



CLEAR NEXT STEP · AN INTRODUCTION

FROM SITTING TO SERVING

The First Step, in twenty minutes. One experience your church runs every Sunday, so the person who felt something this morning knows exactly where to go next.

WHERE PEOPLE GO NEXT

Your church is good at Sunday. People show up, they engage, and they feel something real. Then the service ends, and most of them walk out with nowhere to go.

This guide is the short version of the First Step Playbook. It walks you through one experience your church runs every Sunday, built to move a person from sitting to serving. Read it in one sitting. Every section ends with one thing to do this week.

THE ONE RULE

ONE FIRST STEP. SAME NAME, SAME ROOM, SAME INVITATION, EVERY SUNDAY.

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WHERE IT GOES SILENT

Think about last Sunday. The message landed. Somebody raised a hand. A family came for the first time and stayed to the end. Then the benediction, the walk to the car, and nothing happened next.

People leave unclear, and that is what drift looks like. Drift is quiet. It shows up months later as a name you no longer see.

Momentum is temporary. What a person feels on Sunday fades by Wednesday unless something catches it. When the next step is unclear, even highly motivated people hesitate, and hesitation turns into nothing.

The cost shows up in who comes back. Churches that are not growing keep about 9 percent of their first-time guests. Growing churches keep about 21 percent. Those figures come from Gary McIntosh and Charles Arn, in *What Every Pastor Should Know*.

A clear next step is pastoral care. It tells a guest that you saw them, you prepared for them, and someone is ready to walk with them.

THIS WEEK

Sit down with your team and answer three questions in writing. What happens after service today? Where does it go silent? What would close that gap?

HOW PEOPLE MOVE

People are consistent. Every time someone takes a step, the same five things happen, in the same order. If one station breaks, momentum breaks.

1 · EMOTIONAL OPENNESS	The service has done its work. The person is willing.
2 · CLEAR DIRECTION	They hear one thing to do, said plainly, with a time and a place.
3 · PHYSICAL MOVEMENT	They get up and go somewhere: a room, a door, a person.
4 · RELATIONAL CONNECTION	Someone meets them there and learns their name.
5 · REINFORCEMENT	Someone follows up and tells them the step mattered.

The more meaningful the moment, the more people hesitate, because choosing wrong feels expensive. Reassurance comes from structure. A strong personality can carry a weak system for a season. Design carries it every week.

That is why the invitation repeats. If it feels repetitive to your team, it is finally becoming clear to your guests.

THIS WEEK

Walk last Sunday through the five stations, one at a time. Write down the station where people stopped moving.

NAME IT ONCE

Language is never neutral. A guest decides in a split second whether something is for them, and the name decides first.

Strong names are simple, imply movement and feel low pressure. Weak names imply evaluation, commitment or insider knowledge. Leave these behind: New Members Orientation, Assimilation, Class, Workshop, Discipleship. If people cannot repeat the name easily, they will not attend it confidently.

The SundayOS+ system calls it First Step. Your church gives it a name of its own, and then keeps that name. Do not rename it every season. Familiar language creates safety.

Every invitation answers two questions. What is this? Why should I go today?

First Step is the one ask your church makes from the stage, every Sunday. Name it five times across the Sunday, five different ways: the screen before service, one line in the welcome, the full invitation in the announcements, a thread in the message, and directions at the close. The length changes each time. The name and the details never do.

THIS WEEK

Write three name options. Test each one against three words: simple, movement, low pressure. Commit to one before Sunday.

THREE STEPS, EVERY WEEK

A dependable system needs a dependable cadence. First Step runs every Sunday, right after service, in thirty minutes. Three steps, because people need three things: clarity, discovery and direction.

1 · CLARITY
Value Before Vision

A guest becomes an attender. They learn why this church exists and why that matters for them: they need God, they need community, and they were designed to serve. Every one of those is framed as a benefit.

2 · DISCOVERY
*Discovering Your
God Design*

An attender becomes a contributor. A guided spiritual gifts assessment shows how God designed them, and the team where that design comes alive. They leave thinking: I am not random.

3 · BELONGING
*From Discovery to
Belonging*

A contributor becomes community. They leave with a group, a name, and people who notice when they are gone.

A person can enter at any step and finish the other two on the Sundays that follow. Progress is counted by completion.

Every session runs the same thirty minutes: a three minute welcome, a ten to twelve minute video, ten minutes of reflection, and a five minute close.

Your pastor records the three step videos once. The face the room saw on stage meets them again on screen, and those videos run every week, all year. One voice, one trusted presence, recorded once.

THIS WEEK

Choose the room and the start time. Write both down where your team will see them.

