

GUEST SPEAKER GUIDE

Helping Your Guest Speakers Feel More
Prepared & Welcomed



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Introduction

When churches invite guest speakers, there are often dozens of small details that need to be communicated:

- What time should they arrive?
- Where do they park?
- Who handles slides?
- How long should they preach?
- What Bible translation is typically used?
- Who do they contact if they have questions?
- What happens after the sermon?

Without a clear process, guest speakers can feel uncertain and church teams can end up fielding last-minute questions throughout the week.

A simple “Things to Know as a Guest Speaker” document helps eliminate confusion, creates a smoother Sunday experience, and communicates hospitality and intentionality.

More than logistics, it helps your church serve guest speakers well.

This guide will walk you step-by-step through creating a document your church can customize and use anytime you host a guest communicator.

What a Guest Speaker Guide Should Accomplish

A good guest speaker guide should:

- Reduce uncertainty and stress
- Answer common questions before they are asked
- Clarify expectations
- Help the guest feel welcomed and prepared
- Improve communication between staff and the guest
- Create consistency from one guest speaker to the next

The goal is not to overwhelm the speaker with information.

The goal is clarity.

Think of it like creating a “Sunday roadmap” for someone who has never been to your church before.

Step 1: Start with the Sunday Experience

Before building the document, walk through your Sunday gathering from the perspective of a first-time guest speaker.

Ask:

- What would someone need to know to feel comfortable?

- What information would prevent awkward moments?
- What questions do guest speakers ask repeatedly?
- What details do our staff assume everyone knows?

This exercise helps uncover the practical information your team may overlook because it feels “normal” to you.

Step 2: Include the Essential Logistics

Every guide should include the basic details a guest speaker needs to navigate the day confidently.

Service Information

Include:

- Service start time
- Arrival time expectation
- Typical service order
- Approximate sermon start time
- Typical sermon length
- Whether there are multiple services

Example:

“Our service begins at 10:00 AM. We ask guest speakers to arrive by 9:15 AM to connect with the team, get mic’d up, and review slides.”

Parking & Building Access

Don’t assume the speaker knows where to go.

Include:

- Parking instructions
- Which entrance to use
- Photos or maps if needed
- Where they will be greeted

This is especially helpful at larger campuses or churches with multiple entrances.

Green Room / Hospitality Info

Let the speaker know:

- Whether a green room is available
- Coffee/snacks available
- WiFi access if needed
- Restroom locations

- Where personal belongings can be stored
- What types of lectern is available for their notes (traditional lectern, music stand, bistro table, etc.)

Small details communicate care.

Step 3: Clarify Service Expectations

This section prevents awkward misunderstandings.

Include things like:

- Preferred sermon length
- Preferred Bible translation (if applicable)
- Whether communion is involved
- Invitation/altar call expectations
- Whether the speaker should close in prayer
- Dress expectations
- Whether there will be Q&A or ministry time afterward

Be clear without sounding controlling.

Example:

“Our typical teaching length is 35–40 minutes. We usually preach from the NIV, though you are welcome to use your preferred translation.”

Step 4: Explain Media & Tech Details

One of the biggest stress points for guest speakers is technology.

Clarify:

- Who handles slides
- Deadline for slide submission
- Accepted file formats
- Whether videos/audio can be used
- Confidence monitor availability
- Microphone style preferences
- Whether the sermon is streamed or recorded

Also include a direct contact person for tech questions.

Step 5: Provide Key Contacts

This is one of the most important sections.

List:

- Primary host/pastor
- Worship leader
- Tech/media contact
- Administrative assistant
- Emergency day-of contact

Include:

- Name
- Role
- Email
- Phone number (if appropriate)

The guest speaker should never wonder who to contact.

Step 6: Tell Them What You Need From Them

Many churches forget this section.

Clearly communicate:

- Sermon title
- Scripture text
- Bio/headshot
- Honorarium mailing address
- Song requests
- Slides/media
- Social media handles (optional)

Also include deadlines.

Example:

“Please send your message title, scripture text, and brief summary by Wednesday afternoon.”

