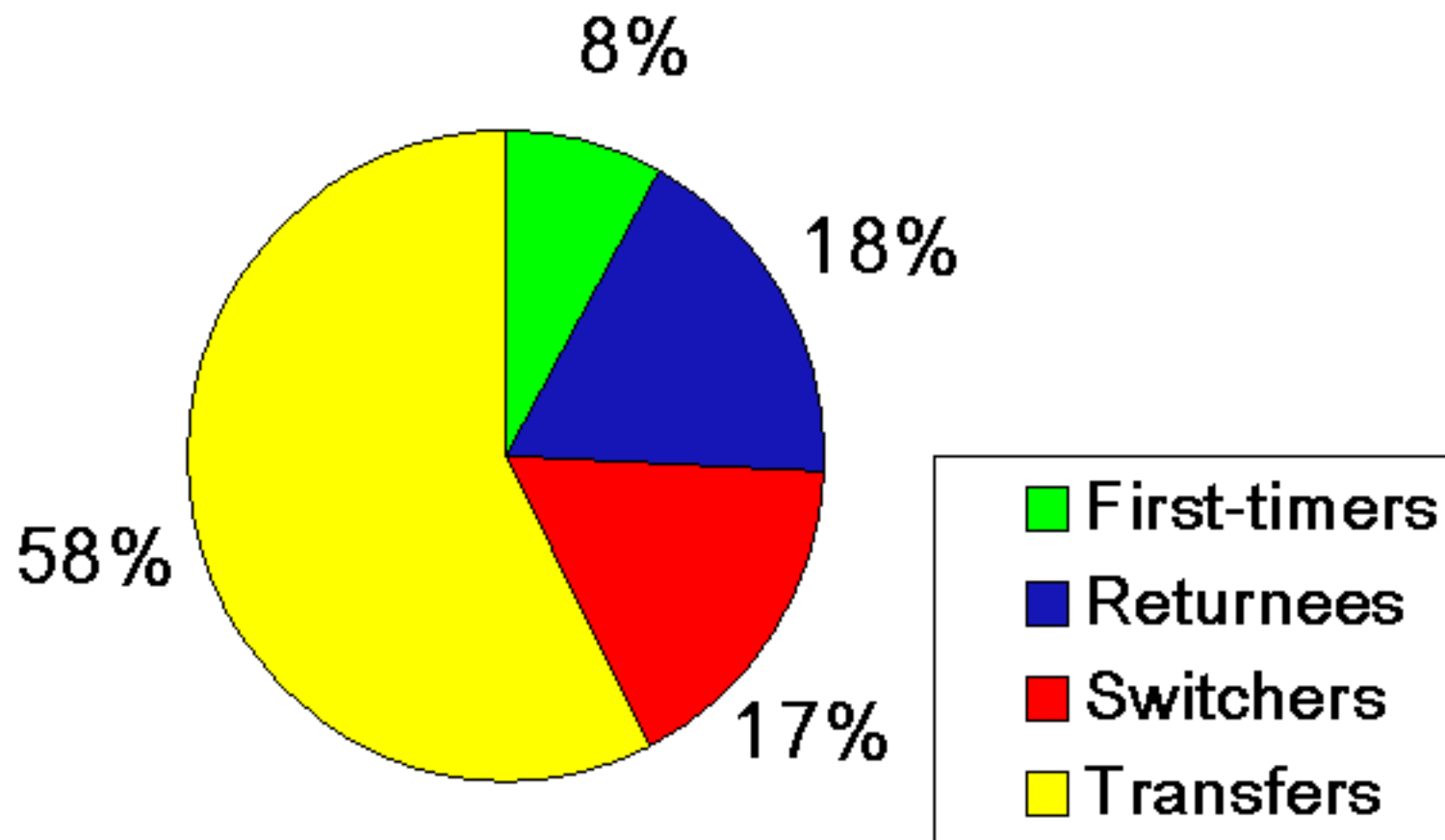
What are the types of
new people?

