

# HOW TO ADD JUST ONE FAMILY TO THE CHURCH

**Fred King**

In both Police and Military training they admonish the officers to “*never assume anything... if you do it can get you killed!*” I am going to violate that word of advice. Hopefully, it will not get me killed!

I am going to *assume* that every pastor would like to add at least one family to his church. That’s right, *just one!* Of course, if we learn how to add *just one*, then the same technique will logically work for adding many new families. This will require some additional planning or detailing on your part, but for now let’s just think about some very basic steps you can take to add just one family.

## **Step One**

**Meet someone.** I know, that is a bit oversimplified, but stay with me on this.

*What are some things I can do to meet someone?* Here is a list, but please, by all means, add more ideas to the list. Believe me, you will likely have a lot better ideas that I can ever come up with.

1. *Become involved in local sporting events.* Volunteer to coach or assist with a children’s little league of some kind. It has been my experience that they never have enough people to help out. You can really make a lot of new friends this way. You personally do not need to have young children to become involved. If you have a church facility, offer the facility for their team and/or family meetings. You will be amazed at how difficult it is for teams to find places to meet! Offer to provide refreshments, a meal, cold drinks, whatever. This same idea holds true for older youth and even young adults. Softball teams, baseball, basketball, soccer, jogging, tennis, swimming, etc. are but a few. Become a sponsor or offer to help in some way.
2. *Use your special hobby interest to meet new friends.* This could be crafts, carpentry, cabinet making, various arts, auto shows, motorcycles, hunting, fishing, boating, surfing,.... make your own list! Often a little research will reveal local clubs or groups that get together to share common interests. You could even offer to host the meetings at your facility. Again, many groups have a difficult time finding places to meet.

3. *Become a volunteer at a local school.* Make an appointment to meet the principal and offer your assistance as a helper. This could be in a computer class, cafeteria, library, sports, or even office help. Perhaps you could help with the PTA. Great numbers of people can be met in this manner. Again, some schools do not have adequate places to meet for PTA or other school events, including graduation ceremonies.
4. *Join a local community service club such as Kiwanis, Rotary, etc.* This is a real “natural” for getting an inside track on the heartbeat of a community. Your personal concern and involvement in the community will speak volumes to city leaders. Many of these organizations do not have adequate meeting places. Offer your church!
5. *Join a Fitness Club.* It is amazing how many great opportunities you will have to meet new people! Doesn't matter what segment of the club you are interested in, there will be people who share your interests. Also, it is a good idea to sponsor a fitness/exercise program using your church. We have done this and met a great number of people. All you need is a volunteer to lead a group once a week.
6. *Take a Degree Completion Program Class at the local college.* Many adults do this and immediately have something in common with others in the class. Some churches have offered their facilities as extension campuses for colleges that are located in other regions of the country. No, they do not need to be Christian colleges!
7. *Take employment at a local coffee shop that is frequented by people with whom you easily identify.* Starbucks is the best known, but there are many others. Open your own coffee shop and be certain to have wireless internet so people can come, drink coffee, enjoy a pastry and do some internet work. You will need to make this known and keep the prices low!
8. *Become a Police Chaplain.* You probably know this is my favorite in that it gives you ready access to every part of your community as well as with other segments of the official community. It is amazing how many remarkable opportunities are presented through this program.
9. *Join the Civil Air Patrol.* This is a tremendous way to meet outstanding young people and to have a great inroad to your area.
10. Offer to *help your neighbor/friend with some project* they may be working on. It could be a landscaping or home improvement project they have mentioned to you. There could be people in your church who have certain skills they could offer to use one evening a week. Mechanics,

carpenters, electricians, plumbers, painters, etc., could be encouraged to volunteer a few hours to help people with special needs. Many pastors are very skilled in various ways and can offer their assistance. It is a great way to meet and help people.

11. *Make your own list of ways to meet new friends!*

Now that you have joined or are participating in some entity in your community, the next step is developing a good relationship with at least one person and by extension, his or her family.

Granted, it will take a bit of time to become acquainted well enough to take the next step. A certain level of trust must be formed which means you have had opportunity to have conversations and share mutual interests.

Most of us can take step one rather easily, but we must decide to take the next step if we expect to add *just one* new family to our church.

## **Step Two**

### **Invite your new friend and/or family to dinner.**

This event could be at a restaurant or in your home. It all depends on how well you have progressed in developing the friendship as to whether you will invite them to your home. It might be less non-threatening to invite them to a local restaurant, then, at a later date, invite them to your home.

## **Step Three**

### **Plan a follow-up event.**

Following the initial dinner, follow-up with an invitation to share another dinner, barbeque or perhaps a family picnic. Isn't it interesting how food brings people together? We have found that somewhere around step two and step three the new friends will return the invitation and ask you to join them on their turf! Great progress!

