

# 8 Great Guest Questions to Answer with Your Church Web Site

By Cory J. Miller

**A**s you begin to plan and design your church's Web site, it is important to answer common questions that guests will be asking before they walk through your church doors. Often, a guest will log on to your church's Web site (especially if you are diligent about including it in all your promotional materials) before ever stepping foot on your campus.

I have found the church's Web site to be a valuable tool in welcoming new people to church services and events. Thus, your Web site is an excellent opportunity to make a good first impression with guests while simultaneously putting them at ease by answering key questions they might have.

**HERE ARE EIGHT QUESTIONS I WOULD SEEK TO ANSWER IN ANY CHURCH WEB SITE:**

## 1 "WHO IS THE PASTOR?"

At my previous church, one of the highest pages viewed on our Web site was the "About the Pastor" page. Guests want to know who the pastor is before they attend the church. This page could include a short welcome letter from the pastor accompanied by a photo and a brief biographical sketch of his educational background, when he was saved and called into the ministry, what his ministry's focus is, etc. A link to online audio sermons is also a good way of introducing your pastor to potential guests.

## 2 "HOW DO I GET THERE?"

Use the power and resources of online map services, like Google, MapQuest, or Yahoo! to provide an interactive-type map to your campus.

My personal favorite is Google. It has an excellent mapping component to its site that is often overlooked. To get a link to Google's map to your building, go to Google.com, type in your church's physical address, hit "Search," then make sure and click on "Google Maps." Check to make sure that the map indicated is indeed the correct location of your church building. Next simply copy the URL or right-click on the "Link to this Page" link. Then paste it on the appropriate link on your site.

## 3 "WHAT ABOUT YOUR WORSHIP SERVICES?"

Give all the information you can for what a guest might encounter during your main worship services. List traditional or contemporary services if you have them, descriptions for different services, what to wear, how long it lasts, where to park, etc. Some of these details are more important for those churches outside the Bible Belt or located in a large unchurched region.

## 4 "WHAT ABOUT CHILDCARE?"

Families are a large segment of any city's population. It is important to demonstrate to parents that your childcare facilities are not only available but safe. I hope and pray your church already gives background checks on all nursery and children's workers. List this important facet of your ministry prominently. Include good directions for dropping off children: i.e., where is the preschool or nursery (or children's) area located. Give the name, phone number and email address of your children's minister for questions.

## 5 “WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?”

Every church Web site should include a simple, straight-forward section that provides answers to this question. Think of this portion of your site as an opportunity to communicate your church’s distinctive doctrinal beliefs to many different audiences.

Put your doctrinal beliefs in a format that even a child could understand. Some church sites’ doctrinal statements read like peer-reviewed journal articles and use terminology that only those in academics would recognize. Articulate your beliefs in easy-to-understand language. For instance, instead of saying your church believes in an “inerrant, infallible Bible,” (which I hope you do), why not simply say: “We believe the Bible is the pure and perfect Word of God and has all authority over our lives”?

## 6 “HOW DO I GET CONNECTED?”

I think connecting people is one of the problems of many churches. Guests come looking for connection (i.e. fellowship) and wind up slipping out the back door of the church.

At my previous church, we posted small group Sunday school information prominently on the Web site home page in an easy-to-access format.

Use your site to educate guests on the importance of connecting with other believers through small group Bible studies. Explain why it’s vitally necessary for spiritual growth and how they can contact a pastor or small group leader to get linked with a good group.

## 7 “HOW DO I JOIN?”

This should go without being said, but I must mention it: Do not be vague about this important function of the church. Write out the essential steps necessary to join (i.e. baptism, new member orientation classes, etc.) and give appropriate contact resources.

## 8 “WHO IS JESUS?”

No church Web site is complete or sufficient without an adequate Gospel presentation. With so many excellent online presentations available today, there is no excuse for a church to not include opportunities to know more about our great Lord and Savior.

If you cannot produce it yourself, link to a site that does an effective job of communicating the Gospel. (One good resource is located at: <http://www.thegoodnews.org>.) Be sure you include phone and email contacts, as well as the church’s office hours for those who want to learn more or have questions.

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## ABOUT CORY MILLER

Cory Miller has worked in journalism and public relations since 1998. He has served in the communications field at three daily newspapers, a sports magazine group, at two Southern Baptist churches, and a seminary. Additionally, he has written for *Baptist Press*, *On Mission* magazine, *Purpose Driven Ministries*, *Missouri Pathway*, and *Oklahoma Baptist Messenger*, among others. He is available for freelance writing, graphic design and church communications consulting work.