Step 7: Decide When to Send the Guide

Timing matters.

Recommended timeline:

3–4 Weeks Before

Send:

- Initial invitation confirmation
- Date details
- General expectations

7–10 Days Before

Send:

- Full guest speaker guide
- Contact information
- Sunday schedule
- Any final reminders

1-2 Days Before

Send:

- Simple confirmation text/email
- Encouraging note
- Final parking or arrival reminders

Avoid sending everything the night before.

Step 8: Make the Tone Warm & Relational

The document should feel hospitable, not corporate.

Good guest speaker guides sound like:

“We’re excited to have you.”

“We want to make your experience smooth and enjoyable.”

“Thank you for serving our church.”

Hospitality begins before Sunday morning.

Common Mistakes Churches Make

Giving Too Little Information

This creates confusion and unnecessary texting throughout the week.

Giving Too Much Information

Avoid turning the document into a 12-page operations manual.

Keep it concise and practical.

Not Updating the Guide

Review the document periodically to ensure names, contact info, service times, and procedures are still accurate.

Assuming Guest Speakers Understand Church Culture

Things that feel obvious to your team may not be obvious to someone visiting for the first time.

Final Sunday Checklist for Churches

Before the speaker arrives, confirm:

- Slides are loaded
- Microphones are ready
- Host knows how to introduce the speaker
- Honorarium/check is prepared
- Someone is assigned to greet them
- Water is available on stage
- Tech team has reviewed sermon media
- Service order is finalized

A little preparation creates a much more relaxed environment for everyone involved.

Sample Guest Speaker Guide (Mock-Up)

Things to Know as a River Valley Church Guest Speaker

We're excited to have you with us and are grateful for your willingness to serve our church family!

Service Information

Our worship gathering begins at 10:00 AM.

Please arrive by 9:15 AM so we can help you get settled, review slides, and get mic'd up. Most of our teachers use a bistro table as a lectern on stage that we have available. We also have a music stand or a traditional lectern you can choose from.

Parking is available in the main guest parking lot directly in front of the Worship Center. Enter through the main lobby doors and someone from our team will greet you upon arrival.


Typical Service Flow

- Worship Set
- Welcome & Announcements
- Guest Speaker Introduction
- Sermon
- Closing Prayer
- Final Worship Song

After service, many people will likely want to greet and thank you, so we encourage you to stick around for a few minutes afterward if possible.

Key Contacts

Service Host
Jason Miller
jason@rivervalleychurch.org



Media & Slides
Ashley Cooper
ashley@rivervalleychurch.org

Day-of Contact
Matt Reynolds
(555) 555-1212

Information We Need From You

Please send the following by Wednesday afternoon:

- Message Title
- Scripture Text
- Brief Message Summary
- Bio & Headshot
- Any Slide Content
- Honorarium Mailing Address

Media Information

Please send slides or media files no later than Saturday at noon.

We can display:

- PowerPoint
- ProPresenter
- Video clips (MP4 preferred)

General Teaching Information

- Typical message length: 35–40 minutes
- Bible translation typically used: NIV
- Please close in prayer following your message
- Dress style is generally professional casual

Thank You!

Thank you again for serving our church family. We're looking forward to having you with us and praying God uses your message to encourage and strengthen our church.

Inviting someone to speak at your church is more than filling a spot on the calendar. It is an opportunity to encourage, care for, and partner with another servant of Christ.

A thoughtful guest speaker guide may seem like a small detail, but small details often shape the overall experience. Clear communication helps eliminate unnecessary stress, creates smoother Sundays, and allows guest





speakers to focus their energy on serving your church well.

It also reflects something important about your church culture.

When churches communicate clearly, prepare intentionally, and serve guests with warmth and hospitality, it communicates value, respect, and excellence.

You do not need a complicated system to do this well.

Even a simple one-page guide can make a significant difference.

As you create your own guest speaker document, remember that the goal is not perfection. The goal is clarity, care, and intentional hospitality.

We hope this resource helps your church create a smoother and more encouraging experience for every guest speaker who serves your congregation in the months and years ahead.