Types of New People

- **First-timers**—no faith background
- **Returnees**—recently not attending
- **Switchers**—changed denominations
- **Transfers**—changed congregations within the denomination

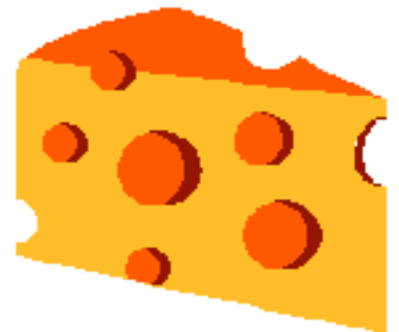


Types of New People



Myth #5

Conservative Protestant congregations attract more first-timers than other types of congregations.



Who attracts the most first-timers?

Proportions of New People

- Catholic parishes have more transfers
- Mainline Protestants have more returnees
- Conservative Protestants have more switchers
- Historically black denomination churches have more first-timers

Proportions of New People

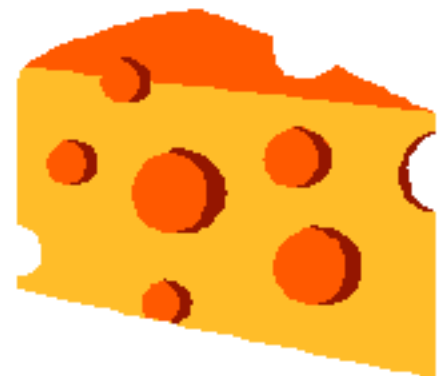
	Catholic	Mainline Prot.	Conservative Prot.	Hist. Black
First-timers	6%	8%	8%	11%
Returnees	13%	27%	19%	21%
Switchers	8%	22%	31%	21%
Transfers	73%	42%	42%	48%



REVERSE EVANGELISM WAS DISCOVERED BY REV. DRAKE.
UTILISING STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY NIGHTCLUBS,
HE DISCOVERED THAT TO ATTRACT YOUNG PEOPLE
THE CHURCH HAD TO BE VERY DIFFICULT TO GET IN TO.

Myth #6

New people are pretty much
all alike.



How do switchers
differ from other types
of new people?

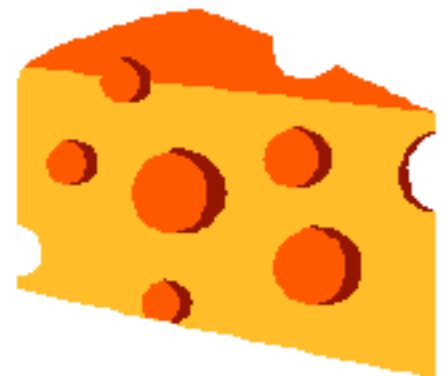
Switchers are Different

Compared to other new people, switchers:

- Participate more in congregational life (weekly worship attendance, small groups, leadership positions)
- Give more to the congregation
- Invite others to worship

Myth #7

New people usually learn about the congregation from advertising.



How do worshipers
find a new
congregation?

Finding a New Congregation

How did you first find out about the congregation? (top 4 reasons)

- Advertising: 6%
- Passed by: 10%
- Looking for my denomination: 12%
- Someone invited me: 47%