LOWER ANXIETY, RAISE CLARITY

Every room creates a feeling before it delivers information. A guest walking into First Step is asking one question: what is expected of me? Answer it before you teach anything.

Open the same way every week.

We're really glad you're here. No pressure. Just clarity.

Put the room directly off the lobby, with signage a guest can follow without asking anyone, and set it theater style. Calm is contagious. The tone of the room follows whoever is leading it.

Your Facilitator Lead owns the room and holds three words. Safety: people never feel trapped or pressured. Clarity: people always know where they are and what comes next. Hospitality: people feel seen. Give this seat to your most settled person.

Ease is pastoral. When anxiety is low, people listen. When clarity is high, people move.

THIS WEEK

Walk from your sanctuary to your First Step room the way a guest would. Count every point where you would have to ask for directions, and fix one before Sunday.

SUNDAY NIGHT

A decision made on Sunday feels optional by Thursday. Sunday night is the window.

Everyone who finishes Step 3 gets a call that same night, five to seven minutes, from a real person. The call does four things: it welcomes them to the team, affirms that their step mattered, says what comes next at a high level, and sets the tone. It schedules nothing and assigns nothing. If they do not answer, leave a voicemail, then send a text Monday morning.

If that person was also a first-time guest that morning, this call is the message they get. Nobody hears from your church twice in one night.

THE FIRST SERVE

Give them a simple task beside a calm, trusted team member. Send one written page the day before: what to wear, where to go, who to find, and what they will be doing. Keep a new person out of the gaps in your schedule, and off the every-Sunday rotation from day one.

After that first serve, the team leader sits with them for ten minutes. That conversation is where serving starts to become belonging.

THIS WEEK

Name the person who makes the Sunday night calls. Put the first one on their calendar.

METRICS THAT MATTER

First Step runs on three seats. The Next Steps Director owns the whole system. A Facilitator Lead owns the room. An Admin Lead owns the names, the tracker and the follow-up, with every name entered before Monday morning.

Your pastor's weekly part is small: invite from the stage, read the numbers once a month, stay available when something needs them, and protect the system from drift. Same name, same cadence, same invitation, year after year.

Four numbers tell you whether it is working. Read them monthly and look for patterns.

3%

BAND 2 TO 4

Of adult attendance in First Step each week. The invitation is doing its job.

80%

OF THOSE WHO ENTER

Complete all three steps. The room feels safe and the follow-up holds.

2 weeks

STEP 3 TO FIRST SERVE

A first serve inside two weeks of Step 3 protects the momentum.

25 to 40%

BY SIZE, FLOOR 20%

Of adult attendance serving. 25 percent under 100, 30 at 100 to 249, 35 at 250 to 499, 40 at 500 and up.

When a number is off, check the invitation first, then the room, then the Sunday night call. Ask what the system is telling you.

THIS WEEK

Count how many people sat in your First Step room last month. Divide by your adult attendance across the same Sundays. That is your first number.

BUILD IT WITH THE WHOLE PLAYBOOK

This guide is the outline. The First Step Playbook is the build: every script, guide, card and plan that runs the three steps, the room, the call and the first serve.

It lives in the SundayOS Library, and The Sunday Collective gives you the whole library and a room to build it in: the systems diagnostic, reviewed one to one with our team in your first month, and the Mastermind, live every month.

\$299 a month

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CONNECTED RESOURCES

RESOURCE	WHERE IT LIVES	WHAT IT IS FOR
 First Step Playbook	CLEAR NEXT STEP · SUNDAYOS+ PREMIUM	The field manual: the three steps, the room, the call, first serve and launch
 First Step Implementation Guide and Workbook	CLEAR NEXT STEP · SUNDAYOS+ PREMIUM	Module by module, for the team building it together
 First Step Session Scripting Guide	CLEAR NEXT STEP · SUNDAYOS+ PREMIUM	What to say in all three steps, and why it is said in that order
 Spiritual Gifts Survey	CLEAR NEXT STEP · SUNDAYOS+ PREMIUM	The centerpiece of Step 2
 Spiritual Gifts to Team Placement Map	CLEAR NEXT STEP · SUNDAYOS+ PREMIUM	Turns a survey result into a place to serve
 First Step Launch Plan	CLEAR NEXT STEP · SUNDAYOS+ PREMIUM	Week by week, from the decision to your first live Sunday

The page mark means a resource in the SundayOS Library. The label names the first membership that opens it. The Sunday Collective opens all six.

THIS WEEK

Join The Sunday Collective at sundayos.io/collective, open the First Step Playbook, and hand the launch plan to the person who will own it. No pressure. Just clarity.



THE OPERATING SYSTEM FOR THE GROWING CHURCH

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