## Step Four

### **Think how to frame questions that will lead to spiritual discussions.**

As the friendship develops there will be opportunities to share something of both your spiritual backgrounds. Be thinking as to how you will frame questions that may lead to a more in-depth discussion, such as:

- In conversation simply mention something about your involvement at your church. Just a simple mention may lead to an opportunity to rhetorically ask them about their church background. *What is your church background?*
- Try to keep focused on them as opposed to yourself. One of the greatest problems is that we tend to want to talk about self. If they ask you questions about your church or spiritual life, answer clearly and to the point but do not dwell on self or on your church. *You mentioned your church. Are you involved in some ministry or activity there?*
- Allow the conversation to flow naturally. Do not push them. We are sometimes too aggressive in our desire to be a witness. Just a simple mention of a particular Scripture verse that has meant a lot to you could very well generate an excellent discussion. People often have questions regarding spiritual issues but really have no idea how to find answers. This could lead to the opportunity to have a weekly Bible study together. *You know, I really enjoy Bible studies where we can ask questions, discuss and find answers from the Scriptures. How would you like to get together some evening and discuss some of our questions?* Ideally it is best to meet in their home, but if that does not come up, plan it for your house. Also, ask them to bring some refreshments. This level of commitment really helps ensure their visit.

## Step Five

### **Invite and then Bring your new friends to church.**

Inviting people to church is good, but it is even better to arrange to drop by their house and pick them up. Perhaps having a *breakfast prior* to church would be a good way to begin the day.

Arrive at church early enough to meet a few other friends, show them around, then *sit with them*. *Be certain your church does not embarrass visitors!* They do not want to be conspicuous, so respect anonymity!

When church is over, plan to take them to lunch. This should have been arranged as part of your initial invitation. They have made a commitment to go to lunch with you so they will likely follow-through on accepting the invitation to attend services with you.

It could be that you will want to invite one other family to go to lunch with you in order to expand their new circle of friends. *Careful who you involve!*

## **Step Six**

### **Plan a follow-up visit the week following their attendance at your church.**

Often when people visit a church there is no follow-up. This is really critical! Just a simple *phone call* may be all that is necessary. Regardless of what approach you employ, just be certain it is a *personal* contact, not just an email.

The above six steps are proven successful ways to develop new friends and see them attend your church. *Do not overwhelm them with all this.* Take some time and spread out your contacts. Respect their time and schedule.

### **Pastor – this is for you, in the beginning.**

Pastor, these steps, in the beginning, are for you personally. For the time being, do not try to get your people to do this. Later, when *you* have developed a successful track record, then you can select one or two individuals in the church and help them bring in *just one new family*.

When the time comes that you are prepared to challenge your congregation to become involved, because you have been practicing what you are preaching, then here is a suggestion based on something I have done in my previous church.

### **JUST ONE**

*I constructed a simple box, approximately 12 x 10 x 10 inches. There was no lid, only a slit or opening in the top large enough to insert a 3 x 5 card. Engraved on the front of the box were the words “JUST ONE”....*

*I placed the box in front of the pulpit so it would be highly visible in every service.*

*Cards were designed with the words “JUST ONE” on the front. The other side of the cards was a line. The cards were inserted into the bulletin every Sunday for one month, then made available consistently in a number of ways throughout the year.*

*I preached on how Andrew met Jesus, then went immediately to find his brother, Peter, and said “I have found the Messiah”! Andrew’s focus was on just one person.*

*At the close of the message I asked the people to take the card and confidentially write down on the card the name of just one person for whom they were concerned. I instructed them not to show anyone, even their spouse. This was strictly between them and the Lord.*

*Next, I explained that the JUST ONE box was designed for those cards. I noted that it had no lid so that when the cards were dropped in the box they could not be seen by anyone except the writer and the Lord. Also, at the end of the year the box would be burned and we would then provide a new box and repeat the emphasis on JUST ONE.*

*Following the explanation I asked everyone present, including visitors to stand, form a line and simply walk by the box and drop in their card.*

*Each Sunday for one year we would take a minute as a congregation to pray for the names in that box. I can report to you that by the end of twelve months the Lord had added a good number of people to the church as a direct result of our people praying for just that one name they placed in the box.*

*When people are focused on just one person or family the end result will be that they will want to also take definitive action to see that friend not only attend church but to actually come to know Christ as Lord and Savior!*

Whether you use this particular approach or some other, I encourage you to prayerfully seek the mind of the Lord as to how you can take personal responsibility to reach *just one* family and see them added to the church. It is really exciting to see the church become enthused over the addition of new people!