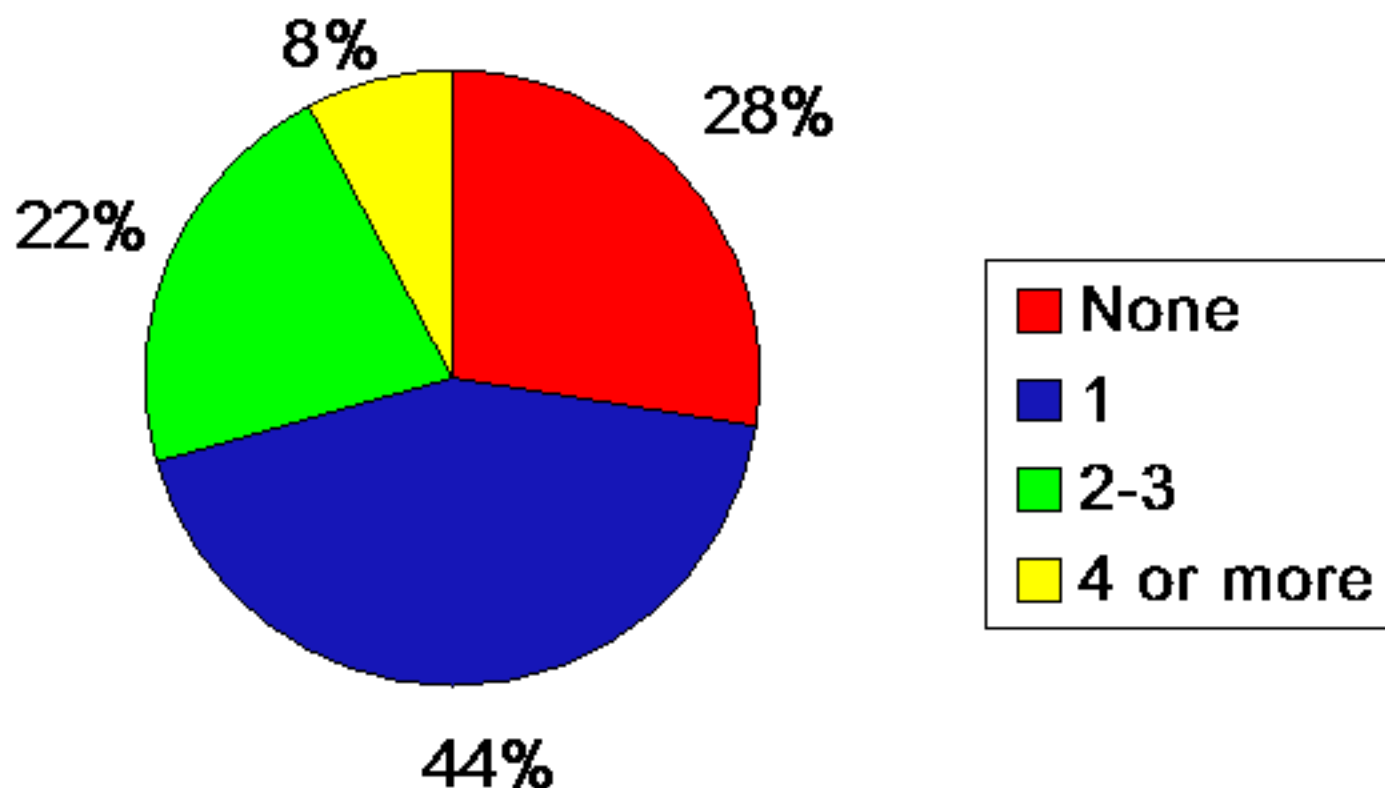
Finding a New Congregation

Why did you come here for the first time? (mark two)

- Someone I knew attends here: 32%
- Easy to get to: 32%
- Actively looking for a church: 26%
- Heard about the church's sermons, preaching, activities: 11%

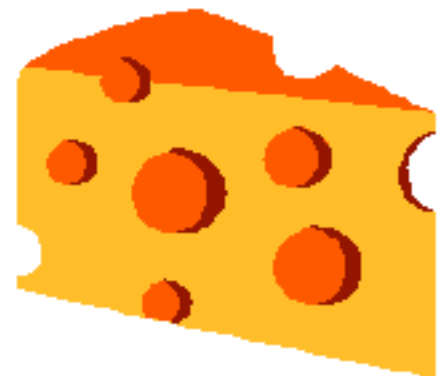
Finding a New Congregation

Number of Other Congregations Visited



Myth #8

New people usually come back after the first time because of the coffee hour.



Why do new people
return to the
congregation?

Returning to the Congregation

What impressed you and made you want to come back? (mark two)

- Quality of sermon: 36%
- Friendliness of people: 32%
- Overall worship experience: 30%
- Style of pastor or priest: 18%
- Sense of God's presence: 17%

Returning to the Congregation

How did the congregation follow-up after your first visit?

- No follow-up: 38%
- Sent letter or postcard: 20%
- Member called me: 14%
- Sent materials about the church: 14%
- Pastor called me: 13%

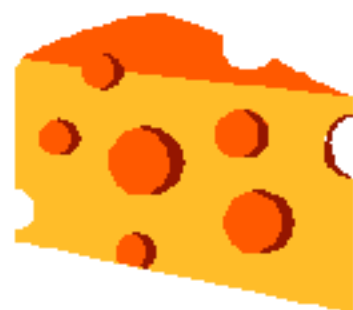
HOW WAS THE
NEW CHURCH
DARLING?

GOOD... UM...
THEY'RE VERY
WELCOMING



Myth #9

All congregations do the same things to attract and integrate new people into the life of the congregation.

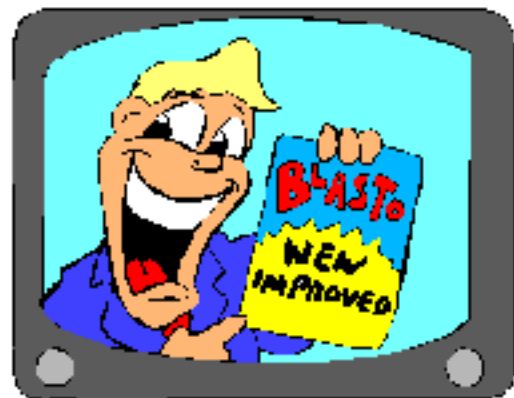


What do
congregations do to
attract new people?

Attracting New People

Methods to reach out to nonmembers:

- Encourage inviting: 90%
- Send materials to visitors: 68%
- Distribute flyers or letters: 65%



Attracting New People

Comparing congregations:

- Congregations with few new people—less than 25%

vs.

- Congregations with lots of new people—37% or more

Attracting New People

	Few New People	Many New People
Encourage inviting	90%	95%
Send materials to visitors	55%	91%
Distribute flyers/letters	56%	72%
Community event	49%	59%
Telephone visitors	50%	57%
Visit visitors	36%	47%
Paid ad on radio or TV	48%	44%

How do congregations
integrate new people?

Integrating New People

Methods to integrate new people:

- Follow-up visits: 57%
- Invitation to service role/activity: 49%
- Invitation to join group: 46%
- Group/course for new people: 41%

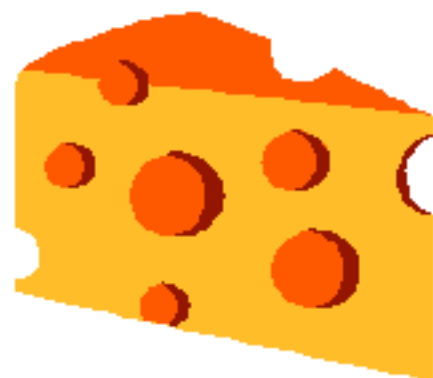


Integrating New People

	Few New People	Many New People
Follow-up visits	54%	62%
Invitation to service	47%	46%
Invitation to join group	50%	44%
Group for new people	37%	50%
Hospitality	16%	20%
No planned methods	13%	7%

Myth #10

New people replace those who leave—they don't influence congregational growth.



What influences
growth?

Growth

Three factors that predict growth:

- The percentage of new people
- Caring for children and youth
- Participating in the congregation



Growth

Factors not related to growth:

- Size of congregation
- Average income of worshipers
- Average age of worshipers
- Faith group
- Population growth



Putting it All
Together

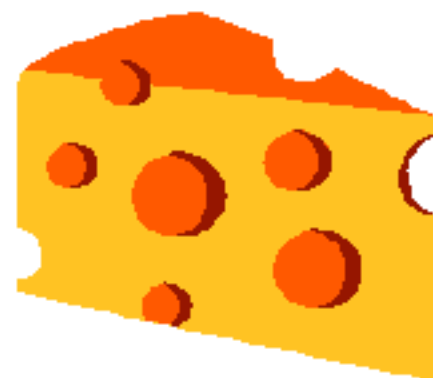
Putting it All Together

- New people bring new ideas
- A personal invitation lures new people
- The worship experience brings them back
- Larger numbers of new people lead to greater growth





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Learn More:

www.USCongregations.org

1-888-728-7228 ext. 2040



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